



SINGAPOUR

MOLEAC DEFIES BIOTECH BURN RATE LAWS

Moleac, which was founded by a group of scientists, one of whom is Merc Vasseur, the former CEO of Genset, has been named Entrepreneurial Company of the Year by Frost & Sullivan Asia Pacific in the healthcare category. David Picard, CEO of Moleac, gives his views on the very particular way of running a business of this extremely promising company from Singapore.

BIOTECH FINANCES:

Which are the advantages of Singapore for setting up a biotech company and in what way does this reflect the needs of Moleac?



David Picard: At the end of the 1990s Singapore decided to create a network of pharma/biotech companies on its territory. A huge complex called Biopolis was set up, bringing together most of the public and private players in the region (1).

With about 30 biotech companies, the site promotes a strong networking spirit, and offers an excellent quality clinical environment. In 2008, international biomedical science companies invested more than 360 M€ in Singapore. This is partly due to the solid scientific foundations of the region, where more than 550 M€ have been spent on research and development in the field of biomedical science in 2007. The sustained confidence in Singapore illustrates the attraction of its environment for investors. This city-state is generally described as the best place to set up business. This easy approach is in sharp contrast with the endless red tape of Europe, particularly of France, where we have just created our European subsidiary.

We DEVELOP COMPOUNDS targeted on THERAPEUTIC VOIDS in LESS THAN 5 YEARS and for UNDER 10 M€

The choice of Singapore has been relatively simple. Given the specific nature of Moleac, with its products from Chinese research institutions, we needed a location between the East and the West. Setting up business in China was never a credible option, and in Europe we would have had huge difficulty in obtaining administrative authorizations to complete our clinical studies on post-

surgical patients who've been treated for severe atrioventricular canal (AVC) defects.

BIOTECH FINANCES:

What would be the advantage of repositioning the drugs you're working on and how do you ensure that you source good products?

D. P.: Moleac is based on the fact that traditional Chinese medicine is highly effective but internationally little known and unaccepted for cultural reasons. These often major scientific discoveries can frequently remain isolated in a certain area. Our strategy consists of repositioning, adapting and sometimes reformulating these candidate drugs. The general objective is to improve their quality, to adapt and simplify their formulations, to define the conditions of their production, and to carry out clinical studies to demonstrate their efficacy, their non-toxicity, and their possible interactions with other composites. The intended result is always to establish the candidate drug as a first-class product and to promote it within the medical community. This positioning strategy, which is unusual within pharma, enables us to develop powerful composites that fill therapeutic voids in less than five years and with under 10 M€. In terms of regulations, we've already gone to market in several countries using the natural character of our products, made from well-researched natural ingredients. This enables us to shorten traditional registration procedures significantly. The cornerstone of this business model, which has excellent cost management, is good project sourcing. To achieve that, we're working closely with renowned institutions in China, which contribute their science to our projects. In order to negotiate efficiently with our Chinese counterparts, it's essential to have a local presence through a joint venture with their industry. Hence we have co-founded the company with the Tang Brothers group, which is a group of business people who are heavily involved with relations between China and Europe. This alliance enables us

to be seen as a local company, which is essential for our work. Furthermore it's important to have at least one employee in place who shares both cultures.

BIOTECH FINANCES:

What do you currently have in your portfolio and what are your next milestones?

D. P.: Our lead program is NeuroAid, a treatment that supports better and more rapid recovery for cerebral vascular accident (CVA, or stroke) patients. The clinical studies, the completed ones as well as those still in process, have shown that patients using the product within six months after a stroke are 2.4 times more likely to make a full recovery, as published in the Stroke in March. The drug has already been registered in nine countries in Asia and the Middle-East and is accessible to patients from 25 countries through the internet, and has earned the company over 650,000 € last year. Currently tests are being carried out during the acute stage of CVA, conducted by the academic organization Chimes, led by professor Christopher Chen from the National University of Singapore, and chaired by professor Bousser from the Lariboisière Hospital in Paris, France. With a pool of 1,100 patients, this is the largest ever clinical study worldwide on recovery after CVA treatment. The objective of these additional studies is to strengthen confidence in NeuroAid and to encourage medical specialists to start treatment as soon as possible after the CVA has occurred. Another objective is to make NeuroAid available in Europe by obtaining Authorization to Market within the next three years, following a Temporary Authorization for Use (TAU), which will be obtained in the first instance. However in the US there is less access via the internet. We will need a partner for that zone, which we're hoping to recruit in 2010. Furthermore we've identified and obtained the rights to a dozen other compounds, in very diverse areas such as smoking addiction and dermatology. Our plan is to

(continued on p. 7)

