

KOLKATA, September 25, 2005

TCG arm considers drug trial centre

The Telegraph, Kolkata

Sep 25, 05

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http://www.telegraphindia.com/1050926/asp/business/story_5285012.asp

The \$10-million TCG Life Sciences, a part of The Chatterjee Group (TCG) promoted by Purnendu Chatterjee, is evaluating its options on entering the animal trials business by either setting up a greenfield project or acquiring an existing laboratory.

"Among the activities of TCG Lifesciences, animal trials is an area we plan to get into," said Swapan Bhattacharya, acting head of TCG Lifesciences and a director of TCG.

"Between developing a drug molecule and human trials, there is a period when it has to be tested on animals, mainly for toxicity tests," he explained.

"Setting up our own facility will take about two years, while acquiring an existing one will be faster. The whole process could be completed within a few months," Bhattacharya said.

While pharmaceutical companies have such laboratories, there are about five independent testing laboratories in the country. "We are in discussions with some of them to commence work in collaboration," he added. He didn't give away further details.

The norms for animal trials are stricter in India than in other countries. There are other issues, such as cruelty against animals, too. The third option will be to look outside the country, like China, where the laws are more friendly for firms that want to conduct trials, Bhattacharya explained.

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To start with, the initial investment in such a set up is around \$2-3 million, which can go up to \$10 million later, he added.

TCG Lifesciences is integrated drug discovery research and development company with four units, each working separately with clients in their individual domains.

The Centre for Genomic Applications is a shared facility with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. It works in the field of genomic and proteomic research, which determines

which disease is to be targeted.

Chembiotek Research International is the drug discovery unit and focuses on synthesis of new and improved chemical entities.