

SHARING TRADE SECRETS

Laval Company Makes a Breakthrough in Israel

BioChem Pharma, Canada's largest biopharmaceuticals company, has just signed its first strategic alliance with an Israeli company.

A little over a year ago, its pharmaceuticals subsidiary, BioChem Thérapeutique, signed a preliminary one-year agreement with XTL Biopharmaceuticals, a private company in Israel, on co-operation in research to find new antiviral compounds for the treatment of hepatitis C.

BioChem was so satisfied with this preliminary year, calling it one of "exemplary co-operation," that it has renewed the agreement for three years.

Seizing the Opportunity

"Everything happened so fast," said Dr. Mario Thomas, Vice-President of Planning and Business Expansion at BioChem Thérapeutique.

It was through business contacts that BioChem first heard of XTL. The latter sent a representative to the international firm headquartered in Laval, which in turn sent an emissary to XTL, and found that the Israeli company shared the same interests.

All this took less than three months, and led to a strategic alliance between the two firms.

"We have to be ready to show initiative," said Dr. Thomas, "and act quickly, because the biopharmaceutical research community in Israel is very well organized and knows exactly what it wants."

It is necessary to go to Israel to seek out opportunities, because competition there is very keen in biotechnological and biopharmaceutical research.

"You have to get there first and

meet the people on their home turf," added Dr. Thomas. "It is a highly skilled community, but one that is prepared to enter into alliances with qualified partners."

Support Received

Once in Israel, through none other than XTL, its future partner, BioChem heard about the Canada-Israel Industrial R and D Foundation. BioChem immediately submitted an application, and obtained a grant corresponding to one-third of the cost of its joint research project.

"I wouldn't say that the grant made the difference between signing the agreement and not signing, Dr. Thomas explained, "but it certainly helped."

This alliance with XTL has also opened other doors for BioChem in Israel, where the scientific community is very tightly knit and, therefore, easier to

approach once you have your foot in the door.

"Through this strategic alliance with XTL," added Dr. Thomas, "we were introduced to other researchers and academics in Israel; this could lead to other opportunities."

Quality and Reputation

BioChem is no newcomer to biopharmaceuticals. Last year its drug 3TC, used in the treatment of HIV/AIDS, was introduced on the U.S. and Canada markets. It is now available in over 20 countries.

Currently, its drug for hepatitis B is at the third stage of clinical pre-licensing testing.

For further information on BioChem Pharma and its projects in Israel, contact Mrs. Michèle Roy, the firm's Director of Communications. Tel.: (514) 978-7938, Fax: (514) 978-7755.

China, a New Frontier

Continued from page 1

between Canada and China and approximately \$2.3 billion between Canada and Hong Kong.

But China is not a market for everyone. Canadian exporters must be price and quality competitive, prepared for lengthy negotiations, committed for the long term and in possession of a range of international business development experience.

This issue of *CanadExport* features a 12-page supplement on China and Hong Kong, outlining the many opportunities available to Canadian companies in various sectors of the markets, as well as advice on doing business in China, organizations dedicated to promoting trade between Canada and China and Hong Kong, and Canadian success stories.