

Interview: Olivier Samama - CEO, Biotest France



France is a good candidate to test and sell new products as one of the most innovative global pharmaceutical markets.

23.06.2016

Tags: [Pharma](#), [Pharmaceuticals](#), [Biotest](#), [Olivier Samama](#), [Homecare](#), [Fractionation](#), [Plasma](#), [Biotech](#), [Biosimilars](#), [Interview](#), [Insight](#), [Exclusive](#), [Executive](#), [Biotest](#), [France](#), [free](#)

Biotest France's Olivier Samama discusses their recent re-entry into France, their focus on homecare treatment, and their expertise in fractionation and plasma derived products.

What are the objectives and goals you have been given by Dr Bernhard Ehmer and what exactly has happened in building this affiliate these last two years? How much progress had been made?

I joined the company about three years ago with Dr. Schultz, former CEO of Biotest. At the time, he wanted to incorporate all the core countries in Europe into the Biotest Group and France was the last European affiliate missing. Dr. Schultz had the vision to enter into the French market first before launching new generation and innovative drugs.

Biotest is planning to double the capacity of production in the next 4 years as part of our 2020 Strategy and we are currently developing new plasma derivatives products and monoclonal antibodies. France is a good candidate to test and sell new products as one of the most innovative global pharmaceutical markets.

France is the second biggest pharma market in the EU; but Biotest only opened its French affiliate two years ago. Why did it take so long for Biotest to move to France?

Biotest has been actively looking into the French market for over ten years and has been trying to register our drugs locally. Due to some discussions with the French regulation system, we were not

able to successfully launch a drug before 2010. Biotest AG decided to wait before entering the French market once again.

Biotest's historic focus and niche has been plasma and, in this specific sector, regulations are very detailed and the heavy amount of competition that exists in France has hindered our business opportunities here. The three big players in the market are CSL Behring, Octapharm, and LFB, with LFB being the biggest player. Competition is also tougher in the French market considering price regulation and savings.

How are clinical immunology, haematology and intensive care medicines represented in the company's French operations? With 14 products currently marketed in these areas, which products do you feel best fit the needs of the French market?

[Featured_in]

In France we are specifically focused on immunology type products. Zutectra is a hyper immunoglobulin product used for liver transplant patients. The sub-Q treatment of the product has now been on the market for two years. The sub-Q could increase the quality of life of the patient, since each patient is able to treat themselves in the comfort of their own home. Homecare is increasingly the future of healthcare.

For the moment we are focused on fractionation and plasma derived products; Biotest's specialty for more than 70 years.

Home care treatment is typically registered with the centralized authorization agency. We currently have two other immunoglobulins specific to other viruses under ATUs (Temporary Authorization for Use). There are two types of ATUs that can be issued, the first being the named patient ATU, which can be issued for a single, named patient and the cohort ATU which includes a group or sub-group of patients; both ATUs' usage are defined in a protocol for treatment with clinical data collection.

Our first objective is to develop the homecare sector of our business since we believe that it is a trend of innovation in the pharma industry.

We would also like to focus on filling the time gap between registering ATU products and discuss with the ANSM what can be considered as acceptable information for each clinical dossier.

As a newcomer in France, how are you building awareness of Biotest and differentiating yourselves from companies like LFB?

Our expertise in fractionation allows us to propose high quality products.

Building ethical relationships and partnerships with healthcare professionals is also key for Biotest.

[related_story]

Biotest is a patient-driven company focusing on providing our patients with new treatments for diseases that otherwise would have no treatment.

The combination of these three elements paves the way for a successful future for Biotest. Not only are our products of high quality but our customer driver approach also differentiates us from others.

What role will France play in Biotest's goal to reach USD one billion dollars by 2020?

We are currently focusing on launching a few products at a time.

In 2020, we plan to increase our French portfolio with new generation of molecules. This will also help increase our sales and stance on the market.

We hope that in five to ten years, France will represent ten percent of global revenues and business.

Why did you decide to join Biotest?

I was personally very motivated to work on plasma products that could heal untreatable diseases.. Working for Biotest has given me the opportunity the built from scratch a new Group subsidiary in France.

I am confident that with Biotest we will be able to make an impact on our customers' lives, hospital care, and the healthcare world in general.

[See more interviews](#)