

# Roche Signs Deal with Emcure to Make 2 Cancer Drugs Here

**DIVYA RAJAGOPAL**  
MUMBAI

Swiss drug major Roche, which has often locked horns with Indian generic drug manufacturers over patents, has made a shift in its strategy by signing a manufacturing contract with Emcure Pharma for its blockbuster, anti-cancer biologics drugs Herceptin and MabThera. This is the first time that an Indian drug maker has got a biologic drug manufacturing contract.

"This deal will equip Emcure to manufacture products that are sophisticated monoclonal antibodies. We look at this project as Emcure's first project with Roche," said Mukund Ranade, director, Emcure Pharmaceuticals. "Depending on its success, we hope cooperation would become broad based," he said. Biologics drugs are complex molecules that require sophisticated manufacturing capabilities.

Emcure will manufacture these drugs for the Indian market and depending on the success of this drug it will be taken to other developing countries. Roche is the only company that sells Herceptin for which there is no generic substitute. These drugs, currently under process development, are expected to hit the market by 2013. However, Emcure has not revealed if it is a mere contract manufacturing or a voluntary licence deal. Analysts said this development is interesting as Roche has not only stayed away from striking such deals in India but has also taken Indian generic manufacturers to court citing violation of its intellectual property rights. "The deal with Emcure is a smart move by Roche; with this, it can deter the entry of other generic companies and also offer affordable drugs for a country like India," said Anjan Sen, director, life sciences and healthcare, Deloitte India.

Roche has been under pressure from various health activists and the government to reduce the price of Herceptin, that costs ₹1 lakh for a single dosage here. Since the drug is patented, there is no generic substitute making it the only available drug for breast cancer patients. This pressure has forced the drug major to enter into a contract with a local company, which might lead to a fall in prices, said analysts. Big pharma companies across the world have



## Here's to Life

Emcure to manufacture Herceptin and MabThera here

Roche is the only co that sells Herceptin, used to treat breast cancer, for which there is no generic substitute

Roche has been under pressure to reduce Herceptin's price of ₹1 lakh for a single dose

come under pressure to reduce their prices on life saving cancer and HIV Aids drugs. "Companies like Roche are facing massive dual pricing pressure, and these deals are a way forward towards addressing those issues," said an analyst from a consulting firm who has advised Roche in its India strategy. In the past, Emcure had signed licensing deals with US-based biopharma giant Gilead Life Sciences for drugs such as Tenofovir and with Johnson and Johnson for Darunvir, both of which are anti-HIV drugs.