

AstraZeneca insources its IT ops

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AstraZeneca which outsourced its IT requirement to IBM in 2001, is now ending its relationship with the IT major through the unveiling of its own new GTC, allowing insourcing of its IT operations.

Faced with a series of R&D challenges and changes at the senior management level, AstraZeneca planned to invest in its new GTC at Chennai, which will significantly cut costs and will enable the company to fasten its grip on its work.

Though Bangalore is known to be the Silicon Valley of India, AstraZeneca sees Chennai as the perfect location for its primary GTC.

The company initially shortlisted a host of countries in Asia and Eastern Europe, but picked Chennai specifically to set its technology center in India.

"Chennai fits well with our strategy. The city is India's healthcare capital and along with leading hospitals and medical colleges, the city has a strong focus on the biotechnology industry sector. Equally important, Chennai is an emerging IT hotspot and there's a large population of IT talent here as well as in neighboring regions," said AstraZeneca's spokesperson to BioSpectrum.

"The arrival of the Chennai facility is just the start," it said. "We plan to establish global technology centres in San Francisco, USA in 2015, and extend our capability with two additional regional satellite centres in China and Eastern Europe." However, it does not intend to build additional GTCs in other locations in India.

At 100,000 sq ft, the GTC in Chennai will be the largest of all the centres AstraZeneca has planned. This centre will drive the company's solutions, tools, technologies and capabilities enabling it to create innovative and pioneering drugs. The GTC is expected to support 50,000 of its staff in 100 countries.

The centre currently employs 60 people, and it aims to expand the workforce to approximately 300 in the first year. "We aren't able to share figures for 2015-16 at this stage," said the spokesperson.

AstraZeneca failed to comment on the investment that went into erecting the Chennai GTC. However, it is estimated that the new IT outsourcing centre is worth \$9 million.

According to the company, the Chennai's GTC will deliver application development, SAP, infrastructure management and operations, cloud, mobile, service operations and maintenance.

"One of our key objectives is to achieve technical leadership in our IT, and our Chennai centre will give us the ability to build the world-class technical capability we need to achieve. We are looking to recruit individuals with global work experience, particularly consultants and engineers for large enterprise application platforms," commented AstraZeneca.

AstraZeneca's GTC in San Francisco is expected to be operational in 2015, and will be a smaller technology centre with a few experts who will be able to use it as a base to tap into innovative tech thinking and technology in the area.