

Local insight, global reach

Mene Research is a CRO operating in the US, Europe and Middle East, and is Turkey's first approved CRO. The company's CEO, Dr Sule Mene, discusses the benefits of fusing local and international approaches, and keeping on top of the wide range of services on offer.

Could you tell us more about the company?

Sule Mene: Mene Research is a small-scale CRO established in 2002. Despite its small size, we offer clients robust global experience. We began as a national company and, today our operations are continuing internationally. The headquarter office is located in Turkey, and we have offices in the US and Switzerland, which broadens the service network.

You promise 'holistic solutions' to clinical research challenges. How would you define holistic solutions in this context?

We offer clients the benefit of our global experience. Mene Research really gives flexibility to provide CRO services from preclinical to phase-IV stages on a stand-alone basis or as part of integrated full-service solution, combined with a local understanding of clinical research in Turkey and the region.

The company has enormous experience with FDA and the EMA regulations, which makes our research strong in Turkey and the MENA region. We carry out preclinical and drug development activities through our partners in Switzerland, as well as offering clinical supply warehouses and logistic services.

What are the benefits and challenges of fusing local and global approaches?

We are aware that the big CROs manage the majority of clinical trials but the overhead load, and the lack of local expertise and flexibility really affects customer satisfaction. A very strong advantage we have is that we are able to build the common language that connects these things together – a strength that comes because our founders have experience in pharmaceutical companies and the international CRO business integrated with their medical background as profession. For this reason, we understand the perspectives of both parties and provide solutions accordingly.

Working across such a wide range of disciplines, from pharmaceutical to medical devices, what is the importance of finding the right employees and skill sets to drive performance? How is this achieved?

It's unique. We are keen to find employees with impressive past experiences and successes. Our location in GOSS Teknopark, Istanbul, brings additional governmental incentives for working with highly skilled people with masters and doctorates. In our group, there are ex-FDA experts, medical doctors, biologists, pharmacists and engineers. In addition, we run continuous training programmes for different levels for our employees and are actively acting as a member of working groups, such as EUCROF on the topic of medical devices, which has broadened our knowledge and know-how transfer.

What does Depot Meridian bring to the company as a whole?

Actually, it's one of our biggest strengths – this year, capacity has been quadrupled. In recent years, the importance of the clinical supply management awareness has increased: guidance is more strict and sponsors are more sensitive about ensuring the chain of custody of their clinical supply, and Depot Meridian is supporting them with high standards, by using our knowledge and experience in clinical research fields, and as a result, is serving many CROs and pharmaceutical companies.

To what extent does Mene Research have a 'typical' client and why do you think they choose you as a partner?

We provide services to everyone from small biotech companies to big pharmaceutical companies. The reason for this range is that we have knowledge of local regulations, good communications, flexibility, institutional transparency and a good understanding of their needs.

Bear in mind that no one solution fits all. It must be chosen based on the means and objectives of the project. Mene Research provides services for functional outsourcing, either in a fee-for-service model or full-service model, where CROs function as a one-stop shop across the development cycle.

Are there any developments in the works that you're particularly excited about?

In recent years, we've been participating in the EU framework for programmes and innovations, an exciting opportunity to work with the large networking groups. Another exciting bit of news is that our R&D department has been established, and this department will work with Tubitak for Mene Research on innovative in-house projects.

We are also planning to broaden preclinical and clinical activities, and we have therefore signed a partnering agreement this year with Gileant in order to create a hub for Turkey and Switzerland. This strategic partnership enables Mene Research to access the life sciences network and infrastructure of Gileant in order to leverage the innovation capabilities of life sciences companies in Turkey, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East and Africa. ■

Further information

Mene Research
www.meneresearch.com

