

**Company Name** : Pharmaniaga Berhad  
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## **Covid-19 Vaccine: Pharmaniaga Says Its Plant Can Repackage 10 million Doses Per Month**

KUALA LUMPUR (Aug 24): Pharmaniaga Bhd said its sterile liquid injectable plant, which is suitable to cater to the fill and finish process of a Covid-19 vaccine, can cater to around 10 million doses per month.

The group's acting managing director, Mohamed Iqbal Abdul Rahman, said given the readiness of the existing line, only a minimal investment of less than RM2 million will be needed to further gear up the plant.

Pharmaniaga is one of few companies identified by the government recently to use their existing facilities for bottling the vaccine when it becomes available.

Mohamed Iqbal, however, noted that although Malaysia has the capacity to do the fill and finish process, it also depends on how much vaccine can be supplied by the manufacturer.

"That's the challenge, because countries worldwide are placing in their orders for large populations. On our part, we are ready and we have been doing testing so that when the vaccine is ready, we should be able to do the fill and finish process almost immediately," he told a media briefing today.

Meanwhile, Mohamed Iqbal said Pharmaniaga is also on track to establish a halal vaccine facility — the world's first — which is targeted for completion by 2022.

"We have been planning this since 2018 and we are now looking at the implementation. This is not for Covid-19. This is for other vaccines such as to get your baby immunised when you travel. There are a few stages we will go through starting from trading, to fill and finish and eventually manufacturing our own kind. We will invest about RM100 million over the course of the next few years," he said.

For the financial year ahead, Mohamed Iqbal believes the pharmaceutical sector will remain resilient amidst the ongoing pandemic.

For the second quarter ended June 30, 2020, net profit came in at RM9.98 million, a 55% drop from RM22.3 million in the immediate preceding quarter, but higher than the RM9.28 million in the year-ago second quarter.

Revenue dropped 21% quarter-on-quarter to RM645.76 million from RM819.92 million. Year-on-year (y-o-y), quarterly revenue grew 7% from RM601.89 million.

For the six months ended June 30, net profit grew 12% y-o-y to RM32.38 million from RM28.9 million, while revenue rose 6% y-o-y to RM1.47 billion from RM1.39 billion.

Mohamed Iqbal noted that first quarter earnings have always been higher for Pharmaniaga as it receives a big purchase from the government, which would then normalise later in the year.

He said the group continues to receive 50% of its earnings from its government concession with the remaining from the private sector.

However, moving forward the group intends to increase its presence in the private sector by increasing its product range, especially in the over-the-counter segment, said Mohamed Iqbal.

"Pharmaniaga has been very strong in ethical drugs, but many may not know about us because you can't advertise ethical drugs such as for cholesterol and hypertension. There are a lot more players in this field so we want to go into an area with a high barrier to entry. So, we are now looking at new therapeutics, vaccines, insulins to name a few," he added.

Shares of Pharmaniaga have soared 149% year to date. It is currently trading eight sen or 18.48% higher at RM5.13.