India’s first plasma fractionation facility in Ahmedabad will be a collaboration between Celestial Biologicals (CBL), an associated company of India’s Intas Biopharmaceuticals and GE Healthcare.

The collaboration will include appropriate technology, products, processes and project development for establishing the plasma fractionation facility. CBL is investing about US$20 million over the next two years whereas GE Healthcare will provide its leading purifying technologies, processes and support to set up the plasma fractionation facility. The Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) compliant facility will be fully functional by early 2010.

Human plasma, a liquid component of blood, is the source of many life-saving proteins. A large number of these proteins can be isolated and used in medicine. The process of extracting and purifying these proteins is known as plasma fractionation. Fractionated proteins are used in the prevention, management and treatment of life-threatening conditions.

In India, the market demand for blood products is dynamic and currently, plasma products are imported from other countries. An estimated 1 million liters of plasma is required annually in India to meet current clinical demands. Hence, local manufacture is the key to providing plasma products at affordable prices to Indian patients. Local manufacturing also helps save precious foreign exchange for the country.

According to various reports, India collects over 7 million units of blood every year, but 60% of the blood plasma collected goes to waste because there is no facility available in India for fractionation. Currently, CBL has a contractual arrangement with a South Korea-based plasma fractionators for fractionation of plasma to fulfill the increasing demand for plasma products in India. The company will continue to rely on contract fractionation till its own facility starts operating.

Under this collaboration, CBL and GE Healthcare will jointly set up a pilot plasma fractionation facility of approximately 15,000 liters to 40,000 liters capacity for at least four products at CBL’s existing GMP-compliant facility, and make plans for the scale-up of the plasma fractionation facility to 300,000 liters capacity. Both companies will work together to develop technologies for dedicated collection, testing and storage facilities for plasma as well as other ancillary utilities. Celestial Biologicals will also explore the possibility of utilizing the facility for the purpose of contract fractionation.

About Celestial Biologicals Limited

Celestial Biologicals, an associated company of India’s Intas Biopharmaceuticals, is involved in plasma sourcing, contractual fractionation and marketing of plasma-derived products such as human Albumin, Immunoglobulin and Factor VIII. The company has undertaken a societal need-based project and is sourcing plasma from various blood banks of India.

About GE Healthcare

GE Healthcare’s expertise in medical imaging and information technologies, medical diagnostics, patient monitoring systems, performance improvement, drug discovery, and biopharmaceutical manufacturing technologies is helping clinicians around the world re-imagine new ways to predict, diagnose, inform, treat and monitor disease, so patients can live their lives to the fullest. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, GE Healthcare, with 46,000 employees in more than 100 countries, is a US$17 billion unit of General Electric Company.