

Proud to save lives

Antoine Bernasconi,
CCO of SERB Specialty
Pharmaceuticals,
describes the
achievements
of this leading
pharmaceutical
company

CBNW: Please could you outline the history of SERB?

AB: SERB Specialty Pharmaceuticals is a leading pan-European specialty pharmaceutical group providing a reliable supply of prescription medicines to patients suffering from rare and life-threatening diseases globally. Thanks to our successful growth strategy, we have a consistent portfolio of specialty products in critical care and rare diseases – even though the portfolio was effectively built around antidotes – which still remains our core business.

SERB provides essential drugs thanks to our direct presence in the Benelux countries, France, the UK, Germany, Poland, the Nordic countries and Italy, and over 100 countries, including the US and Japan, through a broad network of experienced distributors.

With our extensive life-saving medicine portfolio we are a long-standing partner for health authorities, governmental and non-governmental agencies, therapeutic experts and patient associations – committed to serve each patient need.

SERB's strength is also its agility. We multiplied our assets through a significant European manufacturing network in order

Above:

SERB is committed whatever the needs and emergencies.

to ensure a continuous supply, whatever the needs and emergencies. All our collaborators are driven by a shared vision: together we are committed to provide medical countermeasures. We are proud to save lives.

CBNW: How did SERB get involved in the CBRN market?

AB: With 16 medical countermeasures, SERB has a strong expertise in CBRN and we can claim to have one of the most wide-ranging emergency care portfolios. The solid base we have built enables us to easily incorporate new products. We monitor the entire pathway from manufacturing – with a trusted network of more than 15 regional manufacturers – to distribution and sales with specialist partners.

Our antidotes portfolio, available globally, covers the three main threats of chemical, biological and nuclear by providing life-saving medicines for cyanide poisoning, neurotoxins, multiple metal poisonings, anthrax, and acute nuclear exposure.

Our CBRN expertise is recognised by key authorities and partners. SERB is working alongside governmental agencies in the US, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and North Africa. Additionally, since 2018 SERB has been the sole distributor of French Army products (Service Central des Armées) outside France and is a member of the French Interest Economic Group (GIE) specialising in CBRN.

CBNW: How did SERB expand its CBRN market?

AB: The most frequent toxic incidents and CBRN threats are covered by SERB specialties. Over the years we have become an active stakeholder in medical countermeasures to protect civilian and military populations.

To ensure a sustainable and ethical access to our CBRN medicines, at SERB we have a mindset to always go above and beyond to answer the requirements of large populations and rapid response situations. The CBRN risk is a permanent

and unpredictable threat. At any time or anywhere stockpiling of antidotes could be required.

SERB has developed a proven track record in international market access through a tendering process and special access programmes. Thanks to our effective network with authorities, we are able to respond to specific needs through importation license procedures.

SERB's regulatory expertise is consistently seeking for new registrations. In 2020 several new market authorisations for emergency care products are ongoing. These include Israel, Japan, and various European Mutual Recognition Procedures. We are engaged in a long-term commitment to serve the unmet needs of every patient.

We will also continue to pursue our strategy of complementing strong organic growth, in addition to targeted acquisitions of pharmaceutical companies and assets that share our mission of providing essential drugs to help save lives globally.

CBNW: Can you outline the different products you offer to healthcare providers, government and the military?

AB: One of our leading products is Hydroxocobalamin 5 g, a life-saving drug for the treatment of known or suspected cyanide poisoning. As a chemical warfare agent (CWA), cyanide has caused several tragedies in history in various forms (liquid, gas). It can be used as a terrorist weapon and is easily spread so it remains one of the most dangerous threats in a mass-casualty incident. Cyanide is also routinely used in industrial processes with potential human exposure and therefore precautions and awareness are essential.

This product is marketed in more than 50 countries including in Europe, as well as the US, Canada, Japan, Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates. It is listed in several expert consensus (European and international) and is used worldwide on a

Below: SERB is focused on medical CBRN countermeasures.





regular basis by many emergency services.

Another important countermeasure is for organophosphates and neurotoxins. SERB provides medical solutions with oximes (Obidoxime and Pralidoxime). In recent incidents attributed to chemical weapons such as Novichok agents, administration of life-saving antidotes is of the utmost urgency. Research and development projects examining these agents are ongoing to better face this increasing threat.

SERB is also involved in protection against nuclear contamination with the commercialisation of potassium iodide. This is an essential product to offset accidental exposure to radiation and prevent thyroid cancer. It is a crucial medical countermeasure for governments and health authorities to protect their populations.

CBNW: Do you have specific products for patients?

AB: We maximise CBRN awareness to protect everyone, everywhere. Our market access expertise leads to new market authorisations and special access programmes to ensure the wide availability of our medicines where needed.

SERB also seeks to answer unmet needs by continually improving our drugs and adapting their indications and dosages. For example, we have developed and registered a dedicated dosage for one of our antidotes, for its optimal and safe administration to children.

Beside governmental organisations, SERB has set up partnerships with noted international NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to make essential medicines available in regions where populations are at especial risk of exposure.

CBNW: Is SERB involved in the COVID-19 crisis?

AB: In this critical context, SERB is working hard to meet this unprecedented challenge and thanks to all our employees and partners commitment we are successfully maintaining supply of our essential medicines worldwide for patients.

SERB is contributing with two medicines to deal with COVID-19 – in particular, one neuro trauma sedative – for which we were able to fulfil increased demand. We are, once again, demonstrating our ability to meet the special

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SERB is committed to serve each patient's needs.

requirements of healthcare professionals. Everyone at SERB is fully dedicated and proud to save lives. ■■



Antoine Bernasconi is the Chief Commercial Officer of SERB. He joined the company in 2019 after 20 years working in the pharmaceutical industry as a pharmacist, including as European Director of a company specialising in rare diseases.



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