Inside HAS-Cerbios: Building a unique CDMO

A new chapter begins in Switzerland's pharmaceutical services landscape as HAS Healthcare Advanced Synthesis and Cerbios-Pharma join forces under the HAS Group banner, creating a unified front in the CDMO market.

Finalised in May of this year, the HAS Group is now in the process of introducing itself into the hearts and minds of its clients, where CPHI presents an opportune moment to familiarize the wider market with the HAS Group identity.

The new combined contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO) will compete globally in oncology, high-potency active pharmaceutical ingredients (HPAPIs), and antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs).

For **Waldo Mossi**, CEO of HAS Group, the deal is about more than scale. *"This acquisition is a transformative step,"* he told 24/7 BIOPHARMA. *"We started the integration phase by creating an executive committee with key management figures from both organizations."* That structure, he explained, allows teams to align across research, production, finance, and business development from day one.

Denis Angioletti, Group Head of Commercial & Business Development, framed it in commercial terms. *"We can see that we are adding value to what each company was,"* he said. *"Some customers are now complementing or using what the other company is bringing on board."*

Aligning to a fast-growing sector

The timing is certainly no accident. The outsourcing of pharmaceutical manufacturing is accelerating as drugs become more complex and costly to produce. Frost & Sullivan estimates the biologics CDMO market grew from $13.3bn in 2018 to $29.3bn in 2022, with projections to reach $100.4bn by 2030. A separate Frost study valued the sector at $21.09bn in 2023 and forecast it would hit $68.97bn by 2031, a compound annual growth rate above 16%.

The broader picture is just as striking with Bourne Partners estimating that the global CDMO market will reach around $200bn by 2025, with mid- to high-single-digit annual growth thereafter. The financial services firm stresses that the top five players hold less than 15% of the market, highlighting its fragmentation and the opportunity for specialists.

That fragmentation is critical as, unlike markets dominated by a handful of giants, CDMOs remain diverse, with regional champions and niche players competing alongside multinational groups.

For **Mossi**, this creates room for differentiated offerings. *"HAS is representing a very robust scientific chemical and regulatory know-how for APIs, highly potent and anti-cancer,"* he said. *"Cerbios is a very solid chemical and biotechnological company. Together, the two companies represent something very unique."*

Betting on ADCs

Among the fastest-growing opportunities in oncology are ADCs, therapies that deliver toxic payloads directly to cancer cells via targeted antibodies. Developing them requires both advanced biotechnologies and high-potency chemistry, a rare combination.

"The combination of chemical know-how and biotechnological know-how will reinforce our capacity to develop and manufacture ADC molecules," **Mossi** said. In a similar vein, **Angioletti** added that clients are already responding: *"We now have a complete set of manufacturing lines, development lines, and expertise in high potency oncology and ADCs."*

The group intends to expand its ADC capabilities under the Proveo brand, which Cerbios launched with partners in 2015 to integrate conjugation, payload, and linker chemistry and fill finished.

Vision and integration

To support integration, the companies introduced cross-functional teams, newsletters, and staff surveys aimed at ensuring employees remain engaged and part of the new organization. *"People are the basis of what we do,"* **Angioletti** said. *"They still feel part of the family, even with the changes, which is essential."*

Mossi said the long-term ambition is clear. *"The vision is to become a Swiss centre of excellence serving the pharmaceutical world in the CDMO sector with strong expertise in scientific content technologies and industrial sustainability."*

Balancing scale with agility

In an industry where projects can span a decade, both leaders stressed that customer trust and cultural alignment are vital. *"Quality, scientific passion, respect for the client, respect for the people, is very similar between the two companies,"* **Angioletti** said.

Speed of execution is another priority. *"We are now stronger and bigger, but we still maintain speed in decision-making and execution,"* he noted. *"A client recently highlighted very strongly that speed is essential to them."*

Mossi echoed the sentiment, calling Swiss quality and agility *"our signature worldwide."*

Investing for growth

To support its strategy, the group is committing significant funds. *"From a technological point of view, we are investing around CHF20m (€21.4m) combined only in 2025, and other investment will follow in the five-year plan,"* **Mossi** said.

According to **Angioletti**, the spending reflects clear priorities: *"We are expanding our R&D lab, building a second line for conjugation, and preparing for a third, expanding capacity for oncology, and expanding the R&D team for high potency in general. That's exactly reflecting what the market is asking for."*

The expansion includes strengthening quality control infrastructure, scaling manufacturing space, and upgrading industrial capabilities to ensure resilience as demand grows.

Waldo Mossi, CEO of HAS Group and **Denis Angioletti**, Group Head of Commercial & Business Development.

By sequencing investments step by step, the group aims to remain flexible while avoiding overextension.

Risks and discipline

The CDMO sector's strong growth also brings a unique set of challenges. Facilities for biologics and ADCs require vast capital outlays and lengthy regulatory approvals. If demand falters, underutilized assets can quickly erode margins.

HAS and Cerbios believe their focused approach mitigates this risk. *"Specifically for ADCs, there are many investments ongoing and others planned to increase our capacity in terms of linker payload and conjugation,"* **Mossi** said. *"We want to become a leader in ADC development and manufacturing."*

Angioletti stressed prudence: *"We are not one of those companies shooting out investment and doing things. We do tailor-made what is necessary, step by step, but in advance, in order to keep the speed and the capacity in our services."*

Looking ahead

This union positions HAS and Cerbios to capture opportunities in a sector expected to double in size within the decade. By combining chemistry, biologics, and regulatory expertise, the group aims to win business from both emerging biotech firms and large pharma clients seeking partners with specialized skills.

"The group is a well-established player in this CDMO field," **Angioletti** said. *"It's a company with strong roots in respect, transparency, service, and speed of execution. We have a long vision, up to five and ten years, and have plans for investments in that direction."*

For **Mossi**, the goal remains straightforward: *"A Swiss centre of excellence serving the pharmaceutical world of CDMO. That's our target for the coming years."*

As **Angioletti** put it: *"When you see clients returning time and again, it means you are doing something right."*

HAS and Cerbios will be present at CPHI Frankfurt from October 28–30, where it will highlight the group's expanded capabilities following the merger. Executives will be available to meet clients and partners at booths 9.1D77 and 9.1F77.

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