

Best Polyclonal Antibody Production Specialists 2023

Portuguese biotechnology company, SICGEN Antibodies, specialises in the development and production of polyclonal antibodies. The company, which was founded in 2009 by scientist Dr José Ramalho, uses cutting-edge technology to produce its products to the highest quality standards whilst remaining competitive on price. We take a look at the company in more depth with Dr Ramalho.

The small town of Cantanhede, over 100 km south of Lisbon, may not be a location that springs to mind when thinking of biotechnology centres. But the town, in the district of Coimbra, is home to SICGEN Antibodies, a global producer of polyclonal antibodies and antibody-related products and services.

Comprising a lab space and animal house, SICGEN's team includes researchers, technicians and veterinary staff. Dr Ramalho explains the criteria the company uses to select staff, "Technical skills are important but so is the personality of each individual and how well they will integrate into the team. We aim to offer our staff long-term opportunities for growth. We place a strong focus on both our vision and our mission to create a positive and flexible work environment. It's important to us that employees who achieve goals that align with our vision gain recognition."

Developing and bringing to market polyclonal antibodies, the company has seen its products used in areas of life science research. Its antibodies against fluorescent proteins such as GFP, mCherry, and tdTomato have featured in a range of life science research publications including Nature, Cell and Science.

Striving to develop new products, SICGEN is a supplier to leading national and international institutions such as universities, research institutes, pharmaceutical manufacturers and

biotechnology distributors. Its main markets are in North America, Europe and the Far East.

When asked about the company's most recent developments, Dr Ramalho tells us, "Our focus is on increasing the number of antibodies we have available as well as improving the characterisation of those already available for use in different biochemical techniques. We've also been increasing the number of conjugated antibodies with fluorescent molecules. These modified antibodies are important, they expedite experiments and are sought after by researchers."

As of 2023, the SICGEN product catalogue has grown to over 300 products. The company's antibodies are used mostly for research purposes, with a particular focus on Western Blotting (WB), Immunofluorescence (IF) and immunocytochemistry (IHC). Many are also used for enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay ELISA, immunoprecipitation and other biochemical techniques.

We ask about some of the challenges the industry is currently facing. Dr Ramalho says, "The industry has seen significant expansion over the last decade and continues to grow. Larger companies can pose a threat in terms of price, but our customers appreciate our flexibility and responsiveness to their individual needs. There are challenges for all antibody producers resulting from scientific and technological developments in the biotech industry. The most significant of these will be the use of advanced in-vitro technologies – being able to use non-animal-based approaches for antibody generation. This will offer greater versatility and reproducibility as well as alleviating ethical concerns."

With its success largely attributed to exploiting niche areas of the market, SICGEN devotes much of its efforts to research and development. Understanding how the market is likely to evolve and then developing products to meet that demand has been a successful strategy.

Looking to the future, SICGEN will continue identifying and filling gaps in the antibody market. The company also plans to attract new customers by increasing its distributor channels and offering a free sample programme.

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