

Pharma SMEs to get ₹500-cr fund boost to prop up drug quality

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NEW DELHI: With an aim to meet international regulatory expectations and inspections, the government is preparing a ₹500-crore financial package to help small and medium (SMEs) pharmaceutical companies upgrade their manufacturing facilities and meet global standards, said a senior official at the department of pharmaceuticals (DoP).

"We may roll out the financial package by December this year," the official said.

With domestic drug-makers frequently running into regulatory hurdles overseas, the commerce ministry is mulling to become a part of a multinational regulatory regime — Pharmaceutical Inspection Cooperation Scheme (PICS) — under which India will adopt global standards.

"We are planning to graduate to the next level of inspections and manufacturing standards. But for that, the primary priority is to improve the skill sets in

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pharma sector across roles," GN Singh, Drug Controller General of India, had earlier told *HT*.

However, small and medium-sized pharma companies, nearly 8,000 in India, fear that adoption of such norms will drive up costs. "To address their concerns, DoP has initiated the process of sensitising SMEs of the basic good manufacturing practices (GMP) guidelines along with skill training sessions," the official said.

As per government estimates, 50% of the SMEs fail to comply with basic GMP standards.

These standards are drafted by the World Health Organisation to maintain the quality of pharmaceutical products traded across the globe.

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