Amgad Talaat – Saudi Regional Cluster Head and Global Strategic Alliances, EVA Pharma



Together, everyone achieves more, and we are committed to driving meaningful progress in the region

27.01.2025

Tags: Saudi Arabia, EVA Pharma, Manufacturing, Innovation, Talent, Strategy, Partnerships

Amgad Talaat, Regional Cluster Head of EVA Pharma Saudi Arabia, delves into the company's strategic expansion in the region, emphasizing investments in local manufacturing, innovation, and team development to align with Saudi Vision 2030. With a focus on addressing unmet medical needs and fostering partnerships, EVA Pharma is positioning itself as a key player in the healthcare landscape.

What can you tell us about your background and your current responsibilities in Saudi Arabia?

My journey in healthcare began with a deeply personal motivation. The loss of my mother to breast cancer when I was 11 inspired a lifelong commitment to helping patients and improving healthcare. This path led me to study pharmacy, where I graduated from Cairo University and later pursued two MBAs. From the discovery of innovative treatments in R&D to ensuring proper patient care through frontline engagement, I developed a profound appreciation for the role of pharmaceuticals in transforming lives. Over the past 30 years, including 20 years at major multinational pharmaceutical companies, I gained insight into the healthcare ecosystem. This rich and varied exposure has given me the tools to understand and address complex healthcare challenges while driving strategic initiatives at the intersection of business and public health.

Today, my focus is on EVA Pharma’s strategic initiatives in Saudi Arabia, where I bring these experiences to address critical healthcare challenges. Beyond my professional commitments, I am a husband and father of two boys, whose support has been instrumental in navigating this journey. These personal and professional dimensions together fuel my dedication to advancing healthcare and making a meaningful impact.

What is EVA Pharma’s positioning in the global pharmaceutical industry, and how does it align with your focus on Saudi Arabia?

Over the past decade, EVA Pharma has undergone a profound transformation, evolving from a locally focused organization into a global pharmaceutical powerhouse. With four state-of-the-art facilities producing one million medicine boxes daily, the company has established itself as a market leader, ranking first in Egypt according to IQVIA. It has also emerged as one of the fastest-growing pharmaceutical companies in the Middle East and Africa, driven by an impressive Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR). EVA Pharma’s extensive portfolio includes over 500 products, with an ambitious pipeline set to double this figure as it expands its global footprint.

At the heart of EVA Pharma’s evolution lies a strategic pivot towards innovation and globalization. While the company has a strong foundation in branded generics and food supplements, it is increasingly focused on addressing unmet medical needs through advanced research and development. Supported by a team of over 250 scientists, EVA Pharma has prioritized the creation of complex dosage forms, such as inhalers for respiratory diseases, alongside treatments for oncology, immunology, and antivirals. By integrating cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence and data-driven methodologies, EVA Pharma continues to refine its approach to product development, manufacturing, and commercialization.

A defining element of the company’s strategy is its commitment to collaboration. Leveraging partnerships with leading pharmaceutical companies, EVA Pharma bridges the gap between global innovation and local accessibility. This approach not only ensures that groundbreaking treatments reach underserved markets but also aligns with the company’s mission to make high-quality, affordable healthcare solutions widely available. EVA Pharma’s belief in collaboration over competition has enabled it to address critical healthcare challenges effectively while fostering a culture of shared success.

EVA Pharma’s geographic expansion underscores its vision for global impact. Its products are now available in 70 countries, supported by regulatory approvals from prominent bodies such as the

European Medicines Agency (EMA), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA). The company operates offices and affiliates in key markets, including Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Kenya, and Dubai. Additionally, its Hamburg-based hub, Elbe Life Science GmbH, serves as a strategic center for in-licensing and out-licensing, facilitating entry into European markets. Plans to establish a manufacturing complex in Saudi Arabia further highlight EVA Pharma's commitment to localization and its role in advancing healthcare accessibility within the region.

How has EVA Pharma's strategic approach to partnerships enhanced its global healthcare impact?

EVA Pharma's strategic partnerships have been pivotal in elevating its role as a global healthcare leader, enabling the company to address critical medical challenges and expand access to innovative treatments. One of its most transformative collaborations began with Gilead Sciences, addressing Egypt's urgent need for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) eradication. At the time, Egypt faced one of the highest HCV infection rates globally. In partnership with Gilead, EVA Pharma contributed to a landmark national campaign, screening 50 million citizens and treating 4 million with sofosbuvir (Sovaldi) and its generics, manufactured locally. This initiative significantly reduced HCV prevalence and earned international recognition, including a certification from the World Health Organization (WHO), establishing EVA Pharma as a key player in public health interventions.

The partnership with Gilead deepened during the COVID-19 pandemic when EVA Pharma was selected to produce and distribute Remdesivir, a crucial antiviral for hospitalized patients. Despite global supply chain challenges, including active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) shortages, EVA Pharma leveraged its facilities to produce the API domestically, ensuring uninterrupted supply. The company successfully distributed Remdesivir to over 30 countries, including an emergency delivery of 300,000 vials to India during a critical healthcare crisis—an unprecedented example of Africa exporting vital medicine to another continent. Demonstrating its unwavering commitment to equitable healthcare, EVA Pharma provided Remdesivir free of charge to frontline healthcare workers, embodying its core principle that medicine is for people above all else. This partnership continues to evolve with Gilead entrusting EVA Pharma to produce Lenacapavir, a revolutionary HIV treatment administered biannually. As one of only six companies globally granted a voluntary license, EVA Pharma will distribute this life-saving medication across Africa, including South Africa, further reinforcing its leadership in addressing the continent's healthcare needs.

EVA Pharma’s collaboration with Eli Lilly represents another milestone in its strategic journey. Initially focused on promoting Lilly’s central nervous system portfolio in Egypt, the partnership expanded to include manufacturing and distribution of insulin and oncology treatments for low- and middle-income countries. By 2030, EVA Pharma aims to provide insulin to 30 million people annually, demonstrating its capability to scale production while maintaining accessibility. The launch of innovative therapies such as tirzepatide (Mounjaro) in Egypt underscores its commitment to bringing advanced treatments to underserved markets. Through these partnerships, EVA Pharma exemplifies how collaboration with global pharmaceutical leaders can drive meaningful advancements in healthcare accessibility. Its ability to seamlessly integrate innovation with localized solutions continues to shape its impact on global health.

What inspired EVA Pharma’s investment in Saudi Arabia, and how does this align with the company’s strategic objectives?

EVA Pharma’s expansion into Saudi Arabia marks a significant milestone in its quest to empower sustainable access to high-quality healthcare solutions. Having firmly established its leadership in Egypt, the company identified Saudi Arabia as a strategic focal point, driven by the Kingdom’s ambitious Vision 2030 and the dynamic transformation underway across its healthcare sector. The combination of regulatory clarity, governmental support, and a commitment to fostering investment made Saudi Arabia a compelling destination for this next phase of growth.

Over the past decade, EVA Pharma maintained a presence in Saudi Arabia through local distributors and a limited product portfolio. However, this new initiative reflects a deepened commitment to the region. The company is investing over 450 million SAR (approximately $150 million) to construct a cutting-edge manufacturing and research complex comprising five facilities and a research center at heart. This investment underscores EVA Pharma’s alignment with Saudi Arabia’s localization goals, aiming to enhance local production capacity, address healthcare supply chain resilience, and expand access to affordable, high-quality medicines.

Saudi Arabia’s robust and supportive ecosystem has been instrumental in facilitating this expansion. Key government entities, including the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Investment, the Saudi Industrial Development Fund (SIDF), and the Local Content and Government Procurement Authority (LCGPA), have provided strategic guidance and seamless collaboration. Fast-tracked product registration through the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) and transparent procurement strategies from the National Unified Procurement Company (NUPCO)

have further streamlined operations, enabling EVA Pharma to align its plans with the Kingdom’s healthcare objectives.

Currently, EVA Pharma markets 30 registered products in Saudi Arabia. The company aims to expand this portfolio to 50 products in 2025 and envisions treating over 1 million patients annually in the region by 2030. This ambitious roadmap reflects EVA Pharma’s broader mission to make healthcare more accessible while contributing meaningfully to Saudi Arabia’s evolving healthcare landscape. By investing in innovative solutions and building a lasting presence, EVA Pharma is poised to play a central role in the Kingdom’s drive toward a more advanced and sustainable healthcare system.

What are the objectives and focus areas of EVA Pharma’s new manufacturing complex in Saudi Arabia?

EVA Pharma’s new manufacturing complex in Saudi Arabia represents a transformative step in its expansion strategy, reflecting the company’s long-term commitment to the region and its vision to address a broad spectrum of healthcare needs. Spanning an extensive 50,000 square meters, the site will feature five specialized units, each designed to meet critical production priorities across the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors.

The first unit will focus on solid dosage forms, including tablets and capsules, which are indispensable for treatments such as anti-diabetic medications. Ensuring a reliable, localized supply of these essential products is a foundational aspect of the facility’s mission. Complementing this, the second unit will cater to high-potency drugs, concentrating on therapeutic areas like oncology, immunology, and rheumatoid arthritis—fields where localized manufacturing can significantly improve patient access to advanced and often life-saving therapies.

The third unit will be dedicated to sterile products, addressing critical healthcare needs with high-quality manufacturing standards for injectable and other sterile formulations.

The fourth unit will focus on the production of vaccines for both animals and humans, reflecting the increasing importance of localized vaccine manufacturing for global health security. By fostering strategic partnerships, this unit aims to establish EVA Pharma as a key contributor to vaccine production and distribution, ensuring access to life-saving immunizations.

The final unit is dedicated to personal care and cosmetics, with an emphasis on catering to the unique needs of women. By expanding its capabilities into this growing sector, EVA Pharma aims to

support personal well-being and self-care through innovative product offerings.

This multifaceted facility not only strengthens EVA Pharma’s manufacturing capabilities but also aligns seamlessly with Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 objectives. By addressing diverse healthcare needs through localized production and fostering innovation across multiple domains, EVA Pharma is poised to play a pivotal role in advancing healthcare accessibility and resilience in the region.

How does EVA Pharma plan to contribute to vaccine production and align with Saudi Arabia’s healthcare transformation goals?

EVA Pharma is strategically positioning itself to support Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 and its national biotech strategy, particularly in the critical area of vaccine production. Recognizing a global shortfall in vaccine manufacturing capacity, the company is investing in readiness to localize vaccine production and foster strategic partnerships that align with the Kingdom’s ambitious healthcare transformation.

The company’s approach is rooted in the belief that success arises when preparation meets opportunity. While a formal technology transfer agreement with a major pharmaceutical company has yet to materialize, EVA Pharma is actively building the infrastructure and expertise needed to attract such collaborations. This proactive investment reflects both its commitment to innovation and its alignment with Saudi Arabia’s priorities for localizing healthcare production.

EVA Pharma’s experience in vaccine development began as part of the consortium developing EgyVax, a COVID-19 vaccine. Although the project progressed through initial clinical trials, it was ultimately discontinued as the pandemic waned. Despite this, the initiative provided valuable lessons that have informed the company’s ongoing efforts. Currently, EVA Pharma is focusing on producing vaccines for animal health as a foundational step toward future human vaccine production.

Collaborations have been a cornerstone of EVA Pharma’s success in transforming patient care. How are you leveraging this approach to support Saudi Arabia’s healthcare aspirations?

At EVA Pharma, we believe that strategic collaborations are key to driving meaningful impact. Last December, we forged five strategic agreements with local and international partners to localize and

enhance pharmaceutical manufacturing and supply in Saudi Arabia.

Our partnership with Salehiya focuses on expanding access to innovative human and veterinary medicines, while our collaboration with Batterjee aims to localize advanced pharmaceutical production. With Tamer Healthcare, we are working to accelerate patient access to medicines, ensuring timely care.

Additionally, we are investing in infrastructure with our construction partner Karma Emaar Contracting for our new industrial complex in Sudair and partnering with Olystic to streamline logistics and ensure the efficient delivery of high-quality medicines. These collaborations align with Vision 2030 by fostering innovation, enhancing accessibility, and building a sustainable healthcare ecosystem.

Why should global decision-makers and companies consider partnering with EVA Pharma?

EVA Pharma has positioned itself as a partner of choice for organizations that are committed to translating vision into impactful action, particularly in addressing the healthcare needs of underserved regions as across Africa and the Middle East. In these areas, patients face significant gaps in access to innovative treatments, many of which are developed in Europe and the United States. EVA Pharma bridges this gap by combining global standards with deep regional expertise.

The company’s operations are rooted in rigorous Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the highest levels of quality, and a robust code of conduct. This alignment ensures that EVA Pharma meets the expectations of its international partners while also leveraging its intimate understanding of local healthcare challenges and opportunities.

At the heart of EVA Pharma’s success is its team of highly educated and passionate professionals who are driven by a mission to serve their communities and improve lives. This combination of global alignment, local insight, and an unwavering focus on patients positions EVA Pharma as an invaluable collaborator for companies seeking to expand their reach and deliver innovative, life-changing treatments to those who need them most.

What is EVA Pharma’s approach to building a new team in Saudi Arabia, and how does it align with your values and vision?

Building a strong and cohesive top team is at the core of EVA Pharma’s strategy in Saudi Arabia, as no meaningful progress can be achieved without the right people. Guided by the principle that “together, everyone achieves more,” this philosophy has shaped my approach throughout my career and continues to inspire our efforts here. Saudi Arabia has an impressive pool of young, enthusiastic talent, particularly among women, whose passion and dedication to healthcare have been remarkable. My first hire in Saudi was a young woman whose energy and professionalism left a lasting impression, setting a high standard for our team.

Our current team consists of a diverse blend of backgrounds and experiences, combining local market knowledge with expertise developed over years in the field. This balanced approach ensures that we align with Saudization goals, nurturing local talent while leveraging a mix of perspectives and skills.

Looking ahead, our upcoming manufacturing facility, slated for completion in 2027, will create 800 jobs, predominantly for Saudi nationals and a 53% of the jobs to be fulfilled by women. Our team, currently comprising 50 to 60 members, is set to grow to 100 within the next two years. And I am proud to say that we are planning ahead through offering annual internship programs to the kingdom’s most talented pharma students, who are very well equipped to join our future team. We are deeply committed to nurturing talent from within, offering comprehensive learning and development programs through platforms like Coursera and LinkedIn, as well as tailored talent management initiatives. This investment in education and growth fosters a vibrant, collaborative work environment that keeps the entire team motivated and forward-thinking.

With three decades of experience in the industry, I remain excited about the future, inspired by the dynamic and positive atmosphere within our team. By cultivating talent, expanding opportunities, and fostering a shared vision, we are building not just a workforce but a community dedicated to transforming healthcare in Saudi Arabia.

What are your strategic goals for EVA Pharma in Saudi Arabia over the next few years, and how do you plan to achieve them?

My vision for EVA Pharma’s growth in Saudi Arabia is built on ambitious yet attainable goals, underpinned by a commitment to align corporate growth with meaningful social impact.

To achieve this, it is essential to foster a mindset of shared growth within the organization. I consistently emphasize to my team that as we expand the business, we create opportunities for

individual and collective development. This philosophy has guided me throughout my career, and I believe it is fundamental to achieving long-term success. Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 and the openness of the kingdom provide an exceptional platform to align our aspirations with the nation’s transformative healthcare goals.

On a personal level, this journey is also one of reinvention and continuous learning, even after three decades in the industry. Contributing to impactful initiatives, such as the eradication of Hepatitis C and the development of COVID-19 treatments, has shaped my approach and reinforced the importance of adding tangible value. Now, as we focus on Saudi Arabia, I am inspired by the opportunity to play a role in the Kingdom’s healthcare transformation—whether through empowering our team, advancing patient care, or aligning with the broader vision of progress.

By driving financial growth, fostering innovation, and empowering people, I am committed to ensuring EVA Pharma’s position as a vital contributor to the region’s evolving healthcare landscape.

See more interviews