

US' Sequence Design to ramp up Indian operations

Girish Chadha (HindustanTimes.com)
New Delhi, February 19, 2005 | 13:37 IST

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Silicon-based chip-design software company Sequence Design has decided to ramp up its Indian presence and double investment over the next three-four years. The company will bring in over Rs 25 crore and hike its employee base in the country to cater to its growing customer base in Japan and Southeast Asia.

Bullish on the potential of India to emerge as a major development centre for its cutting-edge products, the company is also looking at forging marketing and distribution relationships with Indian partners.

As part of its India-focussed plans, the company has launched a "Made in India" programme that is aimed at fuelling the development of EDA (electronic design

automation) tools from its India centre.

The programme also envisages broad research and educational initiatives with leading engineering institutes in India to conduct joint research in the area of newer power reduction techniques at the chip architectural level and mentor students in leading edge technologies.

"The ramp-up was necessitated as demand for our software is growing in India. So far, most of the top names among our customers transferred the licence for our software from US to India. Now, the Indian unit can deal with local demand and look after customers in Asia-Pacific, Japan, Korea", said Sequence Design Inc president and CEO Vic Kulkarni.

"The India unit will undertake complete ownership and development of key product lines based on our MNC semiconductor clients in India, Japan and Korea. We believe in being close to customers as well as brainpower",

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Kulkarni added.

The company has so far invested about Rs 25 crore in India and has set up a Centre of Excellence since August 2003 at Noida. A typical software that it sells to the top names in the semiconductor industry fetches it \$170,000.

Sequence Design is also scouting for local venture capitalists in India. The company, which was set up after receiving a VC funding to the tune of \$55 million in the US five years ago, is looking at worldwide revenues of \$12-14 million in 2005. It is likely to achieve a break-even by the end of this year and become cash positive from 2006.

Worldwide, the young company has over 100 major customers including the likes of IBM, Toshiba, Motorola, ARM and assists the designers of nanometer systems-on-chips to cut down on time-to-market and costs.

The company was looking at a revenue in the range of \$3-5 million by 2007-08 from its Indian operations and expects the EDA tool market in the country to grow to about \$20-25 million by that time, said Kulkarni.

He said the company is in preliminary discussion with educational institutions like IIT Delhi and Mumbai, besides others, and may also fund Masters and PhD students for research projects in the EDA and related areas.

"India has the potential to do well in areas of chip-design, embedded system and mix-signal devices which can be find utility in automotive and security sectors", said Kulkarni, adding that the company would try to replicate and create a eco-system between the VCs, universities and industry that is in encouraged in Silicon Valley.

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