

An Indian company, a Brazilian company and a British-Russian consortium have bid for a 25 percent stake in Serbia's Galenika pharmaceutical maker which has debts of \$220 million, the Economy Ministry said on Wednesday.

In April the ministry invited strategic partners to invest at least 7 million euros (\$7.7 million) in Galenika, which operates drug manufacturing plants, for at least five years.

In a statement the ministry said Cadila Pharmaceuticals Limited from India, Brazil's EMS S.A. and the consortium of Britain's Frontier Pharma Limited and Russian LLC NPA Petrovax Pharm submitted valid offers.

"The opening of offers will take place on July 29 ... the government will announce the best bidder and it will have 90 days to negotiate (terms) with the first-ranked bidder," it said.

The tender is part of Serbia's efforts to sell, shut or slim down unprofitable state firms under a 1.2 billion euro loan deal with the International Monetary Fund.

Other assets to be sold or shrunk include the RTB Bor copper mine and the Resavica coal mine. In April, Serbia sold its loss-making Zelezara Smederevo steel mill to China's Hebei Iron & Steel Group for 46 million euros.

Under the terms of the Galenika tender, prospective bidders must be companies with 2015 revenues of no less than 50 million euros and assets worth more than 100 million euros.

Bidders are each required to nominate a team of five experts to manage the company.

Of Galenika's \$220 million debt, \$50 million is owed to commercial banks and the rest to the state. A proposed \$8.7 million sale of Galenika to Valeant failed in June 2013.

Source; Reuters