

## Italy seeks tie-ups with Indian biotech, nanotech firms

A 20-member Italian delegation representing biotech and nanotech sectors, under the aegis of the Italian Trade Commission, has offered to tie-up with Indian firms in the sunrise industry for mutual benefit.

'Italian academia and high-tech industry are open to partner with Indian biotech and nanotech firms for promoting cooperation in the knowledge sector and benefiting from each other's domain expertise,' said Italian Trade Commission chief Vittorio Mecozzi.

'Our research institutions, universities and enterprises are willing to transfer know-how built over the years to Indian firms to develop applications and products for domestic and export markets,' Mecozzi told IANS.

Availability of vast talent pool and advantage of cost-effective production in the subcontinent have attracted the Italian academia and high-tech industry to explore joint collaborations with Indian counterparts.

'Our academia and industry have developed cluster models that can be replicated by Indian firms, especially in the small and medium enterprise (SME) segment to promote growth and optimise resources to increase production and achieve operational efficiency,' Mecozzi said Monday on the sidelines of the Italy-India forum to boost economic ties between the two countries in biotechnology and nanotechnology.

Though about 200 Italian biotech firms are engaged in research and development (R and amp;D) activities and generate about five billion euros from product-licensing, the high cost of developing applications has made them scout for Indian firms, which have made their presence in the global market with innovative biotech and agritech products.

'We are looking for entrepreneurial partnership, technology transfer and development of cooperation in the protection of IPRs (Intellectual Property Rights) in biotech and nanotech sectors. With cross-border collaborations and platform technologies, Italian and Indian partners can do business globally by tapping the emerging opportunities,' said Leonardo Santi, president of Italy's national committee for biosafety, biotechnology and life sciences.

If North America (US and Canada) is touted as the hotbed of biotechnology in terms of innovation and market opportunities, [Europe](#) is set to emerge as an attractive region for biotech applications and products by 2010. Not to lag behind, the Asia-Pacific region has witnessed a dramatic growth in developing domain capability and human resource pool.

'In the footsteps of its IT industry growth worldwide, Indian biotech sector as a sunrise industry and nanotech sector as a nascent or emerging sector are developing capabilities to sustain growth momentum and spread tentacles by ramping up exports, making acquisitions in Europe and US and attracting institutional or venture capital for the next leap,' Santi noted.

Biocon, Avesthagen, Shanta Biotech and Strand Genomics are among the leading Indian biotech firms in the forefront of clinical research, drug discovery and product/application development.

In the nanotech sector, Italian firms and research institutions are exploring tie-ups with Indian counterparts for developing a host of applications such as devices and sensors using nano materials, nano tubes and micro electronics.

'About 180 Italian firms and research centres have developed technologies for nano applications and products that can be used in diverse areas such as healthcare, life sciences, instrumentation, consumer appliances and industrial equipment. There is a tremendous scope for collaboration with Indian counterparts to manufacture nano solutions for local and global markets,' said Nanotech IT director Elvio Mantovani.

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