

## Bangalore drives India's biotech sector growth

India's silicon hub [Bangalore](#) dominates not only in IT, but also in biotechnology, accounting for about 60 percent of the country's export pie, an official said here Thursday.

'As a sunrise industry, the biotechnology sector's growth is on track to achieve the target of \$5 billion (Rs.200 billion) by 2010. With about 30 percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) growth, the sector's revenue increased to \$3 billion (Rs.120 billion) for fiscal 2008. About 50 percent (\$1.5 billion) of the total revenue is generated from exports, with Bangalore again driving the growth,' Biotechnology Department Secretary M.K. Bhan said.

In the case of investments, Bangalore accounted for 12 of the 24 biotech firms set up in the last fiscal (FY 2008). Top five biotech firms such as Serum, Biocon, Shantah, Wockhardt and Panacea accounted for a third of the total pie. Revenue from research activities touched \$500 million and from bio-informatics \$200 million.

'Bangalore biotech firms have maintained 35 percent growth rate with upfront investment of \$250 million in last fiscal. As the country's largest cluster, the city boasts of 200 biotech firms,' Bhan told about delegates at Bangalore Bio 2008, a three-day trade exposition being held at the international convention centre on the outskirts of the tech hub.

In the absence of a popular government in Karnataka and the state being in the election mode, the eighth edition of Asia's largest biotech event has been kept low-key. Unlike in the past, many political leaders abstained from the inaugural show.

The event, however, attracted about 150 exhibitors and 650 delegates from 15 countries. About 50,000 visitors are expected to visit the trade show over the next two days.

Inaugurating the event, Nobel laureate Sidney Altman exhorted biotech firms in South East Asia to focus on producing indigenous products for domestic and export markets.

'Institutions and companies should focus on contributing to educational institutes and NGOs, which are responsible for generating about 90 percent of new ideas that are worth commercialisation. These ideas, which eventually become patents in the hands of companies, are generated in academic institutions,' Altman, Sterling professor of molecular, cellular and developmental biology at Yale University in the US, pointed out.

On the relevance of biotechnology to society, Altman said the sector's contribution stood in the top league. For a dollar investment, the sector gave back \$1.25 to the company and 50 cents to society.

'One-fourth of the benefits are ploughed back to society. Two-thirds of the sector's income goes for HR costs and thus it is a major job creator,' he said.

Biocon chairperson and Karnataka Vision Group head Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said the participants should strive for innovations through partnerships at various levels in line with the event's theme - 'Global Partnering'.

'Partnerships are essential for survival and to be competitive. India should become a global hub for

low-cost vaccines,' Shaw asserted.

French ambassador to India Jerome Bonnafont said biotech development was different from any other, as it touched the secrets of life and had ethical aspects.

'India has been addressing these questions with due respect to human life. Dynamism of the biotech sector and its current rapid growth rate are amazing,' the envoy noted.

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