

Maharashtra setting up biopharma and bioagri parks

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What are your plans to attract biotech companies to Maharashtra?

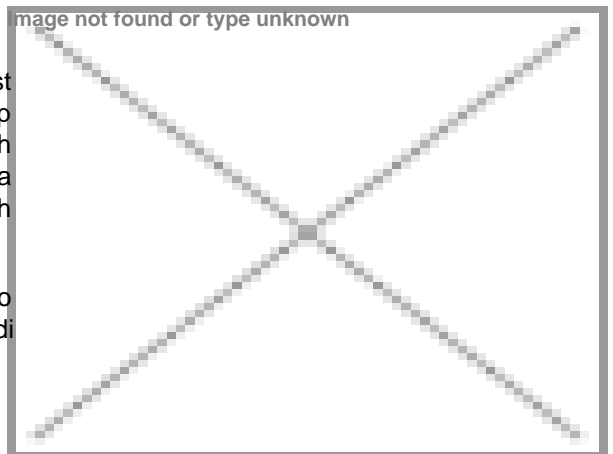
Maharashtra finds itself in a unique position to tap biotechnology, a fast growing industry sector, thanks to the presence of several top international and national pharmaceutical organizations and research centers in the state. The state also has a strong agriculture base. Such a combination should offer tremendous growth opportunities for biotech industries in the state.

To fulfil our goal to provide good quality infrastructure, the MIDC plans to set up two parks – one each for biopharma and bioagri at Hinjawadi and Jalna respectively. The project work has been started.

Could you give more details about the biotech park?

We are developing the pharma biotech park at Hinjawadi which will be spread over 136 acres. The park will focus on attracting organizations from the biopharma sector.

Already four companies – Emcure (12 acres), Shreya Life Sciences (10), USV (10) and Agarkar Group of Institutes – have been allotted land in the park. The Emcure has completed its construction process. Apart from these companies, we are



discussing with big firms like Roche, Nicholas, Intas, Lupin and Glaxo to set up their shop at the park. We are looking at around 25-30 biotech companies at this park. We hope its proximity to the Information Technology Park will attract the bioinformatics sector in a big way to the state.

We have earmarked about 25 acres of land for an academic center to be set up in collaboration with top global institutions. A unique biotech business facilitation center is also being set up at the park to give a real and determined impetus to the growth of the industry.

What steps are you taking to promote the park among potential entrepreneurs?

We have appointed The Charterjee Group (TCG) to promote, develop and market the biotechnology park. The TCG will also work on sourcing investors to set up globally accepted norms such as the good manufacturing practice (GMP) facilities, organize tie-ups with international academic institutions to set up a quality institution within the park, promote tie-ups with multi-lateral agencies and corporates for the development of common infrastructure and to market the park internationally.

The state government has a clear policy about allotting land at the park. We don't want entrepreneurs from other industries to avail the incentives being provided to the biotech industry. We ask the companies to prove their biotech initiatives before allotting the land. The park may lose its purity if we provide land to others.

What are the special features of the bioagri park?

MIDC is also setting up a state-of-the-art complex at Jalna - the seed capital of India - near Aurangabad. We have earmarked 100 acres to develop the park which will provide basic infrastructure facilities. The MIDC will provide land at concessional rate for common research/scientific facilities and for creating an academic center of excellence at the park.

We are also planning to develop residential areas with amenities such as school, hospital, clubhouse, shopping complexes etc. to provide comprehensive industrial and social infrastructure at the park. We are very particular about the quality of operations being taken up at the biotech park. We don't want to compromise on this issue.

Why was the park located in Jalna?

The belt already has the presence of major bioagri companies like Mahyco, Syngenta, Seminis, Monsanto, Mahendra Hybrid Seeds, Nath Seeds, Ajeet Seeds Ltd. These organizations have their production as well as research facilities based there. We are discussing with individuals to set up their shop.

We have signed a memorandum of understanding with Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company (Mahyco) for the development of the biotech park at Jalna. Mahyco has already set up a biotech center at Dawalwadi near Jalna. The Mahyco Research Foundation (MRF) and its promoters will help in the conceptualization, design and implementation of the park. It will also establish a research facility in the park which can be used by other biotech companies.

How do you plan to inculcate entrepreneurship in this area?

We know several rich farmers who are ready to invest and wish to become entrepreneurs. They lack proper education. Our main aim is to educate and guide them in a proper manner so that they can set up units to manufacture bio fertilizers, bio pesticides etc. The process has started at Jalna.

As agriculture continues to be the backbone of India's rural economy. We want to raise the standard of living of people in such areas by helping them to adapt modern technologies. We have taken up programs to educate and bring awareness about the uses of biotechnology to the rural folk. We have been organizing visual presentations, distribution of handouts, road shows, workshops and seminars at village and taluk level to promote the benefits of agri biotechnology. The program has brought in some awareness among the rural community.

Narayan Kulkarni