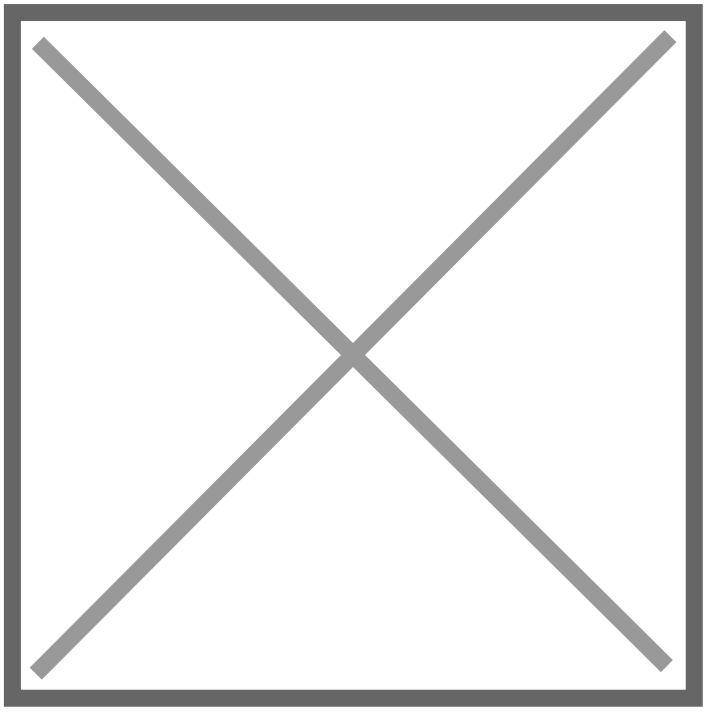
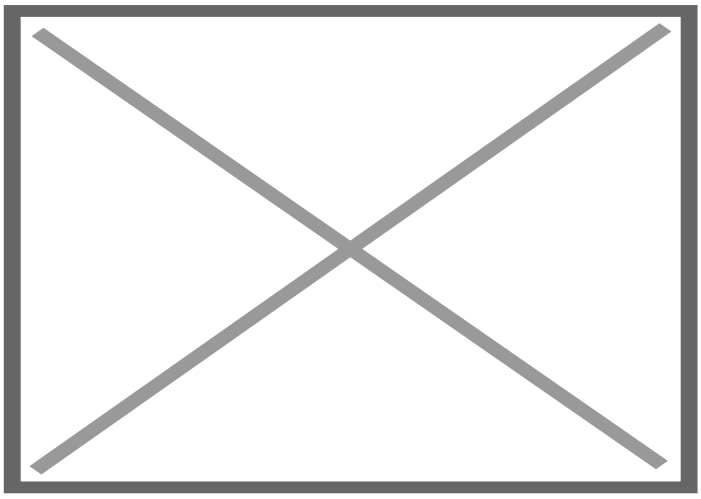
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KBITS workshop highlights Millennium Biotech Policy II

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Dr Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, CMD of Biocon, addresses the gatherings at
the KBITS workshop on Millennium Biotech Policy II

The Karnataka Biotechnology and Information Technology Services (KBITS) and the Association of Biotech Led Enterprises (ABLE) organized a workshop in Bangalore on February 19, 2011. The workshop titled “Millennium Biotech Policy II - An endeavor of the Karnataka government for sustainable growth of the industry” aimed to create awareness on the existing policies, for the development of biotechnology.

Dr Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, CMD of Biocon, who also heads the Vision Group on Biotechnology in Karnataka, inaugurated the workshop. Mr Ashok Kumar Manoli, principal secretary, Department of IT, BT and Science & Technology, Government of Karnataka, and other prominent people from the biotech fraternity were also present at the event.

Speaking on the topic, ‘Sustainable growth of BT industry in this decade’, Dr Mazumdar-Shaw said that the skill and capacity building are vital for biotech growth in India. Commending the government’s effort, by allotting fund worth $200,000 (90 lakh) for establishing Finishing Schools, she opined that with right training, Karnataka can become a major player in biotech sector.

The workshop had three key sessions focusing on fiscal; funding and R&D support; and infrastructure support and HR development for sustainable growth in biotechnology. During the first session, speaking about the incentives and funds available to the biotech industry, Mr Manoli said, “Out of the 100 odd companies in Karnataka, only 34 companies have availed entry tax exemption. Karnataka’s biotech companies have not utilized the policy and its incentives to the full extent.”

Dr KK Narayanan, managing director, Metahelix Life Sciences, who co-chaired the session on ‘Fiscal, funding and R&D support’ was of the opinion that lack of awareness among industrialists was one of the reasons why the policy was not

exploited enough.

Mr N Suresh, group editor, BioSpectrum, who was one of the panelists said that the funding drought needed to be tackled to encourage entrepreneurs and industrialists alike. Mr Divakar Rao, member, Karnataka Vision Group on Biotechnology also shared his thoughts on the topic.

Commenting on the infrastructure support, Mr Vijayshankar, additional managing director, KBITS said, “Bangalore Helix, an outcome of the first biotech policy, hosts many reputed organizations such as Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology (IBAB) and Center for Human Genetics. The second biotech policy will take that growth to the next level.”

Dr Krishnaraj, HoD at Institute of Agri BioTech, said, “The Karnataka government’s efforts on providing funds for instrumentation encourage research initiatives.” Dr Gayatri Saberwal of IBAB, Mr Naveen Kulkarni, MD and CEO, Polyclone Biosciences and Dr Vinay Konaje, founder and director, Navya biotech were among the other panelists who discussed the importance of infrastructure and its impact on growth.

Dr Maulishree Agrahari from PES Institute of Technology, Bangalore; BS Gaurishankar from Siddaganga Institute of Technology, Tumkur; Dr Sarvamangala Patil, Vishweshwaraih College of Applied Sciences, Gulbarga; Dr Nagaveni, Maharani Lakshmi Ammanni College for Women, Bangalore; Prof. T Veerabasappa Gowda, HoD- biotechnology, JSS College of Arts,Commerce & Science, Mysore; and Dr Smitha Hegde, HoD, PG-Department of Biotechnology, St Aloysius College, Mangalore; shared their views on human resource development for the sustainable growth of the industry.

The workshop provided a platform for industrialists, entrepreneurs, academicians and government officials to engage in an open house discussion about the ways and means to improve education, investment and R&D in the field of biotechnology in Karnataka.

Romi R in Bangalore