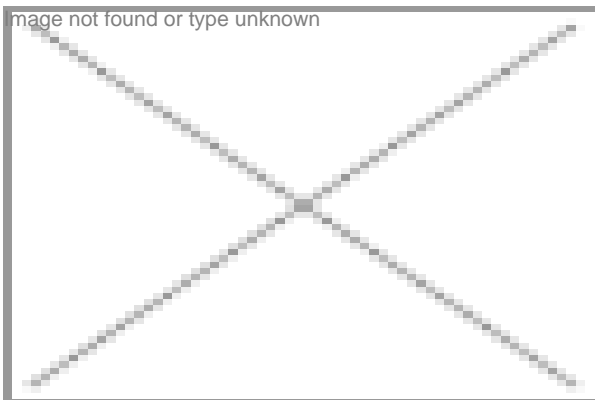


BIO India addresses global BT sector's partnering needs

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Presence of a large number of international BT and pharma firms reveals the intent of global players to partner with Indian companies.



The second annual BIO India International Conference, which was held at the Hyderabad International Convention Center from September 21-22, 2011, came to a conclusion with participants addressing their partnering and networking needs. The two-day event witnessed several biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies from North America, Europe and Asia share a common platform to meet and explore business opportunities with India's biotech sector. The event saw representatives from 80 Indian firms and 40 North America and Europe-based firms.

The event was organized by the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), which represents more than 1,100 biotechnology companies, academic institutions, state biotechnology centers and related organizations across the US and in more than 30 other nations, in association with the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE), India, and also had the support of the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.

The event featured one-on-one partnering, plenary and panel sessions, company presentations and offered its participants exhibiting and networking opportunities. With the help of these sessions, the Bio India Partnering Conference 2011 facilitated the development of partnerships between the global biotech and pharma industry, and Indian partners, who can provide high-

quality contract research, manufacturing and clinical trials support and are looking to partner on discovery and development deals. BIO's one-on-one partnering tool arranged private meetings between investors, large biotech and pharmaceutical companies and emerging Indian biotech companies.

Representatives of global organizations, such as Abbott, Amgen, AstraZeneca, Eli Lilly, Merck, Novartis Pharma, Novo Nordisk, Pfizer, PROOF Center of Excellence, and UK Trade and Investment, were actively scouting for partnerships with Indian biopharma firms. The conference also saw participation from the representatives of law firms such as Cohen & Gresser, and other venture capital companies and research organizations, seeking partnership with Indian companies. Indian companies, such as Biocon, Cellworks Research, Connexios Life Sciences, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, Lupin, Reliance Life Sciences, Strand Life Sciences and Zydus Cadila Healthcare, also shared their organizational vision and their requirement seeking partners. Additionally, the companies were able to capitalize on this unique opportunity that placed their organization in the forefront of a diverse global audience.

Furthermore, the conference included a full schedule of keynote addresses, including that by Mr Glenn Saldanha, chairman and MD, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals and Dr Aaron Schact, executive director, global external R&D, Eli Lilly, on the first day of the event. Day two witnessed keynote address being delivered by Mr Vivek Mohan, MD, Abbott India and Dr Cartikeya Reddy, senior VP and head, biologics, Dr Reddy's Laboratories.

Uncovering thoughts

The event featured three panel discussions that focused on innovation and financing opportunities in global biopharma and also examined the high-profile deal between Pfizer and Biocon. The panel sessions also brought to light the latest issues and trends related to doing business in India. The panel discussions covered topics such as, 'Cross-Cultural Deal Making-Diving into Pfizer-Biocon', 'Beyond Outsourcing – Uncovering Innovation in India', and 'Strategic Roadmap for India: A Discourse Among Global Pharma Executives'.

Mr Viren Mahurkar, executive VP, head of strategic advisory and capital markets, ICICI Securities; and Mr Matthew Walker, VP of operations, specialty and biotechnology operating unit, Pfizer, engaged in a candid discussion on 'Cross-Cultural Deal Making,' moderated by Dr Arun Chandavarkar, COO, Biocon. Panelists shared their view points on different aspects of deal's structure, the collaboration's progress and the dynamics of cross-cultural deal making.

The panel moderated by Mr Glen Giovannetti, global biotechnology leader, Ernst & Young, discussed what is being innovated in India's biotech labs. Dr Mallikarjun Sundaram, president and CEO, Mitra Biotech; Dr Suri Venkatachalam, CEO and managing director, Connexios Life Sciences; Dr Vijay Chandru, CEO, Strand Life Sciences; and Dr Sanuj K Ravindran, managing director, Asian Healthcare Management. The panelists discussed about the approach taken by their firms that continue to come up with the most striking innovations and how India's biotechnology innovation differs from the traditional NME-driven Western innovation.

At the panel on 'Strategic Roadmap for India', Dr Swami Subramaniam, director, external research and licensing for Merck Research Laboratories, Merck & Co; Dr Anand Gautam, sourcing director, Novo Nordisk; Mr Yetunde Taiwo, senior director, emerging markets, Eli Lilly; and Dr Bala Ganesh Tanjore, head of research, VP-discovery, AstraZeneca, India, discussed the long-term intentions of MNCs and spoke about how global organizations could develop mutually beneficial partnerships with the Indian firms and road maps of the MNCs in India. Mr Sri Mosur, CEO, Jubilant Biosys, moderated the panel discussion.

The event highlighted the willingness of the international pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to work with Indian companies and also revealed the interest among the Indian companies to collaborate with global firms. The success of the second edition of the Bio India International Conference has encouraged the organizers to hold the next edition of the event in 2012 as well. Although officially the date of the next Bio India International Partnering Conference is yet to be revealed, it could be expected to be held during the month of September in 2012 again, at Hyderabad.

Need for better reforms

The US Indian Industry Dialogue, a roundtable forum that brings together key representatives from the US and Indian biotechnology industry with US and Indian government observers, met for its second annual meeting at the BIO India International Partnering Conference in Hyderabad to discuss issues of common interest. Organized by BIO and ABLE, the event also saw participation from representatives of the Association of Contract Research Organizations, India; the Indian Society of Clinical Research and members of academia.

The US Indian Industry Dialogue agreed that the lack of clarity and consistency in clinical trials regulations is a significant barrier to R&D commercialization and investment for both innovative and generic medicines in India. Conducting clinical trials is critical for introducing affordable medicines as well as for fostering innovation in developing novel medicines for neglected, chronic and tropical diseases in India. It will also create valuable clinical data for tailoring therapies for the Indian

population. Furthermore, therapeutics, which have been developed in India, are likely to be safer for the Indian population. It was decided to jointly develop a white paper that outlines areas of concern as well as recommend measures to ease the difficulties faced by the industry to promote innovation.

— **Saptarshi Chaudhuri** in Hyderabad