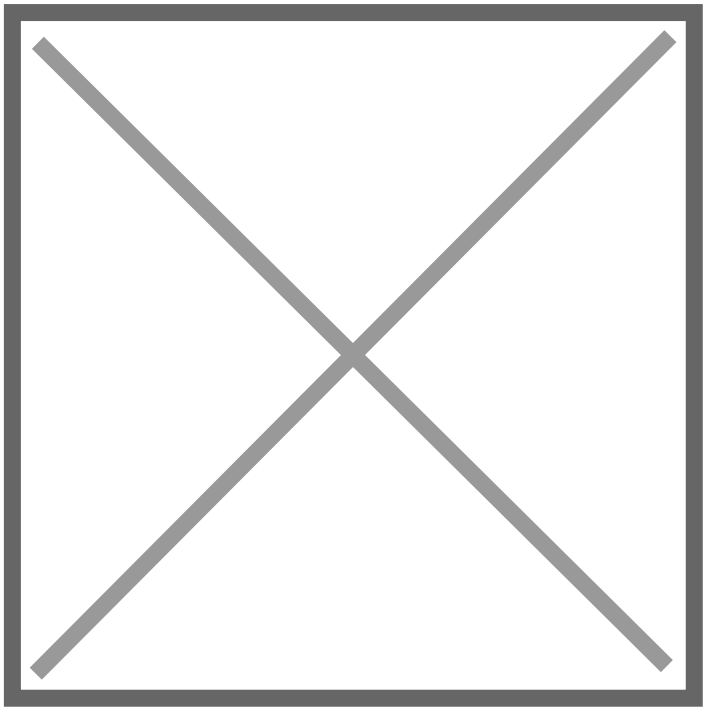
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Maharashtra : Need for Acceleration

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BT Parks - West

Maharashtra : Need for Acceleration

Unlike its neighbouring state, Gujarat, developments of Maharashtra's Bt parks has been moving at a slower pace

Setting up of Biotechnology Parks which comes under the Maharashtra Biotechnology policy 2001 is an attempt by the state government to develop adequate infrastructural facilities to augment the biotechnology industry within the state (The biotech policy of the state is in the process of getting revised).

The idea again is not just to set up infrastructural facilities but also to attract more players- domestic as well as international companies to the state.

Maharahstra has set up two large scale Bt Parks namely the International Biotech Park at Hinjawadi, Pune and the Agri-Biotechnology Park at Jalna.

International Biotech Park, Hinjawadi, Pune

The park is a joint venture between Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and The TCG real estate. TCG has an 88 per cent stake in this park while MIDC holds the remaining 12 per cent. It is spread over 136 acres of land and located on the Mumbai-Pune Highway which is 5 kms from Pune. At present, land in this park has been allotted to Emcure Pharmaceuticals, Centaur Pharma, Phyto Actives Pvt Ltd, Hikal Pharma, Novartis(India) Ltd, Hikal Technologies, Chembiotek Research, Kard Scientific and Advantium (Research service organisation). Venketeshwar Hacteries Ltd and Shreya Biotech presently have their units under construction while production has already kickstarted for Emcure Biotech and Emcure Pharmaceuticals . This park will have an incubation centre,multi tenant campus , built to suit facilities, bioinformatics, education and training, clinical research.

Investment for this park is slated to take place in three phases and as of now TCG has completed one phase in terms of infrastructure development and access to basic amenities. Says a TCG source, " The main advantage of this park is that it is close to the Mumbai-Pune express highway, it is located in a the knowledge capita of Pune,where we have a lot of IT companies located within that area, there is institutional connectivity both academic and industry and lastly physical infrastructure."

The park offers to allot plots for research centers, pilot plants as per the requirements of the tenants. "Here there is no manufacturing facilities to be allowed. The government has allotted strict guidelines as to the activities that are to be followed

by the tenants for which they have appointed two agencies. Companies applying and their activities will have to go through those agents and once these agencies give the green signal we can lease out land to them," says Prasanta Biswal, CEO, International Biotech Park, and TCG.

The total cost of investment was initially estimated to be Rs 215 crore. "We thought that companies coming in would put in their own investments but then we saw that demand for space goes up and at the same time small companies cannot put in all their investment in a building since they have to invest in equipment which is equally important. So now we have already Rs 100 crore now. We are at the fag end of phase one and we are thinking of innovative ways of financing and building facilities," adds Biswal.

Absolute Confirguration for the park includes:

- Plotted Development - Land
- Genesis Square Ã¢â?¬â?? multi tenant campus for bio-science labs
- Chrysalis Enclave Ã¢â?¬â?? built to suit campus for research labs from "bench to the bed side"
- Bio Resource Centre Ã¢â?¬â?? shared facilities, incubation with business assistance(not yet operational)
- Social Infrastructure and Services

There is also an incubation center which is coming up. each laboratories of 1000 sqaure feet. "Since 32 acres of this portion of the park is awaiting for notification, there was a delay. We have an MoU with different clients and once we have the notification we can go ahead with the building of labs and multi tenant buildings," adds Biswal.

Agri Biotechnology Park, Jalna

The Agri Biotechnology Park is another initiative of MIDC to boast up the Bio-agricultureindustry in Maharashtra. Located at Jalna (near Aurangabad), the seed capital of Maharashtra, the total land earmarked initially was around 153 acres now it is 124 acres. Work for this park commenced in 2003-2004.

The park will be declared as an industrial township and the major thrust areas of the park will be gene discovery, bioremediation, fermentation technology, post harvest technology, bioinformatics and diagnostics. Major units in the park includes names in the industry like Mahyco Research Foundation(Research), Balaji Bio-Fertilizer (Bt Cotton Seeds, Bt Grain Seeds), Nirmal Seeds (Seed processing), Krishidhan Seeds Ltd, (Hybrid Seeds), Sharda Biotech (Hybrid Seeds, Bio-degradable fertilizers), Mohodaya Hybrid Seeds (Seed processing), Jindal Agri Tech Company (Research production of hybrid seeds) and Desigen Diagnostics (Biotech equipments). An MoU has been signed with Mahyco Research Foundation (MRF) to design and conceptualize the park. MRF will also develop its research facility within the park.

The MIDC has given a number of incentives and benefits which includes 100 per cent stamp study exemption, agricultural biotechnology companies will be given power at an agricultural rate , exempted from paying electricity duty, captive power generation will be permitted, capital subsidy for small scale Bt units, refund of Octroi and similar levies, twice the admissible FSI for BT units.

However unlike its counterpart in Pune, this park has not picking up in the way it was planned by the institutional authorities. "A lot of people have purchased the land but have not developed it," says a source. Moreover industry experts also point out that unlike purely biotech industries, agriculture is not a promising growth area. In fact a leading promoter confides, "We were approached by MIDC to be involved in this agri-biotech park, But it is too much of a risk to undertake."