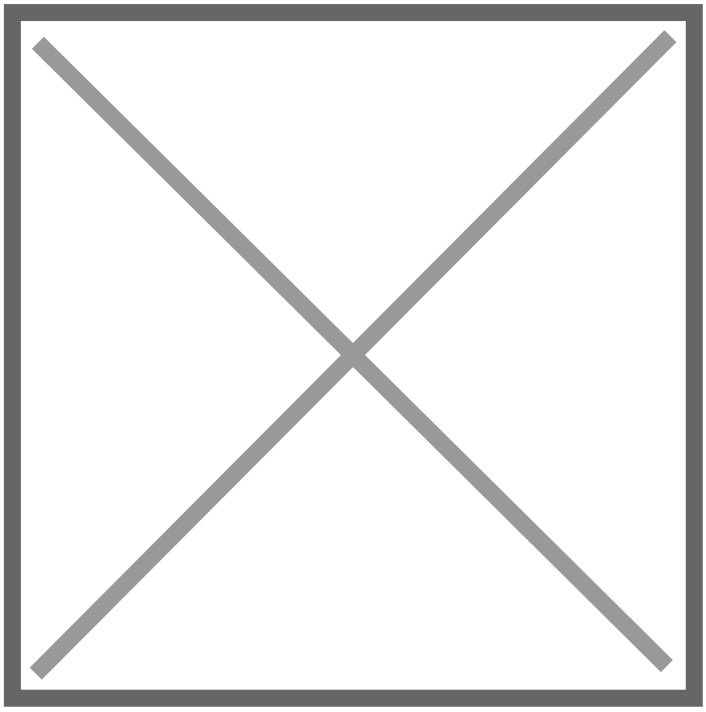
BioSpect
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

India, UK step up biotech links

04 January 2011 | News



The life sciences industry leaders from both India and UK came together in London in early December to strengthen the business ties between the nations in this sector

A delegation of biotech industry leaders from India traveled to the UK to meet with their counterparts to renew and forge new ties for a week in December. The Indian delegation's visit to London was facilitated by the government agency, UK Trade & Investment (UKTI).

The Indian delegation included Dr Satya Dash, COO of ABLE, Dr Anand Anandkumar of Cellworks Research India, Mr Durga Prasad of DSKS Pharma, Mr D A Prasanna and Ms Nazneen Maji from Ecron Acunova, Mr Ponarul Palanisamy from GVK Biosciences, Dr Harish Sharma from ICBio Clinical Research, Ms Sapna Bansi Raj from Molecular Connections and *BioSpectrum* Group Editor, Mr Narayanan Suresh. The delegation met several companies in London and also visited the Manchester Science Park in Manchester.

The highlight of the visit was the full day Genesis conference in London on December 9. The 10th edition of this conference, billed as one of the largest life sciences networking event, had over 700 delegates from over a dozen countries.

On the last day of the program, there were more business meetings at BBE, the Business Exchange for the Life Sciences at the Westminister Conference Center. This occasion resulted in a large number of one-to-one meetings between Indian and UK bioscience companies.

During the interactions in the UK, it was clear that companies in Europe are looking at increasing their collaborations with industries in India and China. Many industry leaders pointed out that life sciences industry in the West was in a state of flux. The total job cuts announced by the industry's leading companies in the west in 2010 alone accounted for more than 45,000. "The industry here is on a cost cutting spree. However, the research and development work has to go on. So, the jobs will shift to India and other nations, to enable these companies to maintain their competitive edge," said a speaker at the Genesis conference.

Many interesting statistics too came out. For instance, it was pointed out that GSK spends over 50 percent of its annual research funds outside the home base in the UK. Merck spends more than a quarter of its research expenses in Asia. At the same time, UK's industry and research leaders highlighted the advantages the country has in biosciences. UK has the second largest biotech industry after the US, and experienced scientists to do range of drug discovery work, excellent infrastructure in public institutions and universities, a congenial work climate and simplified business practices.

The visit certainly opened the eyes of Indian entrepreneurs to the opportunities for strategic collaboration with their UK counterparts. Many formal agreements can be expected in 2011.

ABLE, BIA tie up for business exchanges

During the BBE meet, the Business Exchange for the Life Sciences in London on December 10, 2010, two leading biotech industries from India and UK came together on a single platform to increase the partnership in this sector between the two countries.

Bangalore-based Association of Biotechnology-Led Enterprises (ABLE) and the BioIndustry Association (BIA), London signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on this. ABLE chief operating officer, Dr Satya Dash, and BIA's Chief Executive, Mr Nigel Gaymond inked the memorandum in the presence business delegates from both the countries.

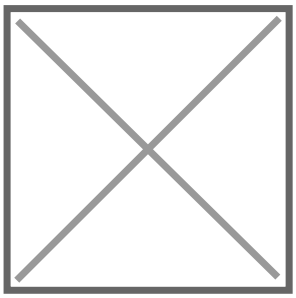
"The MOU is a significant step towards greater links between the bioscience industry in the UK and India and brings together two leading global locations for biotech," said Dr Dash on the occasion.

"We believe the partnership will encourage more interactions between bioscience companies in the UK and India and expand the opportunities for our members to collaborate with Indian bioscience companies," said Mr Gaymond.

Founded in 1989, BIA has over 250 member companies. ABLE, set up in 2001, has nearly 300 members in India.

Narayanan Suresh in London

'India ranks 4th in the number of projects for UKTI'



Mr Andrew Levi, director for Investment at UK Trade & Investment (UKTI), is responsible for inward investments to United Kingdom from 33 world markets. With a global network of teams and about half-a-billion-dollars in operating budget his team goes about building sector focussed win-win partnerships. On a recent trip to Hyderabad, in a freewheeling interview with *BioSpectrum*, he shares his thoughts on the growing importance of India for UK as a partner country. Some excerpts:

Q In your scope of 33 countries, how do you rank or rate the Asian countries in order of importance for UK?

It depends on how you measure it. There is no one measure everyone agrees on. The position of the countries will change depending on the perspective that you take—for example, it could be investments, number of projects, jobs created or capital inflow—which can be quite volatile. Usually, the US is always the biggest by multiples. Germany and Japan follow next. If I were to take an average, I would say that investment flow from India brings it in the top 15 countries for the UK. The strongest figure from India has come for the last year. By the number of projects India's position was fourth in March 2010. Other important economies are China, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and Australia.

Q What is the life sciences share in total inward investment for UKTI in 2010?

Life sciences share in the total number of projects is a little over 10 percent. In 2009-10, the overall number of projects in the life sciences sector was 173 creating 8,492 jobs, up from 140 projects in 2008-09 creating 4,692 jobs. India continues to remain a high importance country for UKTI. It is an emerging economic power. There is potential for inward investment growth across all sectors from India. Currently, with 92 projects across sectors, India accounts for just about six percent of the total number of projects. For UKTI, this is a significant six percent. I wouldn't have been able to say this five years ago or even two years ago. In the last two years, there has been a lot coming from India to UK across industry segments.

Q What is the value proposition that UK offers over other comparable choices?

The investment decisions are not driven by the macro economic perspectives, these are taken by companies and individuals. It depends on what the project/business is seeking. You may seek a particular market. UK is the fifth largest economy in the world and the size of life sciences market is about $50 billion-a-year. You may be looking for a location from where you can grow your business, globally. So, you may want a location that has great connections – be it in terms of infrastructure, travel, education or financial markets.

Many life sciences companies would be interested in the strength of the research base in the UK. Some would find it a great proposition for a clinical study to speed up drug approvals. There are also subtle drivers such as political, cultural and commercial links with the markets that may interest you. India-UK links are very strong and work out to be a great proposition for Indian businesses.

Nandita Singh in Hyderabad