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ASIA EDITION

AI, Talent And Cross Domain Innovation Are Redefining Biomanufacturing In Asia Pacific

March 13, 2026 | News | By Ankit Kankar | ankit.kankar@mmactiv.com

Richard Yang of Sinovation Ventures explains how returning scientific talent, AI driven discovery, and entrepreneurial leadership are shaping the next phase of life sciences innovation across APAC.



At the **APAC Biomanufacturing Leadership Summit 2026 in Singapore, organised by Charles River, BioSpectrum Asia spoke with Richard Yang, Managing Partner at Sinovation Ventures.** With investment interests spanning emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, and life sciences innovation, Yang provides a venture capital perspective on how Asia Pacific's biomanufacturing ecosystem is evolving. In this conversation, he discusses the return of globally trained scientific talent to Asia, the growing convergence between biotechnology, AI, and robotics, and why entrepreneurial leadership will be critical for translating scientific breakthroughs into scalable life sciences companies.

Q: You operate at the intersection of venture investment, emerging technologies, and life sciences innovation across Asia. What excites you most about the biomanufacturing and life sciences landscape in APAC today?

One of the most exciting developments is the strength of talent emerging across Asia. Over the past two to three decades, many Asian scientists pursued advanced education and research opportunities in the United States and Europe. Today, we are seeing a significant number of them returning to Asia and contributing to the regional innovation ecosystem.

Another important trend is the growing convergence of disciplines. Professionals with expertise in robotics, artificial intelligence, and advanced engineering are increasingly entering the biological sciences space.

Perhaps most importantly, the mindset within the life sciences community is evolving. In the past, many researchers hoped to develop a single therapy over the course of their careers. Today, with the support of technologies such as AI and robotics, biology is increasingly viewed as an advanced engineering discipline. Scientists and technologists are now working together to orchestrate knowledge across multiple domains to accelerate innovation.

Q: How important is technology convergence, particularly the integration of artificial intelligence, for the future of biomanufacturing?

Artificial intelligence will become one of the core backbones of biotechnology.

AI is currently the most powerful tool we have to organise knowledge and generate insights from complex datasets. When applied to fields such as biology and chemistry, which are fundamentally grounded in physics and mathematics, AI dramatically enhances our ability to understand biological systems.

Across the industry we are already seeing the integration of AI driven robotics platforms in laboratories and manufacturing environments. Companies such as Charles River and many others are rapidly adopting these technologies. I believe this trend will continue to accelerate over the next twenty years and will fundamentally reshape how biotechnology research and manufacturing are conducted.

Q: From an investor's perspective, what qualities do you look for when evaluating life sciences companies?

Building a company is very different from conducting scientific research.

In natural science, the objective is exploration. Scientists maintain an open mindset and do not assume the outcome in advance. However, building a company requires a different approach. It involves organising people, resources, and expertise to produce predictable results for clients, partners, and stakeholders.

What we look for most is a leadership mindset that can organise diverse teams and enable people from different disciplines to collaborate effectively. Successful founders are able to combine scientific understanding with operational discipline and entrepreneurial thinking.

Ultimately, entrepreneurship becomes the key factor that determines whether excellent science can evolve into a successful company.

Q: What role do regional platforms such as the APAC Biomanufacturing Leadership Summit play in strengthening the ecosystem?

Asia Pacific is rapidly advancing in both biomanufacturing and biological research, particularly in emerging therapeutic modalities.

Events like this summit are important because they create opportunities for leaders from across the global industry to exchange ideas and build partnerships. Singapore and Southeast Asia also benefit from a degree of geopolitical neutrality, which makes the region an ideal environment for open dialogue and collaboration.

Another important development is that biomanufacturing used to be a highly specialised field involving primarily industry professionals and academic researchers. Today, with the rise of AI, robotics, and advanced technologies, a broader group of stakeholders including investors and technology innovators are becoming actively involved.

Forums like the APAC Biomanufacturing Leadership Summit help bring these diverse perspectives together and accelerate the development of the broader ecosystem.
