

BioTaiwan 2014: Business and biotech evolves

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As is true to the nature of this island state, its annual biotech event - [BioTaiwan 2014](#) too, left no stone unturned in welcoming the global biopharmaceutical industry with innocuous excitement.

Over a period of four days in July 2014, Taiwan's biotech sector had planned to unleash innovations and strategies that would awe the visitors. They aspired to woo global giants by promoting Taiwan's potential and its success stories, in a bid that would eventually help the state's biomedical industry reach the \$500 billion mark by 2020.

Hosted at the Taipei World Trade Center, the exhibition and a string of conferences and sessions were [inaugurated on July 24](#) by Taiwan's Vice President, Mr Wu Den-yih. He emphasized, "Taiwan's local biotechnology sector is expected to become the next big driver of Taiwan's industrial development. This has been a great year for our biotech sector. A total of 159 new products from 70 firms were approved as of March, with the total sector value reaching US\$30 billion (NT\$900 billion). I strongly believe that this event will help boost industry output to over a trillion New Taiwan dollars."

Biotechnology driving Taiwan's economy

The resounding word at the opening of the exhibition revolved around how biotechnology had become one of the key drivers of Taiwan's national economy. "Over the years, this event has contributed in the development of Taiwan's biotechnology, helped in rapid expansion of its capital market and has easily outpaced the rest of the world. This year, the focus is rightly on accentuating the importance of Taiwan in the global biopharma industry chain," the Taiwan Bio Industry Organization pointed out at the inauguration.

With this in mind, through the four days, over 700 domestic and international companies displayed their products and services in an exhibition space encompassing 1,200 stalls.

The trade show and exhibition organized by Taiwan Bio Industry Organization under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Affairs' Industrial Development Bureau invited leaders from BIO Association of Japan (JBA), Hong Kong (HK BIO), Singapore (BioSingapore), India (Association of Biotech-led Enterprises and Bangalore BIO) and Australia (Austrade in Taiwan).

Amongst the main sections of the industry that were covered at the exhibition, some were food, agricultural, medical,

pharmaceutical and cosmetic. Further, industrial equipment industries biotechnology, tools and instruments, as well as the materials and reagents needed for scientific research and in the analytical laboratories, R&D, the latest achievements of genetic engineering products and full range of services in the field of biomedicine, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, traditional Chinese medicine were showcased.

Taiwan's Biotechnology Industry Theme pavilion too reached maximum participants and drew audiences with its agenda, 'flagship biotech, towards internationalization.'

The business and networking opportunities however were not limited to only the sprawling exhibition. It featured two tracks for business-to-business partnering categorized under pharma and medical devices. The event's main theme this year revolved around two key points. "We aspire to enlarge the comprehensive development of biotech and greet brand-new opportunities of medical globalization. With this agenda, the Nangang Exhibition Hall will host a myriad of products and technologies, an elaborate matchmaking session, pointed seminars and workshops and a job fair. A white paper on 2014's biotech industry highlighting the results of related government promotion measures was also launched," the organizers added.

China's front door - Taiwan

The industry this year employed a new strategy too. Taiwan led its main sessions with a priority on looking for opportunities in China. The state's local industry opined that they see themselves as one of the most significant 'front doors' to the Chinese market. Further adding that this is why companies looking to do business in China could logically think about using Taiwan as the first stage in that wider China strategy.

"Taiwan's biotech industry is a well carved out miracle. It has now been presented with the opportunity to become second only to the US and a large biotech powerhouse," Mr Den-yih explained to industry leaders.

The event broke its own earlier records by witnessing footfalls of over 10 million. "This is the first time in five years we are able to bring in China-Taiwan Cross-Strait Summit as part of BIO Taiwan events," Dr Johnsee Lee, President, Taiwan BIO and Chairman, Development Center for Biotechnology said during the event.

The highlight of the event was the year's new offering - a roundtable conference on Greater China Bio/Pharma opportunity. The invitation-only roundtable discussion for government officials from both sides, focused on the industry policies, business strategies, partnering models and opportunities on biotech, pharma, diagnostics and biomaterial sectors in China and Taiwan.

The event had 11 countries participating, including West Africa, India, Japan, China, Korea, New Zealand and Australia amongst others. It had companies from France, USA, UK, India, Singapore, Pakistan, Japan and a number of big players from the Chinese mainland.

At a parallel seminar hall, IRPMNA, Taiwan BIO along with delegations from several countries brainstormed about how to leverage MNC's resources for advancing Taiwan's biotech and pharmaceutical industry. Although the public and media did not get to hear pointers from the closed door discussion, the organizers hinted that successful sessions brought out several ideas on how the pie could be made bigger, for both MNCs and local stakeholders.

Taiwan moving towards trillion mark

Dr Johnsee Lee, BioTaiwan Organizing Committee Chairman explained that the market value of the local industry has reached 900 B TWD (30 B USD) and will soon approach its first trillion TWD as Taiwan slowly becomes an integral part of the global biopharma industry chain. "The government's initiatives to support Taiwan's biotech development and innovation are critical for the strong growth momentum."

Officials explained at one of the public seminars held around a lunch gathering, "There are notable increases in late-stage clinical trials, company investment in R&D and manufacturing capacity, international partnerships and market expansion. The licensing deals have once again exceeded the past."

Further, with the addition of big players like Quintiles, Johnson & Johnson, DePuySynthes, BioCentury, King biotechnology company, Zhejiang Medicine Company, Qisda Corporation, Shanghai CITIC - alongside the Industrial Development Bureau, Ministry of Economic Affairs Secretary and China Biotechnology Development Director of the Centre best business opportunities in the biotechnology industry remained the main focus.

Asia's bio-business economy

For the Asian participants, the BioBusiness Asia conference, organized by state-sponsored Industrial Technology Research Institute was the highlight of the first two days of the event. This special conference had representatives from some major international firms, who for the first time, spilt out the real tricks of the trade.

The event's keynote speaker, Mr David Flores, the Co-Founder and President & CEO of BioCentury Publications along with the fiery duo on the panel - Mr Carl Firth, CEO of Singapore's ASLAN Pharmaceuticals and Mr Ross Horsburgh, senior vice president of research outfit Quintiles broke down the trends that are currently in the limelight. They further revealed each of their development strategies.

Mr Flores shared his experience and insights on the current opportunities in the global biotech industry and pointed out how Taiwan could seize these growth opportunities. He cited examples of the industry leaders who have recognized Taiwan's rapid growth and advanced in the biotech market.

The conference also featured three power packed talks designed specifically to be - by the industry and for the industry. Dr Guo Yajun, who owns a lab that focuses on experimental cancer immunotherapy and immunogenetherapy, Mr Jiang Xiaoyueh, chairman of Zhejiang Medicine, Dr Zou Xueming, chairman of Alltech Medical System, and Mr Zhang Huawei, chairman of Wego Group all shared their perspective of growth.

Brightest points of the event

â€¢ Mindo EEG cap

Developed by the Cross-brain research center, the product drew maximum audience eye balls, with even top CEOs of companies and government officials trying it out. The product entered the event with an estimated \$30 billion in business opportunities. Its creators claim that it will be useful in the fields of medicine, education, entertainment and criminal investigation.

â€¢ TLC198

Local anesthetic liposomal R&D in Taiwan

â€¢ Wafer inspection technology

Hualian Biotech Research and development of Wafer inspection technology that can detect 350 kinds of genetic diseases