

Biotech industry needs \$4 bn per year to develop infra: experts

BS REPORTER

Ahmedabad, 5 December

With an eye on touching \$100 billion in revenues by 2025, the biotechnology sector in the country would need at least \$3-4 billion of investment every year for the next five years, feel industry experts here.

In 2012, the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) had laid out a goal for the growing biotechnology sector in the country to touch \$ 100 billion by 2025, as the industry had generated a compounded annual growth rate of around 20 per cent for nearly a decade. "ABLE had reasoned that if the government took steps to improve the business environment and worked with industry and academia to make a unified effort to capitalise on the nation's strengths in biotechnology, the industry could accelerate its average growth rate to about 30 per cent, and reach \$100 billion by 2025," said Anil Chauhan, director, ABLE.

The average growth rate at the moment is around 17-18 per cent, he added. "The government needs to invest in

creating infrastructure especially for start-ups in this sector, like common research facilities, apart from creating an enabling regulatory environment," Chauhan claimed.

The Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) and ABLE has come up with a white paper, "Accelerating Growth: Forging India's Bioeconomy," which aims at analysing the industry in India and make policy recommendations etc.

It notes, "Though the industry is concentrated in Bangalore and Hyderabad, it extends across the country and includes more than 350 companies

working not only in the area of vaccines and biopharmaceuticals, but also agricultural biotechnology, industrial biotechnology, bioservices, and bioinformatics."

The overall biotechnology sector in the country is around \$ 4.5 billion at the moment, of which around 60 per cent is the share of pharma companies.

K Vijayaraghavan, chairman, Sathguru Management Consultants, which works in the area of biotechnology, said that "One of the most promis-



K Vijayaraghavan, chairman, Sathguru Management Consultants (Left) and Anil Chauhan, director, Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) in city on Friday. The experts spoke about the roadmap for the biotechnology industry in country.

Photo: YASIN D

ing areas here is the field of vaccines based on biologics. At least 15 vaccine candidates are being developed at the moment in India and each has a potential of being a \$ 1 billion product."

What's more these vaccines are much more affordable compared to the conventional vaccines. Let's take for

example the pneumonia vaccine, as Vijayaraghavan claims, "Compared to an average Rs 4,000 per shot, the biotech-based vaccine can come for almost one-hundredth of the price."

Gujarat is an emerging cluster for the biotech sector. A biotech park is coming up at Savli near Vadodara.