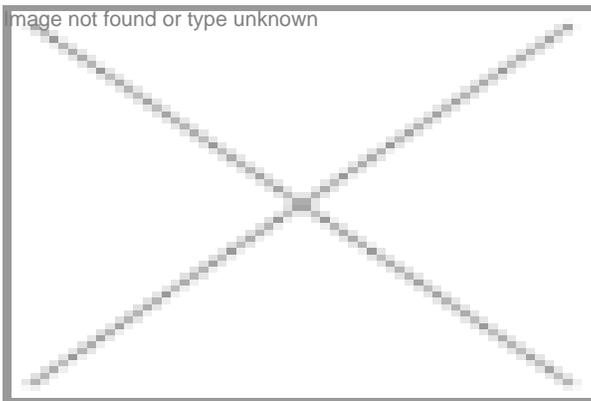


Spanish biotech industry thinks global

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By gaining global attention and government support, BioSpain 2010, the international business meet on biotechnology, has become the most important biotechnology industry event in Southern Europe



Biotechnology is emerging as a key area that drives economic growth in Spain. In terms of scientific production, Spain is ranked fourth in Europe. In this context, BioSpain 2010 witnessed a sizeable participation by major biotechnology companies of Europe and the US. This biannual event organized by Spanish Association of Biocompanies (ASEBIO) in collaboration with the Government of Navarre, through the Navarre Development Association (SODENA), with the aim of augmenting the growth of biotechnology sector in Spain, was held from September 29-

Over 1,300 delegates from various countries attended the event. About 2,000 business meetings including 600 with companies, were part of BioSpain 2010.

While acknowledging government support, Jose Maria Fernandez Sousa Faro, chairman, ASEBIO, said, "With its encouragement for the growth of biotechnology sector in Spain, the government of Navarre has been a perfect ally for organizing this global event, BioSpain 2010."

Addressing the gathering, Jose Maria Roig Aldasoro, regional minister, Department of Innovation, Business and Employment,

Government of Navarre, said, "The biotechnology sector has established its presence in Navarre, and we are determined to strengthen it further, in order to diversify business activities and also to create more job opportunities."

Biotech funding

During this event, ASEBIO stressed that Spain needs to align itself to the European Union's strategy on bioeconomy. According to the Ministry of Science & Innovation, Government of Spain, by the end of 2010, the biotechnology sector will contribute 1.2 percent to national GDP. In order to drive growth in biotechnology sector, the Ministry of Science & Innovation has granted \$145.38 million (€647 crore) in 2009. unknown

"Investment in biotechnology R&D is crucial to prevent our best researchers from moving abroad. Navarre is keen to encourage biotechnology sector, and the proof for that is the enormous interest it showed in organizing BioSpain 2010," said José María Fernández Sousa-Faro, president of ASEBIO.

"The biotechnology sector in Spain has taken important steps during the recent years, and we should not allow the repercussion of economic crises to affect that progress. Spanish companies should gain global recognition in order to attract funding from outside Spain. To achieve this, Spanish biotechnology companies should participate in international fairs like BioChicago, to gain more exposure," said Fernández Sousa.

Spain is currently the second Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country that dedicates most of its public resources to R&D in health, after the US. According to the latest statistics by Spanish National Statistics Institute, there are more than 200 exclusive biotechnology companies in Spain, and over 700 companies that perform biotechnological related activities, an increase of over 38 percent with respect to 2005.

This spectacular growth of the Spanish biotechnology industry is the result of the different public and private initiatives taken to bridge the gaps between industries and researchers to create bioclusters. With all these new initiatives taken by the ASEBIO with the backing of the government of Spain, the Spanish biotechnology is expected to gain global recognition.