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# Research-friendly climate necessary for growth in biotech: experts

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Boston: Biotech industry leaders from the United States and India feel that a research-friendly regulatory framework will go a long way in boosting the Biotech industry, which is still in the formative stage in India. Speaking at the US-India Biotech Summit in Boston, James C. Mullen, chairman of Biotechnology Industry Organization said a good beginning has already been made in the country. "In India, an admirable start has already been made through measures like a well-conceived regulatory framework being put in place to approve bioagricultural crops and recombinant DNA products for human health," he said.

However, it will need some more convincing and clarity before foreign investors are ready to put their money in India. Pointing out the paucity of foreign funds in the biotech sector, Hari Bhartia, co-chairman, Jubilant Organosys said, "Outbound investments in biotech/pharma from India were more than inbound investments last year."

Venture capitalists are now not aggressively pursuing deals in India in the biotech sector, although this is expected to change in the near future as prominent venture capital and investment firms like TVM Capital, Lazard, CRT Capital and Fidelity Biosciences have India under their radar.

Experts at the summit also stressed the need for closer interaction between industry, investors, policy makers and research centres to boost investments in biotechnology. On the other hand, Dr M. K. Bhan, secretary, Department of Biotechnology said that the government has put in place the small business innovation research initiative, and established centers of excellence to promote innovation and encourage investors. "We believe the time to invest in India is now. Investment in India is likely to pay dividends not only for the economic transformation of India, but also benefit a significant portion of the global human and animal population and our environment," he said.

While there is enough scope for increasing cross investments in India and the US, a lot of collaboration is already happening between the two countries. An emerging trend is the symbiotic alliance between the US and Indian companies in pharma-biotech R&D capabilities. A step further to cost-based outsourcing,

these partnerships reflect increased interest and confidence in India's research competencies and infrastructure.

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