News Details

12 steps to biotech prosperity

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After a three-hour intensive dialogue between representatives of Indian and US Life Sciences sectors, as part of the Indo-US High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG), in Bangalore on November 19, 2003, a set of 12 recommendations were finalized. India's leading business chambers, FICCI, coordinated the dialogue. While Bharat Biotech International chairman, Dr Krishna M Ella, chaired the discussion, the US side was led by Suresh Patil, chairman, Hawaii Biotech. BioSpectrum was part of the team that compiled the recommendations and participated actively in the discussions.

These 12 issues were taken up for detailed discussions between the top officials of both India and the US in New Delhi on November 20. In due course, most of these recommendations will eventually get implemented, paving the way for the growth of the biotech cooperation between both the countries.

Adherence to all Intellectual Property Rights agreements including the modified Indian Patents Act incorporating product patents in pharma and agriculture

The US government should remove unnecessary restrictions and delays caused to Indian exports of biotech products which fall in the dual use category—civilian commercial and defense use

India could consider adapting the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) fund sharing mechanism

India should harmonize all the legislation related to the introduction of genetically-modified (GM) products - such as Seeds Act, Environment Protection Act and Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and Patents Act

A fast track mechanism for clearance of biotechnology products for commercialization, clinical trials

US and India should take up mutual accreditation of professional qualifications to avoid duplication of various mandatory product tests

India should either abolish or enhance the eight percent upper limit imposed on payment of technology import fee

India's Patents Act should be amended to include "gene constructs" under the permitted categories to avoid hassles related to interpretation by customs

India should set up a "single window" clearance for biopharma and GM products

Some clarifications related to some of the "draconian' provisions in the Biodiversity Act which hamper the handling of biotechnology products

India should provide for data exclusivity to clinical trials and not permit use of the same data to introduce generic drugs in the same category

Streamlining of the customs clearance process for the import of biotech materials required for research