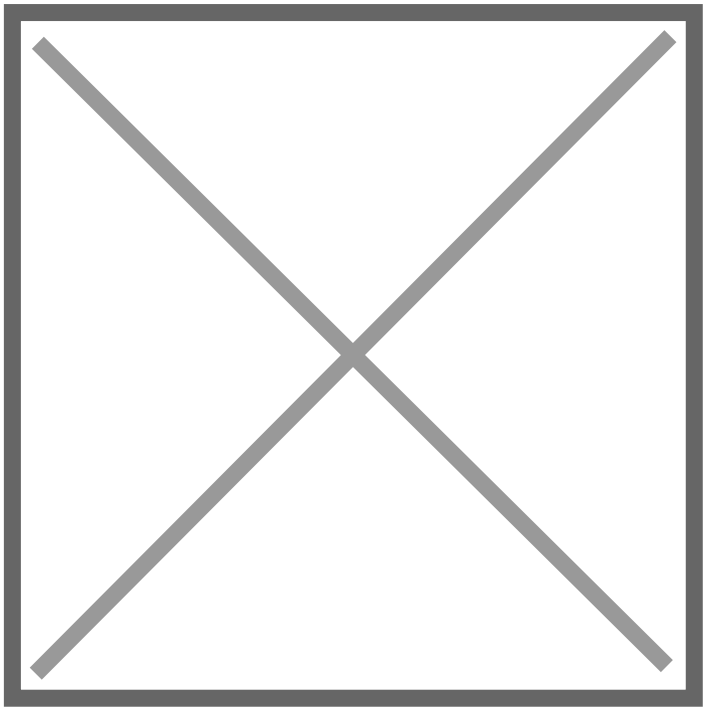


Gujarat: Going from Strength to Strength

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BT Parks - West

Gujarat: Going from Strength to Strength

Gujarat is rapidly as far as its Bt parks is concerned. The aim is not just to attract big players to the park but also promote local companies.

The Akruti Gujarat Biotech Park is a joint venture between the Gujarat government, The Chatterjee Group, and Akruti City Limited. For this park, the three entities came together to form the Gujarat Akruti TCG Biotech Ltd (GATBL). The state government has a 11 per cent of equity stake, Akruti the lead promoter holder is holding 66 per cent and TCG has a 23 per cent stake. Investment is to be done in three phases. Total investment by the Government of Gujarat, for Phase 1, was Rs 10 crore while for Phase 2, Akruti has committed to the government a total cost of Rs 200 crore.

Spread across 714 acres of land, the park is located in Savli in Vadodara, which is around 20 km away from the airport and 8 km from the Ahmedabad Ã¢â?¬â?? Vadodara Express Highway,and is located amidst a cluster of biopharma companies(spread across a a periphery of 50 km). "Park components includes, incubation centre which will house modular wet labs , common equipment library , pilot plan , plant tissue culture facility, animal tissue culture facility and a green house. The guidelines strictly asserts that no manufacturing units will be permitted within the park," says Ajay Pawar, GM, Engineering, Akruti Gujarat, Biotech park.

Development of the park is divided into three phases out of which phase one has already been completed by the Gujarat Government (development of basic infrastructure) and now Akruti has taken up the development of Phase 2. However, Akruti was also involved in Phase 1 developments along with the state government, which was for purely marketing purposes. Says Akshay Kumar Saxena, mission director, GSBTM, "There are 16 companies who have applied , of these 6-7 are new ones and 3 are local companies. We also want local players to come to this park so that they can enter the biotech space. There are also1-2 MNC companies in the loop." Also 15 per cent of the land has been allotted for commercial development.

For phase two, Akruti will now be developing around 131 acres of land. The master planning of the park was drafted by Australian-based agency HBO+ EMTB (who also designed the Dubai park) and has been submitted to the Government . This park has a SEZ portion and a non-SEZ zone. "The non-SEZ zone is close to 32 acres out of which 26 acres is occupied by the 2 companies one of the two being a MNC," adds Saxena. There have been major hiccups over the last one year, as far as the SEZ issue is concerned which has led to a delay in further developments.

The Government of Gujarat is also developing an incubation center. For this centre again, they have taken the help of Akruti who have taken up the task of designing the facility and a Rs 4 crore facility is likely to come up by the end of the year. " The

complete design is finalized, we have selected the consultants. It has all the components like microbiology , biochemistry lab and lab cell culture," adds Saxena.

Akruti and the Gujarat government has mapped a route of marketing the Bt park which will be done not just by attending conferences(domestic and international), but also wooing NRI entrepreneurs who have been showing interest in investing in Gujarat lately and also keeping a close tab on the major international developments in the biotech industry. "We have also appointed an Italian delegate to promote our park in Italy. This is with the intention to ensure international firms setting up bases in the Bt park. Two MNC giants have already have discussions and with the government," adds Pawar.

Gujarat is now on the move towards setting up an agri-biotech park. "We have identified 3-4 locations and carried out the feasibility studies We are coming up with 4 small agri-biotech parks. The state governments approval is awaiting, then we will think whether to go to state agencies or go to DBT for funds," comments Saxena.