

Biotech can overtake IT says Sam Pitroda

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Terming the biotechnology as being "pervasive", Mr Sam Pitroda, advisor to the prime minister on public information infrastructure and innovation, has hailed the sector as one with the capacity to emerge even bigger than information technology (IT). "With biotech, we can expedite the process of development in pharmaceuticals, environment, processes and many other things," remarked Mr Pitroda who is also the head of National Innovation Council. He was addressing the media at an event marking the launch of the first phase of a plan developed by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), which aims to foster innovation and techno-entrepreneurship in Indian universities.

"Biotech could be bigger than IT (information technology) in terms of export. The sector is not essentially limited to medicines but energy, agri fields and oceans. I see biotech everywhere. We have an edge if we have 200-300 highly trained scientists and no doubt that we can do wonders," Pitroda told the BioSpectrum.

On being asked what the word 'innovation' meant to him, he defined the term in his own way. Explaining the same he said, "Although the word innovation has lots of meanings, it brings about change not just in terms of new products but the processes and delivery too. It is thinking just outside of box."

The BIRAC initiative, in collaboration with the biotechnology industry, will leverage the University Innovation Cluster (UIC) and Cluster Innovation Centre (CIC) model recommended by the National Innovation Council (NIC). The UIC model seeks to build an innovation network with multiple stakeholders and CICs, identify and forge partnerships with institutions of interest, further facilitating the innovation culture.