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An Asia-Pacific perspective on resilience in the biopharma industry

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" Preparing for the next pandemic means investing in our talent and people "



Countries in Asia-Pacific may have fared well in comparison to those in other areas of the world in coping with the current pandemic, but the region is performing below the global average when it comes to the resilience of the biopharma ecosystem according to our recently published Cytiva Global Biopharma Resilience Index.

The Index, which has been compiled in partnership with Financial Times company Longitude, tracks the resilience of the biopharma ecosystem in 20 countries by examining five areas of relevance: supply chain resilience, access to talent, strength of the R&D ecosystem, quality and agility of manufacturing capacity, and effectiveness of government policy in supporting the industry.

While the lower-than-average score for Asia-Pacific might be expected for a region that is still home to many middle and lower income nations, with Asian markets now larger than North America and Europe combined1, and home to an increasingly large proportion of the world's patients suffering from diseases such as cancer2 and diabetes3, this should still act as a warning sign that we need to do more now if we are to avoid any large-scale healthcare issues in the future.

Fortunately, the Index also gives us plenty of pointers about where we can target our resources to help improve the system. Of the five pillars covered, talent is the lowest scoring in Asia-Pacific, indicating that there is a significant gap in the region in this respect.

Asia-Pacific is a very diverse region in many ways, and none more so than in our people – something that is very evident in the degree of variance in the responses we received when conducting this research. Survey respondents from higher income countries such as Japan and South Korea point to accelerating costs of talent as their greatest challenge across all five of the pillars – more so than other challenges including manufacturing agility and government regulation. Lower income countries on the other hand, including Indonesia and Thailand, show noticeable difficulties in both sourcing and training talent compared with higher income nations.

To me, this signals a huge opportunity for improved training and education, both in quality as well as access. By enhancing content and localizing the delivery (both digital and hands-on) of biopharma-related educational resource, we not only uplift the current talent pool, but we also create more opportunities for students or those from other fields of study to enter the industry.

I'm really proud of the work we have been doing at Cytiva in this space, partnering with global academic and government institutions to provide training and education programs to students, researchers and manufacturing staff. Our Fast Trak Education and Training program, for example, already operates six centers worldwide, with three located here in Asia-Pacific. These centers are training thousands of professionals each year, empowering them with the skills they need to drive this industry forward added **Francis Van Parys, Vice-President Commercial, Asia-Pacific, Cytiva .**

Our long-standing partnership with the National Institute For Bioprocessing Research and Training in Ireland is also enhancing the scale and quality of the training we deliver. Together with NIBRT, Cytiva has co-developed curriculums for Fast Trak centers and other academic institutions worldwide; on top of this, we recently opened a training center for biologics manufacturing in China, the Guangzhou Bioprocess Academy, which delivers courses based on this curriculum.

Where we are unable to reach our customers face-to-face, our rollout of digital tools is enabling our customers to access training and educational resources remotely. Through Cytiva College for example, which was launched in China in 2020, around 10,000 active users now have access to remote training on demand. We also offer webinar trainings for customers across the region – something that has naturally seen an increase in interest during the pandemic.

Culturally, education has always been important to people in the region, and I believe that if we are to prepare ourselves for the future, investing in our people is one of the most effective tools we have at our disposal. This will require an industry-wide effort as well as support from government if we are to make any real impact. Investments in talent development take years, if not generations for the true benefits to be seen. With that in mind, we should be looking at what we can do now in order to secure the future resilience of biopharma.

The Cytiva Biopharma Resilience Index research was conducted by Cytiva and Longitude in late 2020.