BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

BIO Asiaâ??Taiwan 2026: Taipei, the City That Won Over Global Biotech

July 15, 2026 | News | By Saradha Mani | Saradha.mani@mmactiv.com

Without intending to answer the same question, six global biotech leaders delivered the clearest endorsement yet of Taipei's growing influence on the future of life sciences.

Every host city wants the same thing from an event like this: not the visit, but the verdict. What made the press meet worth watching was that nobody had to ask for one. It arrived on its own, six times over, from people with no particular reason to flatter anybody.

TAIPEI · For most of the last decade, Taiwan's biotech sector has been answering a slightly deflating question. Not whether the science is good, which was never seriously in dispute, but whether the world would ever think of this island as somewhere biotech happens, rather than as the place that makes the chips.

The press meet at **BIO Asia-Taiwan 2026** did not answer that question directly. It did something more useful. It filled a row of chairs with people who had flown a long way to be there, gave each of them a subject entirely of their own, and let the press watch what happened. What happened is that six separate arguments, none of them about Taiwan, kept arriving at the same place.

THE WELCOME Johnsee Lee and Lee-Cheng Liu

Johnsee Lee, Chairman of the 2026 BIO Asia-Taiwan Organizing Committee, opened by doing what confident hosts do: he got out of the way of his own guests. He did not walk the press through the programme. He framed why this particular group had been assembled in this particular city, under a theme, *"Asian Inspiration, Global Impact"*, that he treats as a description rather than an ambition.

Lee-Cheng Liu, Chairman of the Taiwan Bio Industry Organization, took the same thread from the industry side and put the sharper point on it. A sector's health, he suggested, is not measured only by what it produces. It is measured by who chooses to come and build alongside it. On that measure the row of chairs beside him made the argument more efficiently than any slide deck could have.

The most confident thing a host can do is stop selling the venue and let the room speak for it.

THE WELCOME · LEE AND LIU

WHAT TAIWAN TAKES FROM IT

The hosts resisted the usual temptation to recite achievements. By framing the event around the calibre of who showed up rather than the size of what Taiwan has built, they made a stronger claim and a harder one to dispute.

THE ACCELERATION Alex Zhavoronkov

Alex Zhavoronkov, Founder, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Business Officer of Insilico Medicine, had the subject everybody already had an opinion about, *How AI is Transforming Drug Discovery*, and his best move was refusing to oversell it.

Insilico has spent years turning generative AI from a claim into a working pipeline, one that identifies targets, designs molecules and reasons about candidates faster than a human team can. But the argument he made was not about the technology. It was about consequence. If the earliest and most failure-prone stretch of drug development gets cheaper and shorter, the bottleneck does not disappear. It relocates. It becomes manufacturing. It becomes capital, regulation, talent, clinical capacity.

Nobody in the room needed reminding which island has spent forty years becoming exceptionally good at precisely those things. Zhavoronkov did not make the connection to Taiwan and did not need to. He was describing an industry whose scarce resource is shifting from discovery to execution, in a city whose entire industrial reputation is built on execution at scale.

The good news is that AI is compressing discovery. The more interesting news is what that does to everything standing behind it.

ZHAVORONKOV · ON AI IN DRUG DISCOVERY

WHAT TAIWAN TAKES FROM IT

The most valuable thing said all morning, and it was said by accident. If the industry’s constraint is moving downstream toward manufacturing, precision and scale, Taiwan’s semiconductor inheritance stops being a charming irrelevance to its biotech story and starts being the point of it.

THE CAPITAL Rudi Pauwels

Rudi Pauwels, Founder and President of the Praesens Foundation and a co-founder of Tibotec, Virco, Galapagos Genomics and Biocartis, was the most direct of the group and the most cheerful about it. *Why Asia is Becoming the Next Global Biotech Investment Hub* is a title that could easily be delivered as a warning to somebody. He delivered it as an invitation.

What gave it weight was the source. Pauwels has built companies across diagnostics, virology, genomics and molecular platforms, in Europe and in the developing world, and has therefore been wrong about markets before and knows it. This was not an analyst reading a trend line. It was a builder saying that when he now looks at where innovation, supply and capital intersect, the answer has moved, and that the move looks structural rather than cyclical.

This is not capital passing through Asia on its way somewhere else. It is capital that intends to stay.

PAUWELS · ON ASIA AS THE NEXT INVESTMENT HUB

WHAT TAIWAN TAKES FROM IT

Endorsements from investors are cheap. Endorsements from people who have to live with the decision are not. Pauwels was speaking as someone who builds here, which is a different and more useful category of witness for a region trying to be taken seriously.

THE PATIENT Yoshiki Sawa

Yoshiki Sawa, Professor Emeritus at The University of Osaka, President of Osaka Keisatsu Hospital and President and CEO of the Organization of Future Medicine, did the quietly radical thing in a room full of strategy talk. He brought the conversation back to the patient.

On *The Future of Regenerative Medicine*, Sawa spoke with the calm of someone who has watched a field travel from improbable to nearly routine. His optimism was specific rather than promotional. The science, he suggested, is arriving. The harder question is the one he has spent a career on, which is whether hospitals, regulators and delivery systems are ready to receive it, and on that count Asia is further along than most of the world has noticed.

The ambition is no longer to manage a failing organ. It is to restore it, and to have a health system ready on the day that becomes ordinary.

SAWA · ON THE FUTURE OF REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

WHAT TAIWAN TAKES FROM IT

Sawa moved the competitive question away from laboratories and toward clinical infrastructure, regulation and hospital readiness. That is a contest fought on ground where Taiwan and the wider region are genuinely strong, and where the traditional hubs hold no automatic advantage.

THE ROAD Keiichi Fukuda

Keiichi Fukuda, Founder, Representative Director, President and CEO of Heartseed and Emeritus Professor at Keio University, told the morning's most concrete story: *From iPSC Research to Commercial Therapy: The Next Frontier in Heart Regeneration*.

If Sawa described the destination, Fukuda described the road, including the stretches founders rarely put on a slide. iPSC-derived cell therapy for the failing heart spends years sounding like science fiction, and the passage from a laboratory result to a therapy with a commercial path runs directly through manufacturing, quality and scale. It was the cleanest answer to the point Zhavoronkov had opened with. If discovery gets faster, this is where the time goes instead.

The interesting question is no longer whether the science works. It is whether you can make it, reliably, at volume.

FUKUDA · FROM IPSC RESEARCH TO COMMERCIAL THERAPY

WHAT TAIWAN TAKES FROM IT

Fukuda made the region's case without arguing it. An academic in Asia founded a company in Asia and walked it toward the clinic. Every founder in the room recognised the road, which is what a regional ecosystem looks like from the inside rather than in a market report.

THE RULES Kelly Seagraves

Kelly Seagraves, Vice President for National Security and International Affairs at the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, closed with *What's Next for U.S. Biotech*. Her presence was itself part of the message. BIO co-convenes this event with the Taiwan Bio Industry Organization, and sending its national security and international affairs lead to sit on a panel in Taipei is not an accident of scheduling.

Her contribution supplied the frame the other five sit inside. Biotech now lives alongside national security, supply chain resilience and international cooperation, and the tone she struck was collaborative rather than defensive. A global industry whose science, capital and manufacturing cross every border is one that needs its major markets in conversation. Ending an Asia-forward morning with a Washington perspective was, on reflection, the most on-theme thing the organisers could have done.

Global impact is not a line on a banner. It is the part where the science has to survive contact with everybody else's rules.

SEAGRAVES · ON WHAT IS NEXT FOR U.S. BIOTECH

WHAT TAIWAN TAKES FROM IT

The single most consequential fact of the morning was structural rather than spoken. Washington's biotech policy voice came to Taipei and sat down. For a sector whose global standing has always been a question of who returns the call, that is the answer.

THE VERDICT NOBODY ASKED FOR

Read the morning back and the shape of it is hard to miss. An AI pioneer explained that the industry's scarce resource is moving toward manufacturing and execution. A company builder said the capital has already relocated and intends to stay. A surgeon said the contest will be decided by clinical infrastructure rather than laboratories. A founder showed that the road from an Asian bench to an approved therapy is now walkable. And Washington sent someone senior enough to make the point that this conversation is one it wants to be in.

Not one of them was making a case for Taiwan. That is exactly why it worked. Five independent arguments, assembled by an audience rather than a host, landed on a description of an industry whose next decade rewards precision, capacity, clinical depth and partnership, and which happens to be holding its conversation in Taipei this week.

-Reported from the BIO Asia-Taiwan 2026 press meet, Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center. A BioSpectrum Asia report.