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Eppendorf lab support to boost BioNexus program

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Eppendorf lab support to boost Malaysia BioNexus program



In a bid to extend support to biotech innovator companies in Malaysia, laboratory technology company, Eppendorf, recently said that any company supported by BiotechCorp under its BioNexus scheme will be able to avail preferential prices and free maintenance support from the designated Eppendorf network in Malaysia. This incentive is crafted to support the laboratory set-up of new BioNexus companies and is also open to existing BioNexus companies until end of 2012. The support will be in the form of additional benefits to top up the fiscal incentives, grants and guarantees endowed by their BioNexus status.

"The idea came about when Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal, CEO of BiotechCorp, asked if there was anything Eppendorf could contribute to enhance the support provided to BioNexus companies," says Ms Shim Yok Lam, managing director, Eppendorf South & Southeast Asia. BiotechCorp will contact the companies qualifying for the incentive and they will be handed their incentive vouchers from Eppendorf Asia Pacific soon after that.

Eppendorf develops, produces and distributes systems for use in the life-science research laboratories worldwide. Its product range includes pipettes, dispensers and centrifuges as well as consumables such as micro test tubes and pipette tips. In addition, it also provides instruments and systems for cell manipulation, automated devices for liquid handling, complete equipment for DNA amplification and biochips.

The thought behind Eppendorf's decision to extend such a kind of support is that at the start-up phase, one of the biggest costs for any biotech company is getting instruments for the laboratory. The problem is bigger if the company is small. At this stage, these companies need to consider carefully between costs and reliability of results. Eppendorf says, given the nature of its activities and reach in Malaysia and product range, its support for BioNexus companies needed to be broad-based, practical and simple to lower the acquisition costs of high-quality instruments, especially for laboratory start-ups.

"Due to the high requirement for reliability of results, we included leach-free consumables, set-up support, training, and maintenance services into the start-up packages. This program also allows interested BioNexus companies to access our educational programs for specific laboratory techniques," says Ms Shim.

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This program is being run in cooperation with BiotechCorp to add to its current support for these companies. The benefit for Eppendorf is that it will build a strong position in the country and the market. It will be in close contact with the growing companies of Malaysia that may have a strong future. It will be able to track their development and be in a position to tap their output which could be interesting for Eppendorf.

Though Eppendorf has its own R&D, it might be interested in any relevant technology for new product development coming out of these BioNexus companies.

Malaysia is one Asian country that has abundance of land and natural resources and lately it is pushing its local biotech industry innovators with strategies that few countries have planned. The first step that Malaysia took was to build a world-class infrastructure in the initial five years, since the launch of National Biotech Policy in 2005. Then the country started nurturing small start-up companies, categorizing them as BioNexus companies, a group of innovators in biotechnology. Multinational companies around the world, looking at low cost facilities and resources with high standards in Asia, have also shown their interest to invest in Malaysia. But foreign direct investment is not the only thing that Malaysia has on in mind. Through tie-ups, such as the one with Eppendorf, the country is opening itself to value-added relationships with existing investors.

What is BioNexus?

BioNexus is a special status awarded to some international and Malaysian biotechnology companies. The status endows fiscal incentives, grants and other guarantees to assist growth. Since 2005, BiotechCorp has facilitated the development of 207 BioNexus-status companies in Malaysia with total approved investment of $690 million (RM 2.118 billion). BioNexus Status companies receive continuous support and assistance from BiotechCorp on immigration-related matters, IP advisory and regulatory services and employment-related matters. BiotechCorp also provides a wide range of capacity building programs covering a variety of subjects to assist biotechnology entrepreneurs in managing their business locally and internationally.