

Opportunities on the pulse

Finland is an innovative force in the following fields:

- **Bioengineering and stem cell therapies**

- The REGEA Institute for Regenerative Medicine in Tampere is the leader in Finnish stem cell research, offering world-class expertise in biomaterial, cellular biology and clinical research. REGEA also organizes international symposiums for specialists and researchers in stem cells, scaffolds, bioactive materials and bioreactors. The challenging technologies being developed at REGEA allow for the delivery of new materials and methods for tissue repair. The commercialization of these technologies is a key development target for REGEA.

- **Biomaterials**

- Biomaterials research and product development is centered on the university cities of Tampere and Turku, where chemists, dentists, physicians, and biotechnology experts from universities have successfully channelled innovative research into commercial applications.
- This includes the Turku Biomaterials Centre, which promotes research, materials testing and education in biomaterials. The center has been instrumental in transferring innovation from universities to the commercial arena.
- The COMBIO - Commercialisation of Biomaterials TEKES funded technology program 2003-2007 also plays a pivotal role in developing Finnish know-how in biomaterials. Both research networks and funding are open to foreign companies and investors.

- **Drug development**

- The Finnish drug discovery sector, though relatively young, is growing rapidly, thanks to partnerships and licensing agreements between Finnish and international pharma companies. In 2004, around 30 CROs were listed active in Finland, with Remedium Oy, Medfiles Oy, Secret Files Oy and Premedic Clinical Research Oy topping the list.
- Other service providers in the drug discovery process are PET Center in Turku, Finnish Genome Center, Turku Center for Functional Genomics, The Center for Scientific Computing-CSC, Clinical Research Centres of Kuopio and Turku, Finn-Medi Research in Tampere and HUCH-Institute.

In the development of niche market pharmaceuticals, these companies can provide highly specialized expertise and clinical experience through partnering or targeted acquisitions.

In between-industry opportunities

Finnish companies and research networks are also actively engaged in:

- Bioinformatics – especially the commercial development of biobanks for genetic analysis and disease identification and prevention
- Nutraceuticals and functional foods
- joint application of green plant biotechnology and white industrial biotechnology – especially biofuels and green diesel

Healthy support on regional and national levels

Finland's largest public investor and promoter of research and development is Tekes – the National Technology Agency. With an annual budget of € 400 million Tekes aims to enhance technological potential and competitiveness of Finland's industry and service sector.

Tekes works in close cooperation with other Finnish innovation organizations: the Academy of Finland, Sitra, venture capital investors, Finnvera, Finpro and the network of regional Technology Centres and Centres for Employment and Economic Development. This includes VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, the largest technological R&D organisation in the Nordic region.

All these organizations provide valuable funding and resources to overseas pharma/biotech investors and companies interested in establishing a presence in Finland or developing ties to Finnish R&D networks.

A quick recap

For foreign investors or companies in the bio-pharmaceutical industry – Finland delivers opportunities with the right profile:

- innovative start-ups with skilful, devoted employees and potential patents for further development
- established drug discovery companies and biotechnology companies interested in forming strategic partnerships to develop and launch new therapeutic methods and products
- merger and acquisition candidates specialized in relevant diagnostic/therapeutic field

Friendly assistance

Finnish pharma and biotech companies are continuously looking to develop international partnerships. This includes overseas companies or corporate venturing units for strategic investment or research cooperation.

Many of these Finnish companies are also fast-growth firms that are attractive acquisition targets, while others can provide larger enterprises with valuable niche technologies or services.

Invest in Finland

Invest in Finland offers consulting services and relevant information to international companies interested in establishing or expanding a presence in Finland. We provide assistance with questions relating to opening a sales office, mapping potential merger and acquisition targets, establishing research and development facilities and/or a manufacturing unit, or expanding existing operations.

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