

Lifera Hosts Global Biotech Leaders in Riyadh to Discuss Saudi Arabia's Biotech Future

Lifera's summit in Riyadh highlighted Saudi Arabia's biotech potential, focusing on collaboration, AI, and infrastructure to address global health challenges

RIYADH, RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, January 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – A Historic Biotech Summit: "Elevating Saudi Biotech to Global Heights"

In a landmark event, [Lifera](#) hosted a pioneering panel discussion titled

"Elevating Saudi Biotech to Global Heights," bringing together some of the world's most influential biotech leaders. This exceptional gathering included figures who have collectively invested over USD \$50 billion in biotech, founding over 200 companies, many of which are leaders in their fields. The panel featured:

- Dr. Noubar Afeyan (PhD.) – Founder & CEO, Flagship Pioneering
- Dr. Vik Bajaj (PhD.) – Managing Director, Foresite Capital
- Bob Nelsen – Co-Founder & Managing Director, ARCH Venture Partners
- Andrea Ponti – Founder & Managing Partner, GHO Capital

Moderated by Dr. Sara Althari, Founder & Managing Partner of The Althari Group (TAG.), the discussion centered on how Saudi Arabia can carve out a leading role in global biotechnology. The panelists explored strategies for fostering innovation, collaboration, and investment to drive the development of new therapeutics that can meet global health challenges.

A Vision for Saudi Biotech's Global Impact

The panel emphasized the vast potential of biotechnology in addressing global health issues, including pandemics, chronic diseases, and climate-related health crises. The discussion highlighted biotechnology's unique ability to unite diverse disciplines and foster innovation that transcends borders. Dr. Noubar Afeyan noted, "Biotech doesn't just develop products; it



Elevating Saudi Biotech to Global Heights Panel

develops possibilities. To innovate, we must take risks and work together across nations to solve problems that no single entity can tackle alone.”

A key theme was the importance of collaboration across sectors – governments, private investors, academic institutions, and industry leaders – to drive progress. The panelists emphasized how sharing data, pooling resources, and aligning goals can accelerate transformative innovations.

“True breakthroughs come from networks of innovators who trust and learn from one another,” said Bob Nelsen. “When we collaborate effectively, we create an environment where the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts.”

The Role of AI and Data in Revolutionizing Biotech

With the global biotechnology market projected to grow from USD \$483 billion in 2024 to USD \$546 billion by 2025, AI and data were identified as pivotal drivers of this growth. Dr. Vik Bajaj stated, “We need data that helps us understand the root causes of diseases, not just their symptoms. Only then can we create truly transformative therapies.”

Artificial intelligence is accelerating drug discovery by reducing the time and cost involved in bringing new therapies to market. However, the panel cautioned that the full potential of AI can only be realized with robust data ecosystems designed for therapeutic discovery. These systems must support cross-border collaboration to enable the effective use of AI in medicine, particularly for personalized treatments tailored to individual genetic profiles.

AI-driven innovations are already revolutionizing areas like oncology, but they have broader potential to address common diseases like obesity, heart disease, and autoimmune conditions.

Flagship Pioneering’s Groundbreaking Approach

Flagship Pioneering’s approach to creating breakthrough companies by asking “what-if” questions beyond current knowledge was also highlighted. The company has launched over 100 first-in-category bioplatfrom companies, demonstrating how unconventional thinking can lead to significant advancements in biotech.

In line with this vision, Xaira Therapeutics, co-founded by Bob Nelsen and Dr. Vik Bajaj, was cited as a prime example of AI-driven innovation. With an initial investment of over USD \$1 billion, Xaira focuses on generating high-quality, experimental datasets to train AI models for faster drug discovery and better therapeutic outcomes. “By generating and analyzing causal biological data, we bridge the gap between theoretical insights and practical applications,” said Dr. Bajaj.

Building a Sustainable Biotech Infrastructure

A critical component of the discussion was the importance of infrastructure to support global biotech growth. The panelists agreed that innovative ideas must be underpinned by solid

infrastructure, including manufacturing capabilities and regulatory frameworks. Andrea Ponti emphasized, “It’s not enough to have great ideas; we need the facilities, expertise, and systems to turn those ideas into reality.”

Infrastructure also extends to talent development. The panelists stressed the need for greater investment in education and training programs to equip the next generation of scientists, engineers, and healthcare professionals with the skills needed to drive biotech forward. Ponti concluded, “Biotech is a deeply human endeavor, and its success depends on the creativity, dedication, and expertise of the people working within it.”

The panel expressed optimism about Saudi Arabia’s potential to be a global leader in biotechnology, particularly given the country’s Vision 2030 initiative. Saudi Arabia’s ambition to embrace cutting-edge technologies like AI, alongside its growing investments in infrastructure and talent, positions it uniquely to shape the future of global biotech. The discussion highlighted how Saudi Arabia could create a curated data infrastructure to generate unique biological insights, potentially accelerating the discovery of new therapeutics worldwide.

As Dr. Afeyan pointed out, “Biotechnology is an industry of rare but miraculous contributions. To make those miracles happen, we must think big, take risks, and commit to long-term goals.” The panel encouraged stakeholders to pursue bold, transformative projects that have the potential to change the world, such as developing universal vaccines or addressing the health impacts of climate change.

The session concluded with a call to action for the global biotech community to unite in achieving ambitious goals. The panel urged countries and organizations to identify areas where they can lead and focus on creating breakthroughs that will benefit humanity.

Bob Nelsen emphasized the unique opportunity for biotechnology: “We have the tools, the talent, and the vision to solve some of the world’s most pressing problems. But we can only achieve that if we work together—across borders, disciplines, and industries.”

The leaders left the summit inspired by the promise of biotechnology to transform global health, united by a shared commitment to collaboration and innovation in the pursuit of a healthier, more sustainable world.

Lifera is a biopharmaceutical company dedicated to advancing Saudi Arabia’s biopharmaceutical sector and building national health resilience. For more information visit www.lifera.com.sa

Ravi Samani

Lifera

+966 55 997 9212

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

X

[LinkedIn](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/778157278>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.