

largest biotech companies. Medivir develops protease inhibitors for pharmaceuticals. With Lipsovir to treat labial herpes, the company, under former GlaxoWellcome Marketing director Lars Adlersson, has an iron in the fire that could achieve market registration in late 2008.

Take a chance on me

However, most Swedish biotechnology is considerably younger and smaller. The Gothenburg-based start-up Vivolux, founded in 2004, is "searching biological applications for synthesized organic compounds that combine fluorescence with DNA interaction". Vivolux has such an impressive web presence that one almost overlooks the fact that it employs barely a dozen people and is still looking for venture capital.

What makes the biotech world go round are its movers and shakers, of course. The



Biovitrum's CFO Göran Arvidsson looks good humoured, despite a dwindling share price.

another (Biovica) in 2004.

Perhaps Sweden's most prominent biotech enterprise, however, is Biacore of Uppsala, one hour north of Stockholm. Biacore was founded 1984 as a result of the merger of Linköping Institute of Technology and the Swedish National Defence Re-

search Institute. The company specializes in systems for the analysis of protein-protein-interactions and binding affinity. Biacore has always been haunted by the big pharmaceuticals. For many years Pfizer owned a 41% share, until in June 2006 the company was acquired by GE Healthcare for €270 million. At the moment, 275 people are working for this American company with Swedish roots.

Even the Swedish biotech pipeline boasts numerous exciting possibilities. It's a sure bet that foreign companies are keeping their eyes on its 65 clinical and 45 late pre-clinical projects (eleven of them in fairly advanced Phase 3 stages).

Does your correspondent think there's really more to Sweden than elks and herrings? I do, I do, I do, I do, I do...!

WINFRIED KOEPELLE

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Location of Swedish biotech

Springing up like mushrooms

In addition to the main bioregions around Stockholm and Malmö, some smaller centres have developed over recent years.

Stockholm/Uppsala/Strängnäs is by far Sweden's most important biotech region (and in addition one of Europe's largest). Astra, Pharmacia and the Nobel prize were all founded here. 250 (58%) of Sweden's biotech companies are located here, employing over 20,000 people. They recruit from dozens of resident academic institutions, including the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm and Uppsala Universities and the Linnaeus Centre for Bioinformatics (with 23,000 students in life science related disciplines). Companies like AstraZeneca, Biacore, Amersham GE, Phadia, Biovitrum, Medivir and SBL Vaccines have their headquarters here.

Lund/Malmö is Sweden's second largest bioregion with 15% of the nation's biotech companies, including Active Biotech, Novozymes and Alligator. It is located near the Danish Copenhagen/Öresund region and features academic facilities such as Lund and Malmö Universities and several hospitals, biomedical centres, science parks and incubators.



The **Gothenburg** region has a 14% share of Swedish biotechnology. The resident life science firms (e.g. Nobel Biocare) employ 8,000 people. Important institutions are the Swedish Biomaterials Research Center, the Chalmers Institute of Technology and Sahlgrenska Academy and University Hospital.

Linköping is the home of 45 biotech companies (mainly small start-ups) and several academic institutions with a focus on medical topics, such as diagnostics and imaging.

Umeå in Sweden's north, is a small biotech region with a fistful of companies and academic institutions (including Umea University and the Umea Plant Science Centre) that employ 1,000 people each.

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(left) Sweden's 430 biotech companies are distributed over five biotech areas (marked as mushrooms). The most important, Stockholm and Malmö, are located on the south-eastern coast of Sweden.