

Life Sciences in Latvia

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Latvia's life-science sector combines strong R&D capability, established manufacturing infrastructure, and geographic and cultural proximity to eastern and western markets. A very competitive workforce as well as further investment in raising productivity levels and fostering R&D related activities have contributed to the potential and success of the industry.

Key Advantages

- Strong R&D capability
- Established manufacturing infrastructure
- Geographic proximity to eastern markets
- Long-standing traditions in chemistry
- Skilled and competitive workforce

The Latvian chemical industry is a cornerstone of today's economy. History shows that, as early as 19th century, Latvian chemists had made a significant contribution to research. The most prominent scientists of that era were Willem Ostwald, a Nobel Prize laureate in 1909 and acknowledged to be one of the founders of physical chemistry, and Paul Valden who was nominated twice for the Nobel Prize and is a founder of physical organic chemistry. Life sciences became a priority during Soviet times, when some of Latvia's leading research institutions were established. During that time period Latvia was the principal location for life sciences, with 25% of all new drugs designed and one in four medical products manufactured in Latvia.

The sector is currently ranked 4th by turnover among manufacturing industries in Latvia, with value added growing steadily. As a result of its advantageous geographic location, Latvia has access to both western and eastern European markets. There has been an almost fivefold increase in exports since 2003. The EU is Latvia's main export partner, followed by Russia.

Of the three Baltic States, Latvia leads the life science sector, with the highest value added in this sector. A very competitive labour force, higher wage-adjusted productivity in almost all sub-sectors and increasing R&D expenditure support the excellent performance of Latvia's life science sector. The sector is further supported by a high investment rate for tangible assets, which will further increase the productivity of the Latvian labour force.

Additional information

Ministry of Health: <http://www.vm.gov.lv/en>

Association of Latvian Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry: <https://lifescience.lv>

Latvian Biotechnology Association: <http://www.latbiotech.lv/en/index.html>

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en/invest-latvia/key-sectors/life-sciences>