- Stockholm pioneers life science research
- UK consultant drawn to Sweden's life science

The number of Swedish life science and biotechnology companies reported to have projects in clinical phase has doubled since six years ago.

That's according to the latest report from the organisation SwedenBIO, which has asked Swedish research and development intensive companies about their drug pipeline status each year since 2006. This year, 42 projects were reported to be in clinical phase - almost twice as many as in 2006.

Project leader Sara Gunnerås said the report has become more recognised and respected over the last few years, attracting 79 companies to chip in this time.

"We've observed a yearly increase in the number of companies that declare projects in clinical phase, which is promising and indicates that Swedish R&D companies have the ability to produce high quality projects," she told The Swedish Wire, but added:

"Unfortunately we also see that the total number of projects is lower now than a few years ago, which of course is worrying."

Most of the projects that were in clinical phase I-III last year still remain in the same phase, the report said. Only three of the 17 development projects have moved from phase I to phase II.

"This result is in line with what to expect as it takes a long time to develop new drugs," Gunnerås said. "After each clinical phase the data must be carefully analysed and often new

financing is needed in order to enter the next phase.”

The report also detailed how an increasing number of large molecules, also called biologics, have reached the clinical phase during the period, while the number of small molecules decreased.

"Large molecules, such as therapeutic antibodies, is an important component of personalised medicine as they can be very specific and used for severe diseases such as cancer and multiple sclerosis," Gunnerås said.

As a destination, Sweden is described as a country rich in life science history and opportunities. With its investment in innovation and a supportive economy, Sweden is well suited for knowledge-intensive industry sectors like life science, which attracts international entrepreneurs and investors.

"We constantly have international delegations visiting who want to use Sweden as benchmark," she said. "Sweden is a country that has invested heavily in innovation, which is now noticeable in international comparative reports."

The Swedish government recently showcased the contents of an upcoming research and innovation bill, which includes a special investment in the life science area.

“We welcome this investment and hope it will have an impact on the number of projects in the pipeline in the future,” Gunnerås added.{jcomments on}

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