



InnoMedica's
clean room facility
in the MIC.

InnoMedica develops new cancer medication at the Marly Innovation Center

What started as a venture in an improvised laboratory in a basement in Bern will soon find its way into Swiss hospitals: an innovative biological transport system to improve chemotherapy

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The concept is simple but smart. The aim is not to discover new active substances, but to enhance the risk-benefit profile of well-known pharmaceutical ingredients. "This was the sole reason why we dared to start this project in 2013," explains Dr Peter Halbherr, General Manager of InnoMedica. "Otherwise it would have been impossible for us to finance it." Because of this, InnoMedica's therapy does not qualify as a new substance but as a known substance with innovation, allowing for a simpler submission to Swissmedic, thus constituting a massive strategic advantage.

In-house clean room facility

"At the beginning of the project it was rather difficult to find investors willing to finance our idea and we soon realised that it wouldn't be possible to outsource the production process," Dr Halbherr says. "So we invested nearly all our acquired new capital in the first clean room facility. Of course, this was only feasible with a partner who understood the needs of a small pharma startup and was also willing to take risks."

Dr Halbherr remembers how the team built up their production site in the Marly Innovation Centre near Fribourg. In hindsight, the construction of InnoMedica's own cleanroom turned out to be a wise decision that has proven instrumental for fast development of the drug compound. The former Ilford complex was an ideal incubator, offering a good infrastructure for pharmaceutical production purposes as well as considerable room for expansion.

Today the InnoMedica team consists of 22 employees and is continuously growing. The



The Marly Innovation Center in Marly (canton of Fribourg).

first clinical batch will soon be manufactured for InnoMedica's initial clinical trial with the cancer therapy Talidox. The trial will take place in five Swiss hospitals and be conducted by the Swiss Group for Clinical Cancer Research (SAKK). Additionally, the research and development department has already filled the pipeline with promising new oncological compounds, while also venturing into neurology: "As it turns out, our transport system can be modified so as to cross the blood brain barrier and we decided to use this advantage for a new approach in the treatment of Parkinson's Disease," explains Dr Halbherr.

Across the blood brain barrier

The treatment uses an endogenous active substance with protective and regenerative properties aiming to reverse the neuro-degenerative process of the disease. Last year's filing of its patent application has encouraged InnoMedica to proceed with the newly developed compound. "If we can achieve real benefits for patients with our technology, we are obliged to do so." Dr Halbherr is not alone in this opinion: the growing shareholder base of InnoMedica, counting more than 650 investors, illustrates the strong interest in small but innovative players in the pharma business. In order to remain independent, InnoMedica has pursued a milestone financing model, addressing a larger public in its annual capital increase campaigns.

Given the promising preclinical results in terms of efficacy and tolerability, expectations are high and oncologists are eagerly awaiting the launch of the clinical trial with Talidox. To Dr Halbherr it is clear that the progress of the project was made possible both by the highly skilled team of InnoMedica and the strong involvement of its numerous partners.



THE MIC IN BRIEF

The MIC is one of the largest technology centres in Switzerland at 370 000 m². Our current facilities include available spaces for rent, of which 7000 m² are fully equipped and secured laboratories. Five buildings with an additional area of approximately 11 500 m² are being constructed. 150 companies – providing 500 jobs – are currently enjoying the benefits of our infrastructure. And we have space for new members!

In future a green eco-dwelling will be built in the immediate surroundings. This will provide an entire ecosystem for people who work on site. Quality of life is essential to success. marly-innovation-center.org