

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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A focus on innovation and new research alliances has been the main goal of the Department of International Affairs (IAs) in 2017. The start of the year strongly set the tone with the hosting of the first Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) Workshop in Oncology. This event to support the participation of CNIO and other Spanish cancer institutions in IMI, the largest European public-private initiative for drug discovery was organised in collaboration with the Spanish Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI). Different actors from the Spanish oncology community gathered together at our Centre to discuss the strategy in cancer with high-rank influencers of the European programme. Putting ourselves even more firmly on the map of cancer research and innovation, the CNIO achieved an important milestone in Spain by establishing a research collaboration agreement with the largest Spanish and most international biopharmaceutical company, *PharmaMar*. This represents a remarkably successful case of knowledge transfer in relation to the support of innovation.

In the context of furthering our international impact on public-private collaborations, we have invested efforts in expanding and consolidating our international network for innovation. The joint effort of the IAs and the Department of Innovation to actively engage collaborators in forums such as BIO-Europe 2017 in Berlin, conveys the importance of the interdepartmental work to achieve common goals. Other international networks dedicated to drug discovery, such as the Milner Therapeutics Alliance, now include the CNIO as affiliate academic institution.

At the CNIO, basic discoveries and scientific creativity are at the forefront of research progress, and as such, the Centre strives to form alliances with centres of excellence that can serve as springboards for other research collaborations. In 2017, and with the invaluable support of the *Ramon Areces* Foundation, the 1st CNIO-Weizmann Institute of Science Joint Symposium on 'New Insights in Cancer Discovery' was launched, creating the appropriate setting for knowledge exchange. The CNIO will continue nurturing this tripartite alliance with the Weizmann Institute of Science in order to set the basis for a fruitful collaboration among scientists from both institutions.

**“Our international scope embraces the interests of all our different stakeholders, crucial for our development as a centre of excellence. These partnerships with both public and private entities will help us build our roadmap for the future.”**

Establishing communication channels with international delegations is part of the strategy of IAs, as we can leverage their power to facilitate the creation of partnerships of value for the CNIO and represented countries. This year we established a fruitful relationship with the US Embassy in Spain, resulting in the participation of a CNIO female Head of Unit in the international programme for women leaders in STEM called “Hidden No More” to represent Spain in this initiative. We are tapping other embassies to forge new partnerships and to develop new projects that can add value to the scientific community in an international context.

Last but not least, we believe that having a strong impact abroad is just as important as being influential in networks that are composed of Spanish Research Centres of Excellence; in this light, the *Severo Ochoa* and *Maria de Maetzu* alliance (*SOMMa*) was recently launched to promote their members internationally and to further boost the high-profile reputation for the institutions. The CNIO is actively participating, through the IAs, as leader of the ‘work package of Outreach’. The goals shared by the alliance and our Centre are framed within the European ‘Responsible Research & Innovation’ (RRI) concept, which continues to guide the institutional strategy and science policy of the CNIO.