The combined efforts of different departments spearheaded by the Department of International Affairs (IA) translate into outputs for the institution that have an impact at a science and institutional level. In collaboration with our Projects Office, we continue to explore funding opportunities to propel the research impact of our investigators and the CNIO. In 2019, we continued participating in strategic working groups organised by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (MICIU) and the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI), as a fundamental action to maintain our engagement with funding and influencing institutions at the National and European level. Our institutional strategy to boost the coordination of H2020 consortia projects by CNIO investigators has resulted in an increase in 67% in proposals submissions for coordinated projects.

Since its launch in 2017, the CNIO has been a member of the Severo Ochoa and María de Maeztu Alliance (SOMMa). This year, CNIO Director Maria Blasco held the position of Vice-Chair of the Alliance, directly contributing to its performance and governance. The IAs led the WP of Outreach and actively participated in the organisation of the second ‘100xCiencia’ conference held in November at the Tabakalera in San Sebastian that focused on how science can bring value to society. During this event, the CNIO Director Maria Blasco shared with the lay audience the advancements in gene therapy for age-related diseases, and AIs brought a stand in which we gamified different biomedical innovation projects from CNIO.

Continuing with our approach to promote cooperation with international research institutions, in 2019 we led a proposal for an interdisciplinary project in collaboration with institutions from three different countries. The Accelerator Awards call from CRUK and AECC is a key framework for developing a competitive consortium in alliance with 3 European countries. These and other opportunities have been leveraged to boost our visibility and cooperation beyond our borders.

One of our main successful alliances is the one we keep nurturing with the Weizmann Institute of Science and the Ramon Areces Foundation. In 2019, this successful partnership has translated into a collaborative project for the development of new immunotherapies and knowledge in the field of melanoma, and a cancer research symposium held in Rehovot, Israel. This partnership is a true example of collaboration and commitment between international institutions devoted to the advancement of science.

As the new European framework programme becomes a reality, the IAs has been actively involved in the scrutiny of the working documents for the upcoming Horizon Europe. This aims to facilitate the involvement, participation and influence of CNIO in future calls in order to harness our expertise and leadership in key fields in cancer and ageing-related diseases. We expect 2020 will help us achieve more outputs from the groundwork that we strive to build and strengthen every year.

“We align our scientific and institutional strengths with Europe’s vision for research and innovation to maximise our outputs through collaborative projects and public-private alliances.”