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# PLACING TRUST IN THE SEARCH FOR INNOVATIVE MEDICINES

A conversation with **DR. ISRO GLOGER**, Director of Trust in Science, Global Health R&D at GSK



GSK believes that great science can happen anywhere in the world. As a global leader in human health, GSK engages in diverse collaborations to drive scientific advancements in disease understanding and medicine development. In 2011, GSK formed a partnership with the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) as part of their Trust in Science initiative to pursue the best research, identify new approaches for drug discovery, and develop scientific talent in Latin America. Isro Gloger discusses the structure and success of this initiative.

### What is GSK's mission?

Our main aim is to discover something meaningful that will help people with a particular disease. We hope to identify unique molecular pathways that will allow us to try something innovative for tackling certain diseases. The work we are doing in Brazil is setting up a basis to launch the journey to a new medicine.

### What is the Trust in Science initiative?

In 2011, we created this programme to engage with the top research institutions and investigators in Latin America, as a means to understand more about the biology and potential targets of disease. We primarily focused on two countries, Brazil and Argentina. In Brazil we have invested approximately US\$6 million in our partnerships. Since 2012 our funding has been matched by our public partner, FAPESP.

### How does a public-private partnership work?

As soon as we started working in Brazil we engaged with government funding agencies to co-fund research projects, particularly FAPESP. Each partner contributes to the funding and adds the strengths of their organization. In the case of GSK, we contribute value through training researchers and providing scientific expertise.

FAPESP adds project organization and monitoring skills as well as fellowship opportunities. I think our relationship with FAPESP is a good example of how a public-private partnership can work. We have a fantastic understanding, where we truly collaborate with the clear objective of pursuing the best science. This is a very innovative way of supporting research in Brazil and it has proved to be very successful.

### What is GSK's approach to collaboration with academic researchers?

We work in a collaborative way with academic researchers. The unique element that GSK brings is our experience and expertise in discovering medicines. Our drug discovery expertise is valuable to academic groups who want to understand a different approach and more applied science. The funding is important, but investigators in Brazil are really interested in engaging in productive scientific collaborations. Our Trust in Science collaborations started in 2011 and have continued well beyond the funding. I think that is a testimony to the power of engagement and the power of great science.

### What projects are you currently working on?

One very innovative project, in collaboration with the Butantan Institute, involves

screening venoms from different organisms to uncover novel pathways or mechanisms that will lead us to discover a new target for drug discovery. The Butantan Institute has one of the largest collections of venom resources in the world, so this work can only be done at that institute. So for the past three to four years, we and FAPESP have concentrated on supporting a Center of Excellence in New Target Discovery in Immunology and Inflammation in Butantan. We are also supporting a Sustainable Chemistry Center to develop an environmentally better way of doing chemistry with more sustainable solvents and reagents. We are also setting up a joint programme with FAPESP and Biominas, which supports small entrepreneurial companies of up to five people by giving them seeding funding and scientific advice. The goal is to see whether they can produce and develop a novel idea which can be developed further into a medicine.

### How does GSK contribute to scientific talent development?

We want to help create a new pool of people that will go onto become independent scientists and develop their own research programmes in Brazil. Through

these projects, a number of researchers publish their work and achieve Master's and PhD degrees. Another way of generating talent is through sharing knowledge, technologies, and resources. We have GSK scientists travel to Brazil to train academic researchers in new techniques and technologies and also invite researchers from Brazil to spend time in our laboratories at GSK.

### What are GSK's views on intellectual property?

We are respectful of intellectual property in our agreements in Brazil. The intellectual property belongs to the scientist or group who makes the research discoveries. We encourage them to engage in the process of intellectual property, and in many cases, our experts will help our academic colleagues decide whether and how they want to move forward. It's a fresh approach that has been widely applauded because it shows we want to support what researchers are doing and create value for them.



# 110 years of investing in science in Brazil

## Science and Innovation

We have invested and developed research in basic science, clinical trials and epidemiological studies in different therapeutics areas, such as: infectious tropical and neglected diseases; oncology; metabolic diseases; respiratory diseases; immunology, inflammation and genetics.

Trust in Science and Sustainable Chemistry are GSK initiatives investing in basic science.

We have developed important clinical studies in strategic therapeutic areas for Brazil, such as: Vaccines, HIV and Malaria.

## Strategic alliances

In addition to discovering and supplying new medicines and vaccines, we seek to transfer technology and knowledge to Brazilian scientists in order to guarantee the autonomy in the production of medicines and vaccines considered priorities in the context of Brazil's public health.

Our partnering projects aim at delivering the highest standards of research.

The skills and expertise our partners gain from the collaborations benefit other areas of their research which may deliver further long-term benefits to patients.

Our access strategy has been an important element of our successful performance in the country and we believe we can contribute much more to help transforming the health of millions of Brazilians.



Ana, lab employee in GSK Brazil

