SELECTA Biotech

Best MedTech Innovation of the Year 2022 - EU

New technologies could revolutionise the healthcare industry, but it requires a bold vision to bring these new ideas to the market. Dr Filip Razga founded Selecta Biotech in order to do just this. We caught up with him to find out more in the light of his tremendous success in the Research and Development Awards from Acquisition International.

The creation of tailor-made oligonucleotide-based inhibitors was an idea which drew the attention of scientists around the world. It was a technology which held extraordinary potential, with many believing that it would be able to precisely block its molecular target while exerting essentially no other effects on the patient. Unfortunately, the severe specificity limitations of oligonucleotides killed this dream for many, but not all.

Selecta Biotech holds a patented technology and relevant know-how in R&D of tailor-made oligonucleotide-based inhibitors. Under the leadership of Filip Razga, the firm has gone from strength to strength, aiming to improve patient health care through safe therapeutic solutions. There is the potential, currently, to implement a new generation of inhibitors in clinical practice with the aim of achieving the desired therapeutic effect without side effects. It's why Selecta Biotech was founded.

When we caught up with Filip, we wondered what he made of the opportunities that technology has presented to medical professionals. "We have been given the opportunity to excel at what we do best," he tells us, "and so we feel responsible to contribute to the society and communities in which we operate. Now is the time to proactively look for solutions and challenge ourselves to make a difference in patient care through progressive therapeutic concepts that have the potential to redefine treatment outcomes."

The aim of Selecta Biotech has always been to push the boundaries of what technology is able to produce, and the team is proud to hold a patented technology that gives them a unique advantage compared to the rest of the industry. "We strive to bring safe and reliable treatment modalities to support patients with unmet medical need by transforming the promise of modern science with the power of our know-how and experience into products and technologies that enhance, improve, or even save lives."

Key to the team's success has been the decision to pursue milestone-driven projects. By using such a targeted approach, the team have been able to offer an efficient route to regulatory submission. Most of those who turn to Selecta Biotech are companies within the oligonucleotide therapeutics and drug discovery services market that would benefit from the remarkable efficacy and safety of new generation inhibitors within R&D of their oligonucleotide therapeutics in pipeline and clinical trials.

Of course, the team had to forge their own path when it came to developing this leading technology. "We took a multidisciplinary approach and included several original parameters into the design of inhibitors to achieve remarkable specificity of our unique drugs, improve their bioavailability and substantially increase their safety," Filip explains. "We strive to significantly reduce clinically relevant health complications arising from the promiscuity of applied therapeutics."

Because of the focused nature of the work that the Selecta Biotech team do, it has proven to be relatively easy to uncover the therapies most associated with adverse events. In many cases, side effects are found by those undergoing anticancer therapy, which is why the team are primarily focusing on solutions that eliminate the inherent drug toxicity in oncological diagnoses. The potential benefits have opened the door to many, proving that a safe treatment option might be on the horizon.

Any new discovery in the research and development world naturally presents new opportunities for many different sectors in the industry. Advances in areas such as genomics, bioinformatics,

synthetic chemistry, and protein engineering for example offer new ways of working in the identification and pursuit of new drug targets for the treatment of diseases. “Although delivering authentic medical innovations is more complex than ever,” Filip admits, “we anticipated and have developed a reliable and precise technology with a great potential to meet this challenge and facilitate a global reform in design, and hence applicability of oligonucleotide therapeutics. We deliberately combine the aspects of bioinformatics, nucleic acid chemistry and thermodynamics to achieve exclusive recognition of one specific pathologic target.”

Building such an innovative approach in the R&D space has demanded a team that is capable of delivering such incredible results. “I clearly attribute each success to the expertise and extraordinary commitment of our team,” Filip tells us. “There is a quote saying ‘Surround yourself with those on the same mission as you’ which I find deeply valid during our everyday work. Each of us has a different thought process, specific skills, and dedicated responsibilities, and because science in general is a long-distance run, we need to be able to rely on each other in this complex system while staying focused on the goal.”

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The creation of this creative atmosphere where people feel empowered is a credit to Filip’s leadership. This is a role he takes incredibly seriously, working across various responsibilities in different ways. “Being the CEO of the company and the scientific leader in one person requires permanent effort to maintain the balance between the role of the professional with a friendly approach towards my colleagues and the respected authority with full responsibility for company management,” he explains. To this end, Filip takes the time to get to know every employee in his business, delegating the various tasks that arise to ensure that the work environment is one which is proactive and pleasant. “I believe that I am at my best when everyone is doing well,” Filip tells us.

Reaching this point has not been easy for Filip, and we wondered what advice he would pass onto those wishing to echo his considerably success in this industry. “Be ready to openly perceive all stimuli, evaluate them wisely in the current context, be flexible to adapt, believe in success and persevere in your determination,” he says, before adding: “Transform the negative experiences into positive growth.” This ability to transform something negative into something positive is no doubt the reason why Selecta Biotech continues to thrive to this day.

The team is built on the concept of finding new ways to solve old problems. They have a history of transforming the negatives into positives, which isn’t going away any time soon. “We are intensively working on the preclinical validation of several therapeutic leads at the moment,” Filip informs us, “and hope that will be ready to enter the clinical trials as soon as possible to help those with unmet medical need.”

The future of medical treatments will depend on people like Filip who are willing to explore bold new ideas and push into areas where others fear to tread. As the team turn to exciting and fresh possibilities, we cannot wait to see where their eye for innovation will take them next.

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