

ADVERTORIAL

18 first-in-class compounds, 6 products in Phase II clinical trials, ONE portfolio



Karolinska Development has one of the largest portfolios of life science companies in Europe. CEO, **Conny Bogentoft**, reveals how the company's unique approach to life science investment is poised to deliver a new generation of pharmaceuticals

Q. What sort of companies make up Karolinska Development's portfolio?

We have a balanced portfolio representing some of the most promising ideas and innovations to come out of Nordic academic research. Each of our companies addresses an unmet medical need and is typically founded on an innovation with a strong IP position. The portfolio spans a broad range of indication areas, from cancer, cardiovascular and inflammation to women's health, dermatology and cell therapy, as well as including technology and medical device companies. Currently, we have more than 40 companies, giving us one of the largest life science research portfolios in Europe.

Q. Presumably they are mainly early-stage development projects?

Not at all. Many of the companies are well on their way to establishing proof-of-concept. In fact, we have six companies with products already in Phase II clinical trials. A good example is Dilafor, which is nearing the end of a Phase IIa study for its new first-in-class drug aimed at preventing protracted labour.

Other companies have already launched commercial products. Cogmed, for example, has created a lot of interest in the US and other markets with its software-based memory training programme. Another company, Athera Biotechnologies, has launched an ELISA-based diagnostic test for early detection of cardiovascular disease.

Q. What makes your approach unique?

We are allied to the innovation system of Karolinska Institutet. A long-standing agreement gives us first refusal on innovations that come through Karolinska Institutet Innovations, which screens and evaluates the commercial potential of innovations from most Nordic universities. It's a system with incredible potential and over 1,000 research projects have been evaluated to date. Our job is to help ensure that the most promising ideas reach the people who need them the most.

Q. How does Karolinska Development operate?

In most cases we are the lead investor and, as such, we actively support and influence our portfolio companies, as opposed to simply contributing capital like most other investment companies.

We give our companies direct access to experienced management personnel and a broad network of professionals in the pharmaceutical industry, so they are able to make the right decisions more quickly. It means our portfolio companies benefit from highly qualified resources, right from seed stage, all the way to commercialisation, which usually means finding a suitable partner once proof-of-concept has been established. It's an extremely powerful and cost-effective business model.

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Meet Karolinska Development at BIO International Convention 2009, May 18th-21st, Atlanta, booth #5901.