



## Press Release

### **Inauguration of the new laboratories for the development of pharmaceutical biosimilars at ICGEB Trieste, Italy**

**On 14 May 2021, ICGEB officially inaugurates the newly completed laboratories funded through a contribution of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region**

On May 14, 2021, the new laboratories of the Biotechnology Development Unit will be inaugurated at the ICGEB in Trieste, Italy. The laboratories constitute a significant investment, supported by the Autonomous Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia with important economic and technological repercussions for Trieste, the Region and Italy. The laboratories, which include 15 clean rooms equipped with latest generation pharma-compliant equipment, will be dedicated to the research, development and quality certification of biosimilar drugs, which are destined to revolutionise the pharmaceutical market in coming years.

Minister Fabrizio Nicoletti, Principal Director for Innovation and Research, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation – ICGEB Governor from Italy – will speak at the inauguration, to underline the pre-eminent role of the Italian Government in promoting and financing the activities of the ICGEB. Massimiliano Fedriga, President of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, will also be present to testify to the strong commitment of the Region to support research and innovation, and in promoting international cooperation and the excellence of the Trieste System. Lawrence Banks, ICGEB Director-General, and Natasa Skoko, Group Leader and Head of the laboratories will also be present.

Funded through a contribution of 3 million euros from the Region, and 1 million euro from the ICGEB, the laboratories meet the highest safety and quality standards required by the guidelines of the European Medicines Agency. These laboratories are unique to Italy and in Europe (as they are not owned by a pharmaceutical company).

The activities of the labs represent the essence of technology transfer. The Group's research focuses precisely on reconstructing and validating all the steps necessary to produce biological drugs no longer covered by industrial patents. The expiry of an industrial patent frees the final product but does not make all the industrial and laboratory procedures necessary to arrive at the final product available. The goal is to obtain biosimilars, or biological drugs that are similar in quality, safety and efficacy to the industrial reference product, at a much lower cost. Thanks to the new laboratories, it will be possible to develop biosimilar technologies for the production of monoclonal antibodies for treating cancer and rheumatoid arthritis, insulins for treating diabetes, interferons for treating viral infections and a range of additional products still in the development phase.

The unit also offers training courses for the staff of pharmaceutical companies in ICGEB Member States to reproduce production techniques in their own countries. The new laboratories will make it

possible to offer high-level training in the increasingly advanced technologies required for drug development. The web site of the Unit is: <https://icgeb-bdu.org/>

Lawrence Banks states: "ICGEB has over 20 years of experience in developing biopharmaceuticals. *During this time the technology has been transferred from Trieste to companies all over the world, allowing them to produce therapeutics, such as interferons for Covid19 treatment, insulin and monoclonal antibodies for therapies for cancer, at costs much cheaper than those from big pharma. This ensures that affordable medicines can be obtained by all regardless of socio-economic background*".

The inauguration will be held at the ICGEB Headquarters, AREA Science Park, Padriciano 99, Trieste, Italy.

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