

BioRegio STERN Management GmbH anniversary – the biotech sector celebrates

A dating portal, midwife and safe space for 20 years

(Stuttgart) – BioRegio STERN Management GmbH was founded on 6 December 2001. Delayed by six months due to the pandemic, its anniversary celebrations took place last Wednesday in Stuttgart. Representatives from the worlds of politics, business and research were invited to the event. They congratulated the BioRegio STERN Management GmbH team and Managing Director, Dr. Klaus Eichenberg, on 20 years of successful business development dedicated to life sciences, while also celebrating the entire sector’s achievements. Besides recalling years past, the speakers, entrepreneurs and scientists also took the opportunity to look at biotechnology’s exciting present and future.

In his role as Chair of the Supervisory Board of BioRegio STERN Management GmbH, Reutlingen’s Lord Mayor, Thomas Keck, welcomed guests from politics, various companies and institutions with some impressive figures: “To date, the region’s 110 biotech companies have secured investment totalling three billion euros and funding of 550 million euros from the German federal government alone. The team at BioRegio STERN Management GmbH has helped 76 businesses with the start-up process since the company was founded, creating over 3,000 jobs. I am looking forward to a further 20 years of success.”

In 2001, the network comprising the cities and regions of Stuttgart, Tübingen, Esslingen, Reutlingen and Neckar-Alb won the BioProfile contest organised by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research with its specialisation of regenerative biology. That marked the start of the Stuttgart-based BioRegio STERN Management GmbH, a municipal business development agency that consciously transcended municipal boundaries. The STERN BioRegion adopted the same approach when it came to industry boundaries, looking beyond medical technology and making a special effort to initiate collaborations with mechanical engineering and automation technology partners, too. The resulting synergy effects – complemented by automation, digitalisation and artificial intelligence – are creating solutions that will

make it possible to continue overcoming the challenges facing society, such as pandemics.

For many years, the biotechnology sector was seen in Germany as a hard sell – with companies making products that needed to be explained, did not generate profits and were dependent on years of funding. It was a real challenge for BioRegio STERN Management GmbH to win over political, business and life science decision-makers. Thanks to a large number of impressive projects, though, the network that has been created is one of the big, successful German bioregions.

In the panel discussion involving Dr. Jürgen Bernhardt, CEO of BioTeSys GmbH from Esslingen, Prof. Oliver Planz, CSO of Atriva Therapeutics GmbH from Tübingen, Johannes Bacher, Managing Director of Curetis GmbH from Holzgerlingen, and Michael Kahnert, Corporate Counsel of the industry association BIO Deutschland e.V., participants recalled the early days of their business ventures and what an important role BioRegio STERN Management GmbH played in their success. One example of this is the Science2Start ideas competition, which gives scientists the initial impetus to start up a company. For this reason, Prof. Planz compares BioRegio STERN Management GmbH to a “midwife”, Bacher sees it as a “dating portal for companies” and Dr. Bernhardt appreciates the fact that it provides “a safe space where people can speak openly”.

Dr. Klaus Eichenberg, who has been Managing Director of BioRegio STERN Management GmbH since 2004, looked to the future in his speech. In the health economy, artificial intelligence, telemedicine and personalised medicine will redefine the roles of patients and doctors alike and transform the healthcare system. Bio-economic tools are being developed to make the economy more resource-efficient and climate-friendly. “I am grateful that BioRegio STERN Management GmbH was founded with so much foresight 20 years ago. Despite all the successes that have already been achieved, though, the biotechnology sector is still in its infancy. It offers huge social and economic possibilities, but also involves a high level of investment and equally high business risks. Further support and funding are therefore required,” emphasises Dr. Eichenberg. The event host also took this opportunity to thank the shareholders and funding agencies – Wirtschaftsförderung Region Stuttgart,

Regionalverband Stuttgart, the Neckar-Alb region, and the cities of Tübingen and Reutlingen: “Through your financial and moral support, you are all helping to create a sector here in the region that is already achieving a huge amount – and the best is yet to come.”

About BioRegio STERN Management GmbH:

BioRegio STERN Management GmbH promotes economic development in the life sciences industry, helping to strengthen the region as a business location by supporting innovations and start-up companies in the public interest. It is the main point of contact for company founders and entrepreneurs in the Stuttgart and Neckar-Alb regions, including the cities of Tübingen and Reutlingen.

The STERN BioRegion is one of the largest and most successful bioregions in Germany. Its unique selling points include a mix of biotech and medtech companies that is outstanding in Germany and regional clusters in the fields of automation technology and mechanical engineering.

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