



## Evotec: Bridging the gap from bench to bedside

Few biotech companies can count a Nobel laureate among their founders – but Evotec is one of them. The company's co-founder Manfred Eigen (1927–2019) was awarded the 1967 Nobel Prize in Chemistry at just 40 years of age. He later turned his focus to biology, and molecular evolution in particular, which he researched as the director of an institution he formed himself in 1971: the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen, Germany. Eigen was convinced that evolutionary biology provided the best foundation for the discovery of new pharmacological agents. In 1993, this conviction led to him creating Evotec BioSystems with six other scientists. He not only contributed some of the capital required to found the company, but also patents and machines he had developed himself. Today, Evotec is one of Germany's most successful TecDAX companies. Along with its headquarters on the Manfred Eigen Campus in Hamburg, Evotec has 17 other locations in Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Austria and the US.

In line with its founding ideology, Evotec's core area of research is drug discovery – the early phase of drug research and development. This crucial phase involves a number of steps that bridge academic and industry research and can last up to six years – from the validation of a drug's target to the biochemical optimisation of the active substance that binds to it and the testing of the drug in preclinical models. To date, Evotec has provided this bridge for numerous partners in science and industry. Its clients include all the top 20 pharma companies and hundreds of biotech companies, as well as renowned academic and healthcare institutions.

The goal behind Evotec's strategy is to catch disease-relevant biomarkers at the patient-specific level as early as possible, thereby providing very early insight into the efficacy and safety of a drug candidate – knowledge that is currently first gained during advanced clinical trials, at which point failure is extremely costly. To achieve this goal, Evotec is continuously developing innovative technology platforms. One stand-out example is its drug screening platform that uses induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs). These are derived from the patient's own cells and can be transformed into a wide variety of disease-relevant cells. For example, scientists can turn them into neurons and use these to simulate the molecular patterns of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Evotec is a global pioneer in this application of iPSC technology. With it, the company is able to offer preclinical models that mimic disease progression in a petri dish and thus predict

the effect of a substance on a particular patient. This is just one of many fully integrated technology platforms with which the company helps its partners establish a more efficient research process. And Evotec is always incorporating more data-driven digital processes into its precision medicine platforms.

In 2019, Evotec AG went from being a German stock corporation (Aktiengesellschaft) – as it had been registered in Frankfurt in 1999 – to a European stock corporation (Societas Europaea) called Evotec SE. In the same year, it entered the business field of biologics by acquiring the US company Just Biotherapeutics. Since November 2021, Evotec has been listed on New York's NASDAQ exchange. Evotec's business model of being a go-to partner for translational science is also enjoying growing success, as it bridges the widening gap between academia and industry. The more that industry – and particularly Big Pharma – outsources its R&D activities, the harder it is for academic researchers to find competent industry partners to validate their research results. Now, they are turning to Evotec. With over 4,500 employees, the company generated revenues of €618 million in 2021 – a 23 percent increase over the previous year. A quarter of this income is attributable to its three largest customers: Bristol Myers Squibb, Merck and Sanofi. Ninety-seven Evotec partners each contributed more than one million euros to company revenues in 2021.

