

# Interview: Beatrice Falise Mirat - CEO, Medicen Paris Region, France

---



---

11.12.2015

Tags: [Pharma](#), [Pharmaceuticals](#), [Biotech](#), [France](#), [Paris](#), [Cluster](#), [Innovation](#), [Technology](#), [Medicen Paris Region](#), [Beatrice Falise Mirat](#), [Interview](#), [Executive](#), [Insight](#)

---

*The CEO of Medicen Paris Region, the biopharma cluster for the Paris region, discusses her vision to develop a world-class cluster and act as a catalyst for innovation; her international partnership strategy and how her diverse background in engineering, medicine and a variety of companies has equipped her to lead Medicen Paris Region.*

**In April 2015, you were appointed CEO of the Medicen Paris Region. Why did you decide to take this position and what is your vision for the business cluster?**

I was primarily motivated by the scope of the position and how complex and therefore interesting the work would be. I also understood how my personal profile corresponded to the demands of the position and I was confident that I would be able to manage all the attendant responsibilities. Medicen Paris Region's ambition is to act as an intermediary for innovation to occur between all sectors and industry stakeholders: Big Pharma players, medical technology, SMEs, start-ups and biotechs, academic researchers and clinicians and production. There is the need to innovate in health care, across all sectors. We need to coordinate and develop synergies between all these stakeholders in order to attain the results and level of success that we want. That is where Medicen Paris Region comes in: a cluster where all the relevant entities can come together and work on our common mission.

## **What is Medicen's new strategic plan for 2014-2018, which you are in charge of?**

By the year 2020, our ambition is to become one of the three regions of excellence worldwide for personalised and translational medicine. Our core focus is to take innovation and bring it to patients and the wider economy as quickly and efficiently as possible.

We organize our operations into five strategic domains, with the core being translational medicine. Translational medicine as an official field is relatively new but it is something we have always done: taking academic research and realizing it in industrial and commercial applications to make medical breakthroughs accessible to patients. We have always worked with big enterprises, SMEs and academic researchers to bring their products to market and we will continue to do so. In France, there is an abundance of fantastic researchers and clinical technicians, and we work with all of them, for instance, through our partnerships with AP HP (largest European hospital), INSERM (Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale; French National Institute for Health and Medical Research), CEA and, Genopole and many others.

The other four strategic domains are *in vitro* diagnostics, diagnostic and interventional imaging systems, regenerative medicine and biomaterials and ICT for health. We regularly have meetings with all these stakeholders and actors.

## **What is Medicen Paris Region's comparative advantage compared to other leading healthcare regions like Lyon, Cambridge or Bavaria?**

Undoubtedly, Paris is one of the best healthcare regions in Europe, if not the world. Paris has an unusually high concentration of academic and research activities. Fifty percent of French researchers are based in Paris. We also have the largest concentration of hospitals in Europe, with Assistance Publique - Hôpitaux de Paris (AP-HP; the French public hospital system in Paris). Many of our researchers and clinicians are world-renowned and there is excellence everywhere. According to the *Science Business* study "Innovation Valley: Which European life sciences clusters are in the lead?" we number among the top clusters in Europe, coming in first for pharma and second for med tech.

## **Given the diversity of players within Medicen Paris Region, how do you balance the diverging interests that must inevitably exist, not only between different sectors but also differently-sized players?**

Within Medicen itself, this is not as problematic as one might expect. We function on a system of collaborative projects. We identify projects according to our strategic domains and we find

participants on a project-basis. As companies and institutions choose the projects most relevant to them, we find that our participants tend to converge naturally based on complementary interests and priorities. As a result, we do not have to manage divergence as actively.

For SMEs, we act as a platform and a catalyst to help companies develop and launch new products. We offer assistance with any logistical, administrative or financing needs the projects may have, but we do not manage the projects for them. As a result, for each project there is a need for someone to take charge and lead the project, but it does not necessarily have to be a Big Pharma player, as long as they have the resources, expertise and time. I would say that the big and small players within Medicen Paris Region participate equally. More broadly speaking, the overall French environment is more difficult and complex. There is a plethora of structures, associations and institutions, all with different organization, priorities and approaches. In this context, Medicen Paris Region is playing an active role in facilitating dialogue between all of them, as well as intentionally clarifying the whole landscape to make it more comprehensible to all stakeholders involved, including but not limited to potential investors. It is true that there needs to be more unity and coordination. There is a tendency for each entity to develop policies without considering their potential interactions with and implications for the existing healthcare infrastructure.

**What importance does Medicen Paris Region attach to establishing research and innovation partnerships with other European and international institutions?**

We are very proactive with our international partnership strategy. This is necessary because we are not a large institution and we cannot be fully present in all countries. We would not be credible if we over-extend ourselves, so we need a clear strategy. Firstly, we have concentrated on two geographical locations: the US and Israel. We have exchanges and partnerships with institutions in both countries, because they are both very innovative, Israel particularly in the medtech sector and US with all its big bioclusters: Boston, New York and Maryland, to name a few. As a result, we have a lot of relationships with other clusters. We also want to use our partnerships with Big Pharma here in France to promote us in other countries; they can act as brand ambassadors for us in that regard.

However, we are also opportunistic and we seize opportunities whenever we can, such as at conferences or networking events held by other organizations. We are looking for international exposure and we will take any chance we can to maximize that. Together with the Health NCP Net 2.0 project, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Paris Ile-de-France, a member of Enterprise Europe Network, we will organize an international brokerage event on the H2020 Health, Demographic change and Wellbeing goals 2016-2017. This event will take place on on 13th January

2016, in Paris and gather about 200 participants, who will get the chance to present their innovative project to the participants, meet potential partners from Europe and beyond and start building their consortiums. We also organised a B2B event called Horizon 2020, which is an event similar to speed-dating, but for biotech companies.

**On a personal note, you have over 20 years of experience in the French healthcare industry, working for a wide range of companies: Siemens, Intel, APAP, EY and Orange. Along with your educational background as both an engineer and a doctor, how have you leveraged your experiences and unique perspective throughout your career?**

My experience at the crossroads of different disciplines has been invaluable. I have spent a lot of time in digital health, which requires significant medical collaboration between big IT companies, who initially enter the healthcare industry without much prior experience or background, and medical professionals, who may not understand much about the technological aspect of things. This difference in background creates a challenge, but a surmountable one. The problems that the healthcare industry face today can no longer be solved with our old solutions. We need to generate innovative ideas, for instance, finding a new way of financing our healthcare system and designing a better mode of organization. To get people from such disparate backgrounds to work well together, you need people acquainted with both sides and my dual background enables me to act as an intermediary between the two groups. It gives me both the skills and credibility to bridge the two sides.

**What would be your final message to our readers?**

Medicen Paris Region is a very efficient organization with an excellent track record. Notably, in the past decade, we have launched around 27 products on the market with a total expenditure of only more than EUR 1 billion (USD 1.1 billion). This is a feat not many companies can beat. I would say, at Medicen Paris Region we make things happen.

[Click here to read more articles and interviews from France, and to download the latest free pharma report on the country.](#)

[See more interviews](#)