Ciril Faia â?? CEO, Curium International

Curiumâ??s leadership stems from mastering an exceptionally intricate value chain that combines pharmaceutical precision with nuclear expertise

27.10.2025

Tags:

France, Curium, Radiopharma, Nuclear Medicine, Oncology, Precision Medicine, Diagnostics

Curium is redefining how radiopharmaceuticals are developed, manufactured, and delivered to patients worldwide. Under the leadership of Ciril Faia, Curium International is advancing a new generation of diagnostic and therapeutic innovations, with particular focus on prostate cancer and neuroendocrine tumours (NET). Through sustained investment in talent, infrastructure, and its newly established Curium Biopharma unit, the company is strengthening its capacity to meet rising global demand and to expand patient access to precision-targeted therapies.

Can you introduce yourself as well as Curium to readers unfamiliar with nuclear medicine?

I am the CEO of Curium International, one of three business units within our global organisation, thatâ??s responsible for all markets outside North America. Nuclear medicine is a remarkable field that unites diagnosis and therapy through the use of radioactive tracers. These tracers are designed to bind to specific disease targets, most often cancer cells, and when coupled with a low-energy isotope, they enable precise imaging to identify tumours. When paired with a higher-energy isotope, the same principle can be used therapeutically, destroying tumour DNA in a highly targeted way while largely preserving healthy tissue. This duality allows us to deliver effective treatment with significantly fewer side effects than traditional chemotherapy.

Within this space, Curium are proud to stand as the global leader. We employ around 3,500 people across 70 countries and provide close to 50 diagnostic and therapeutic products. The companyâ??s modern history began in 2017 with the merger of IBA Molecular and Mallinckrodt Nuclear Medicine

LLC, each bringing over five decades of experience in radiopharmaceuticals. Since then, we have transitioned from a predominantly diagnostic, generic-focused organisation into a fully fledged pharmaceutical model, advancing innovative products that follow the same rigorous clinical development pathway as any novel therapy. Today, our late-stage pipeline spans both diagnostic and therapeutic programmes, with particular emphasis on prostate cancer and neuroendocrine tumours.

How has nuclear medicine evolved, and why is Curium the global leader in such a specialised field?

Nuclear medicine has traditionally occupied a specialised space within healthcare, centred on precise diagnostics and a few therapeutic applications, particularly in oncology and cardiology. For decades, it has relied on two imaging modalities â?? SPECT (single-photon emission computed tomography), developed in the 1980s, and PET (positron emission tomography), which became established in the 1990s â?? both of which remain essential for detecting coronary artery disease and various cancers. Therapeutic use was historically limited to conditions such as thyroid cancer and hyperthyroidism, keeping the market relatively small.

Over the past two decades, however, the field has been redefined by advances in tracer research. By designing molecules that bind selectively to disease targets and linking them with specific isotopes, we can now both visualise and destroy tumours at a molecular level, achieving remarkable precision and safety. This progress has transformed what was once a niche discipline into one of the most dynamic and rapidly expanding areas of oncology.

The emergence of landmark therapies has accelerated this shift. Bayerâ??s *Xofigo* (radium-223 dichloride), approved in 2013, was the first to achieve commercial success, followed by Novartisâ?? *Lutathera* (lutetium-177 dotatate) in 2017 and *Pluvicto* (lutetium-177 vipivotide tetraxetan) in 2022. The latter has already surpassed EUR 1.5 billion in global sales and is projected to reach up to EUR 5 billion through lifecycle expansion. These breakthroughs have ignited unprecedented interest from major pharmaceutical groups, venture funds, and research institutions. Since 2019, radiopharmaceuticals have become one of the most dynamic investment frontiers in healthcare. Today, the global nuclear medicine market stands at around EUR 6 billion and is forecast to reach EUR 35-40 billion by 2035-2040, reflecting both the immense scientific potential of nuclear medicine and its increasing capacity to transform patient outcomes worldwide.

Curiumâ??s leadership stems from mastering an exceptionally intricate value chain that combines pharmaceutical precision with nuclear expertise. Every site must meet both GMP pharmaceutical standards and stringent nuclear safety regulations â?? an extraordinary technical challenge. The analogy we often use is that we â??ship ice cubesâ?•, products that are literally losing potency as they travel, which demands flawless timing from production to patient delivery.

We are also fully vertically integrated, which gives us a strategic advantage. We manufacture not only the finished doses administered to patients but also the isotopes and active precursors upstream in the process. This integration ensures reliability, quality, and flexibility across our network. Supported by over five decades of accumulated knowledge, we bring together expertise in chemistry, manufacturing, regulatory affairs, quality control, and product management. This depth of capability positions us uniquely to develop, scale, and deliver the next generation of radiopharmaceuticals with speed, rigour, and consistency.

How would you characterise Curiumâ??s portfolio?

We have one of the most comprehensive portfolios in nuclear medicine, covering both diagnostics and therapy across SPECT and PET technologies. This breadth enables us to serve hospitals and radiopharmacies as a fully integrated partner. In oncology, one of our cornerstone products is FDG (fluorodeoxyglucose), one of the most widely used PET tracers to detect and monitor cancer progression across a range of malignancies, including lung, lymphoma, breast, melanoma, and colorectal cancers. In cardiology, our SPECT tracers are instrumental in diagnosing coronary artery disease and assessing cardiac risk, supporting clinicians in managing millions of patients worldwide.

The existing portfolio already delivers a profound clinical impact. Bone scans can detect metastases up to a year earlier than other imaging modalities, and our radiopharmaceutical therapies for thyroid cancer remain a standard treatment option in many markets. Looking ahead, our ambition is to extend this impact further, developing new therapies for more patients in more countries. We believe nuclear medicine can improve treatment outcomes across as much as 80 percent of cancer types, particularly advanced or metastatic stages where tracers can precisely target and destroy tumours. Our immediate focus is on neuroendocrine tumours and prostate cancer, with promising work underway in other cancer indications. In prostate cancer, our first Phase III therapeutic trial compared our radioligand therapy head-to-head with advanced hormonal treatments, and it met the primary endpoint. We are now preparing regulatory submissions, first to the FDA, followed by the EMA, Japan, and China. It marks an important step toward making this novel therapy available to patients worldwide and underscores our ambition to bring meaningful innovation to those living with advanced prostate cancer.

What are the main pillars of Curiumâ??s growth strategy?

Our growth strategy rests on two fundamental pillars, innovation and geographic expansion. We reinvest 100% of our profits into R&D to develop new products, ensuring that our progress remains firmly science-led. At the same time, while our presence already spans around 70 countries, we see major opportunities in underrepresented regions such as Japan, China, Latin America, and Australia. Expanding into these markets, alongside advancing our innovation pipeline, forms the foundation of our next growth chapter, driven by our purpose to enable mo patients to benefit from the transformative potential of nuclear medicine.

Acquisitions and partnerships act as strategic multipliers. On the innovation side, we selectively acquire or in-license differentiated assets that complement our focus areas. A recent example is a diagnostic tracer for prostate cancer, closely aligned with our therapeutic work in the same indication. We licensed the product, completed a Phase III trial in Europe, and launched it successfully across the region, with expansion now underway into other markets.

In terms of geographic expansion, we have also expanded into the Nordics through a targeted deal in Finland, reinforcing our European network. Another particularly strategic move was the acquisition of Monrol, a leading Turkish radiopharmaceutical company. This not only brought us a promising pipeline â?? such as Lu-177 and Gallium-68 generators â?? but also access to Turkey and several high-growth Middle Eastern markets.

In parallel, partnerships continue to play a pivotal role. Our collaboration with PeptiDream and its subsidiary PDRadiopharma in Japan focuses on developing and commercialising innovative radioligand therapies, helping to bring these cutting-edge treatments to Japanese patients. Together, these initiatives strengthen both our scientific depth and our global presence, positioning Curium to deliver lasting impact in nuclear medicine.

What role does France play within Curiumâ??s global footprint and long-term strategy?

While the United States remains our largest market, France holds a central position in our global operations with our International headquarters based in Paris. It is home to one of our largest employee bases, c. 700 people, and serves as a major manufacturing and innovation hub. Our flagship site for SPECT is in Saclay, south of Paris, and employs c. 350 people and forms the backbone of our European operations. In addition, we operate a dozen smaller PET sites across the country, each staffed by 10 to 15 people, ensuring proximity to hospitals and patients.

We are continuing to invest significantly in France to meet rising demand across both diagnostics and therapy. Two of our most recent and important projects are located here. At Saclay, we are establishing a new production line for future innovative products like Cu-64 diagnostic products, which will supply the entire European market and beyond (e.g. weâ??re currently supplying doses to Japan as part of a clinical study). We have also set-up an API lab that is derisking supply of critical API from higher-risk countries. In Rennes, Brittany, we are opening what will become our largest PET-production facility in the country, reflecting the growing need for advanced imaging and treatment capabilities. We are also establishing a strategic partnership with Arronax in Nantes, one of Franceâ??s leading research hubs.

France is also one of our four global manufacturing hubs, alongside the United States, the Netherlands, and Turkey. We also operate close to 80 smaller PET sites and radiopharmacies worldwide, across Europe, the Middle East, India, and Malaysia. This distributed network is vital to our work: because some radioisotopes, such as F-18, decay rapidly so each site typically serves a catchment area of only three to four hours by road. Ensuring this proximity allows us to deliver every dose at the optimal activity level â?? precision and reliability that define the essence of nuclear medicine.

How would you characterise Curiumâ??s experience with regulatory frameworks across different markets, given the complexity of nuclear medicine?

Regulation in nuclear medicine is uniquely multifaceted, encompassing several layers beyond standard pharmaceutical oversight. In addition to pharmaceutical authorities, we work within rigorous frameworks for radiation safety and transport. Each site must undergo regular inspections to ensure radioactive materials are managed responsibly, while logistics pose their own challenges. Moving isotopic targets, for instance, from a reactor in Poland to a production site in the Netherlands involves navigating multiple national regulations and transport requirements. The same applies to air shipments of radioactive materials, which require extensive coordination and certification. While demanding, these processes create high entry barriers and reinforce the quality and safety standards that define our field.

From a pharmaceutical perspective, we have traditionally engaged with regulators highly experienced in radiopharmaceuticals. However, as the field expands into therapeutic applications and becomes more mainstream, we increasingly interact with broader divisions within agencies that may be less familiar with the nuances of nuclear medicine. This shift has added a layer of complexity, particularly in markets such as China. The National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) has made remarkable progress in fast-tracking innovative drugs and aligning with FDA standards, yet the approval pathways for radiopharmaceuticals are still maturing. We remain confident that regulatory clarity will come as the sector continues to advance.

Elsewhere, the processes are demanding but comparable to those in other areas of pharma. The greater challenge often lies not in securing regulatory approval, but in scaling production, from small clinical batches to tens or hundreds of thousands of commercial doses. Ensuring consistent quality at that scale requires exceptional process validation and manufacturing control, and it is in these areas that Curiumâ??s technical depth and operational excellence truly stand out.

How is Curium preparing to stay ahead in a rapidly evolving field?

We are taking deliberate steps to strengthen our innovation and operational capabilities for the long term. A key milestone is the creation of *Curium Biopharma*, a dedicated business unit focused exclusively on advancing our pipeline, from early research to in-licensing of promising Phase I and II assets. By bringing together expertise across R&D, clinical development, regulatory affairs and project management, this unit ensures that innovation remains at the core of what we do.

Another major priority is talent. As competition for expertise in oncology and nuclear medicine intensifies, we are investing heavily in attracting and developing the best people across all functions. Our medical affairs teams, for instance, are expanding significantly as we prepare for upcoming launches, strengthening scientific and clinical engagement.

We are also working to bridge the growing gap between supply and demand. The sector has already seen instances where manufacturing capacity constrained patient access, underscoring the need for robust infrastructure. To that end, we are investing in new production lines and sites across the US, Europe, Japan, and other key regions to ensure reliable supply and sustainable growth.

How well recognised is Curiumâ??s brand across your international markets?

Within nuclear medicine, Curium is firmly established as the global leader and is well recognised across the US, Europe and beyond by hospitals, radiopharmacies, and nuclear medicine physicians who have used our products for decades. In some markets, that familiarity even extends to our legacy entities, reflecting our deep roots in the field.

Where greater awareness is still needed is beyond the traditional nuclear medicine community. As we expand into therapeutic and diagnostic products for broader oncology indications such as prostate cancer and neuroendocrine tumours, we are increasingly engaging new audiences like urologists and medical oncologists. For many of these specialists, nuclear medicine remains a relatively recent addition to their treatment practice, so strengthening our visibility and credibility among this wider group will be a key focus as we continue bringing innovative therapies to patients worldwide.

Where do you see Curium heading in the coming years, and what will success look like by 2030 and beyond?

By 2030-2035, I hope to look back and see that we have successfully brought our flagship therapeutic products to patients worldwide. These treatments combine strong efficacy with excellent safety, and their global launch will mark an important milestone for us both scientifically and operationally. But success, to me, also means having generated the resources to continually reinvest in innovation, ensuring a sustainable pipeline that keeps advancing nuclear medicine.

Our ambition is to build on these launches by broadening our reach across additional cancer indications, moving forward one disease area at a time. With a robust late-stage pipeline and a growing foundation of earlier assets, we are positioning Curium to lead the next era of radiopharmaceutical progress, delivering meaningful impact for patients while strengthening our role as a global pioneer in the field.

See more interviews