

2015 life sciences outlook Costa Rica

Pursuing innovative amid ongoing financial constraints is a key issue facing Costa Rica's life sciences industry in 2015. Companies have a great growth and consolidation opportunity, driven by efficiency, to provide a larger portion of the population with access to life sciences products and services (and thus contribute marginally to profitability). However, Costa Rica's government has been encouraging budgetary cuts in the public health care sector because a series of factors have contributed to an increase in the sector's expenses. For example, campaigns for the early detection of breast cancer have made it possible to discover the illness in its early stages but financial pressures facing social security have led to a series of operating budget reductions.

Despite financial challenges, government support for life sciences innovation is becoming more evident. In April 2014, the Congress of the Republic passed the Biomedical Research Regulation Law, which will allow medical research using human beings after a four-year ban. According to Guillermo Rodríguez, President of the Costa Rican Institute of Clinical Research (ICIC), the lack of this law meant that over 14,000 patients did not have the opportunity to participate in clinical studies; 20 private clinical research centers were closed; some professionals were laid off; and 250 clinical research projects were suspended.

The Biomedical Research Regulation Law is a great advancement for Costa Rica's scientific community and may foster growth of the life sciences sector because it gives the private, academic, and public sectors a green light to produce new drugs and develop new medical devices. It could also help to position Costa Rica on the world stage in the field of health care innovation, specifically for pancreatic and gastric cancer treatments. Finally, the law may help Costa Rica to restore the trust of capital investors who were forced to take their funds to countries such as Panama, Guatemala, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia.

Passage of the Biomedical Research Regulation Law could help to position Costa Rica on the world stage in the field of health care innovation, specifically for pancreatic and gastric cancer treatments.



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