



National recognition for Life Scientific CEO Nicola Mitchell

Nicola Mitchell CEO of off-patent agrochemical development company, Life Scientific has been named as a finalist in the 2020 EY Entrepreneur of the year competition.

As one of the 24 finalists chosen from across the island of Ireland, Nicola has been nominated within the International category. One overall winner will be chosen from this or the Emerging and Industry categories, as Entrepreneur Of The Year 2020 in November.

The awards are in their 23rd year, and the programme has grown to a network of c.525 alumni, with the majority doing business with one another.

Nicola hopes that in entering the competition she will be able to raise the profile of the ground-breaking, innovative science that the Dublin-based company has developed, based on bringing a wider range of valuable off-patent agrochemicals to market more efficiently and faster than ever before.

So what is Life Scientific's approach? It is the ability to reverse engineer a product from the original to produce a product accepted as identical by the agrochemical regulatory authority.

"It's a bit like unravelling the Coca Cola recipe, by taking the final product and breaking it down into its component ingredients, so that we can then put it back together," she says.

"The large multinational companies do a brilliant job bringing products to market. They have very talented organic chemists who put an immense amount of work into developing the most remarkable innovations – so good, they believe analytical chemists will never unravel them. Well that's the challenge."

"When you already have a product of outstanding performance, to redevelop it makes no sense."

"Our approach of reverse engineering means we can offer agrochemical products to agronomists and growers earlier than any other off-patent company – which is significant - and makes us unique.

"The only difference between our product and the brand leader product is cost: ours costs less."

But producing the clone is only half the story. “We then have to get the product approved and the natural reaction of regulators is to say ‘no’. We have to build a very convincing case to show our product is comparable and ensure the only conclusion they come to is to say ‘yes’.”

Since its first product launch in the UK back in 2011 Life Scientific today has a portfolio of more than 60 products available in EU’s largest agrochemical markets. This is backed-up by a strong development pipeline, and clear pathways to expansion outside of Europe, including US and South America.

“We are facing a world where the growing population needs feeding alongside a decrease in the availability of good arable land and favourable growing conditions; we simply need to be producing more efficiently from what we have- which is exactly what Life Scientific is doing.”