



Life Scientific 's CEO Nicola Mitchell wins the 2020 EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Nicola Mitchell CEO of off-patent agrochemical manufacturer Life Scientific based In Dublin, has won the highly prestigious and acclaimed national 2020 EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Nicola will now go on to represent Ireland and compete at the EY World Entrepreneur Of The Year Awards in Monte Carlo in June 2021.

Nicola's motivation to join the EY programme was to provide a platform to share 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.

There is no denying the success of this approach. Today, Life Scientific employs over 70 people, has a portfolio of 62 registered products sold in 5 countries, achieving 50% revenue growth to €60m in the last financial year, and targeting €250m by 2025.

The EY Entrepreneur of the Year Awards were established 23 years ago, to promote entrepreneurship across the island of Ireland and empower entrepreneurs. The programme not only ensures national and international recognition for successful finalists and Alumni but also provides invaluable networking and business opportunities.

This year's programme was themed "The Unstoppables" and all 24 finalists were split into three categories; emerging, industry and international. The winner of each category went on to compete for the overall national award, judged by an international panel of past winners and sponsor representatives.

As the winner of the international category, Nicola was up against John O'Connell of West Cork Distillers heading up the industry category, and Professor John Cooper of Inflazome in the emerging category.

The awards were presented live at a virtual event on Thursday 12th November. Sitting in her home, surrounded by family, Nicola was over the moon as she was announced the overall national winner, and put down the win to hard work and attracting the very best people to the business.

“I am absolutely thrilled with this award, it’s surreal to have won, this really is the best night of my life!” said Nicola. “I couldn’t do any of it without the fantastic team at Life Scientific and I cannot wait to share this with them.”

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.

“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’.”

“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.”