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ZARA ASGHARPOUR, MBA

HEAD OF EXTERNAL INNOVATIONS
INTEGRATED BIOLOGICS
LONZA AG

INVESTMENTS & EARLY INNOVATION
PARTNERING



EXTERNAL INNOVATION | VENTURE INVESTMENT | VENTURE CAPITAL

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Internationally experienced leader with 15+ years' experience in Biotech, Pharmaceutical Manufacturing & Medtech. As the Head of External Innovation at Lonza, I oversee global Innovation Center's portfolio of co-investments and collaboration to construct, prioritize and advance the early external innovation portfolio pipeline. By identifying and accelerating science and technology in areas of strategic value to biologics and specialized modalities in pharmaceutical manufacturing, we explore new business models of investment and collaboration to support company's inorganic growth. I have been a part of biologics' leadership team since 2022, as head of External Innovation & Transactions, where I lead a senior team to search, evaluate and execute early-stage investment and partnership transactions with diverse partners in the life sciences ecosystem, including venture capital, accelerator, entrepreneurs, academics and governmental organizations. With a broad background in venture investment and commercial activities, I have over a decade of diverse business and transaction experience, including investments and acquisitions in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries at companies including Lonza, Carl Zeiss & Materialise. I am a board member of Switzerland Innovation Organization, as well as having board positions with several companies and LP member at a VC fund of Lonza. I received my PhD in Human Biology from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and recently finished my Executive MBA at Judge Business School, Cambridge University, UK.

Core Competences:

Deal-flow sourcing – Due Diligence– Deal Execution- Venture Investment – Strategic Partnerships
Leadership- Team Building- Multi-Stakeholder Management – Business Development

EXPERIENCE

HEAD OF EXTERNAL INNOVATION INTEGRATED BIOLOGICS
LONZA AG. Basel, Switzerland

Nov 22-Present

Leading external innovation team within Biologics business unit. Leading the end-to-end co-investment and external innovation partnerships (search & evaluations, technology in-licensing & venture investments). Managing internal stakeholders in venture fund, R&D, Licensing and business unit to accelerate acquisition of new technology and business models. I set up and lead the internal process & governance for evaluation of innovation and investment opportunities in strategic growth areas. I have established a strong global network within venture capital and innovation ecosystem of US and Europe (Boston, Basel, London, Cambridge & San Francisco).

Driving Investment Strategy, Governance & Process

- Mapping out and implementing investment & innovation governance & process
- Leading innovation strategy with a focus on inorganic growth within biologics division
- Driving an end-to-end deal execution process (identifying investment opportunities, evaluation, negotiation & deal execution)

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- Building a network of venture capital firms specialized in Biotech & Therapeutics in Europe & US
- Leading venture board committee meetings for decision making on innovation partnering and investments
- Portfolio management, working with management of portfolio companies to create value and new offers for Integrated Biologics
- Leading transactions of deals with legal & finance departments

Strategic Leadership & Team Building

- Built & leading a senior team of external innovation leads in US & Europe
- Mentoring new team members and supporting their internal integration
- Managing relationship between various stakeholders in business units (Biologics & Specialized Modalities) Licensing, M&A functions

Strategic Investments & Early Innovation Partnering

- Set up co-investment strategy with leading venture capital in life science
- Grew investment and external partnership pipeline by 3 vs. previous years (20 in 2023, 16 total in 2024 & 30 in 2025)
- Managing LP-VC relationships of Lonza with VC funds
- Building strategic partnerships with startups, venture capitals, accelerators and leading academic institutions in Europe, UK & US

SENIOR INVESTMENT MANAGER ,CORPORATE VENTURE CAPITAL Carl ZEISS AG. Oberkochen, Germany

2018-2022

I led investments at Corporate VC at Carl ZEISS AG in areas of strategic growth in digital health and diagnostics. I led entire deal process from sourcing to execution for Zeiss Meditech unit, worked cross functionally with Finance, Legal & IP departments and created governance and investment process for deal evaluation and execution with a focus in investment in Series A& B. I built a strong network of venture capital and innovation ecosystem in healthcare startups in Europe, UK and the US.

Investment Strategy Development on AI-driven solutions for Digital Health & Diagnostics

- Led investment strategy with a focus on early-stage investments in digital health
- Led investment strategy for development and integration of AI & digital diagnostics
- Led investment strategy for Diagnostics in AMD (age-related macular degeneration)

Driving Deal Evaluation & Execution

- Identifying and sourcing Investment opportunities based on defined strategy (Diagnostics & Digital health)
- Deal flow (Caresyntax, Augmedics, Digital Surgery, Proscia, Curemetrix, Optellum)
- Driving scientific and financial due-diligence process, conducting interviews with founders, evaluation of technologies and preparing decision making documents for recommendation to the venture board
- Conducting financial valuation on start-ups using various financial models
- Leading venture investment committee with venture board and recommendation on investment opportunities
- Deal execution on investments within digital health & diagnostics (mindpeak, Hypervision Surgical)
- Building and maintaining a strong network of top start-ups, Venture Capitals in US, UK, Europe

GLOBAL PRODUCT & INNOVATION MANAGER MATERIALISE N.V. Leuven, Belgium

2016 – 2018

Built strategic partnerships with KOLs in Academia in R&D, joint collaborations and Licensing opportunities. Developed and executed go-to-market strategy for medical image processing software, development of roadmap and budget planning. Led a team of engineers and innovation managers, collaborating with the global marketing

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and business development team for successful release of the new software products in digital surgery planning. Identified new technology trends and managed the process for evaluation and integration of new technologies within Imaging, segmentation & digital surgical planning.

Strategy Development

- Defined, planned & executed the global product marketing strategy for medical software solutions
- Developed a new pricing strategy resulting in 50% increase in revenue
- Defined marketing strategy for an annual Innovation Award, an enterprise prize for identifying projects with a compelling commercial impact
- Identified new technology trends in digital health & software solutions and creating business plans

Commercial Operations

- Key responsibility for business growth of a software product with \$20 million annual revenue
- Built strategic partnerships with KOLs in academic institutions (Bioengineering & Biomedical Engineering) departments, e.g. MIT, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Imperial College, UCL, Oxford University, Griffith University

Leadership & Team building

- Managed a remote & global team of product developers, software engineers in US, UK, Europe, Asia and Australia (overall team of 30 with 5 direct reports)
- Managed relationship between product/marketing /business development and supporting marketing and sales team by providing them strategies for growth, marketing campaigns, growing number of leads
- Executed legal contracts & IP collaboration agreements with external partners

PATENT ENGINEER

2012-2015

Grünecker Patent und Rechtsanwälte Part mbB, Munich, Germany

- Performed patent prosecution, reviewed objections from the EESR and provided technical suggestions on further proceeding to clients in field of Medical Technology, Industry and Life Sciences

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Executive MBA, Judge Business School, Cambridge University	2026
Pharmacology- Drug Discovery & Development, Harvard Medical School	2024
Corporate Finance / the London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSE)	2019
PhD in Human Biology/ Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU)	2012
M.Sc. in Computational Engineering / Technical University of Munich (TUM)	2008
M.Sc. in Biomedical Engineering/ Azad University, Science & Research	2006

AWARDS

Cambridge University Directors Award, University of Cambridge, UK	2026
Cambridge University Dean's Director Scholarship, University of Cambridge, UK	2024
2 nd Place Medicode VR, Biel/Bienne Start-up Competition, Switzerland	2018

BOARD EXPERIENCE & VENTURE ECOSYSTEM

Board of Trustees and Economic Board Member, Switzerland Innovation Organization
Board Member, Oxartis, Medical Device, Oxford, UK
Industry Expert & Mentor, Nucleate, NY, USA
Advisory Board, Disulfican, Oncology, Therapeutic, Wolverhampton, UK
Managing Director, Elavity, Life Science Accelerator & Venture Building, Oxford
Board Member, Virtonomy, Medical Software, Munich
Venture Lab Coach, Venture Creation & Business Growth in Biotech, Zürich

INTERESTS

Reading - Math – Finance | Tennis- Golf- Hiking