Innovation could attract investments and improve the quality of the Biomedical Sciences in Brazil.

ACM Camargo
Center for Applied Toxinology (CAT), CEPID-FAPESP, Instituto Butantan.

Transforming a promising technology developed in a scientist’s lab into a successfully financed and managed company is an exigent task. Increasingly, governments around the world, instead of pursuing a “laisser faire” policy, have begun to take a more proactive approach to directing the development of science, with mixed results. There are three approaches that have been used for different countries:

1- The governments attempt to prioritize and provide leadership on a specific technology. One of the best examples is the Japanese government, through the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) by targeting bio-nanotechnology applications as a future cornerstone, such as drug-delivery systems, self-assembly structures based on DNA and bio-molecular motors;

2- The government establishes recruitment programs of expatriate senior scientists. In China more than 200 scientists living abroad returned to China and were responsible for the boom in biotechnology, such as the development of the Beijing Biochip Technology;

3- The universities, through federal technology-transfer policies, have become much more aggressive in directing and finding homes for their scientific discoveries in new start-up companies. In the US, after the Bayh-Dole Act created in 1980, a uniform patent policy allowed the creation in 1999, for instance, of 344 new companies from licensed technologies, adding more than US$ 40 billion to the US economy and supporting 260,000 jobs.

A growing number of countries that adopted these general rules attracted investments and improved the quality of the Biomedical Sciences, expanded their economy and created thousands of new jobs for academic people.

We will be presenting one modest example provided by the Centers for Research, Innovation and Dissemination (CEPID-FAPESP). We will discuss on how, even in absence of a Government General Policy, opportunities for scientists and for the Brazilian Pharmaceutical & Biotechnological enterprises can be stimulated, specially in areas exploiting our biodiversity.