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Monika Lessl is Head of Corporate Innovation and R&D at Bayer AG promoting Innovation throughout the organization. She is leading strategic approaches to promote Bayer's Innovation capabilities, foster Open Innovation, strengthen cross-functional R&D capabilities and drive Social Innovation.

Prior to this role she was head of Innovation Strategy at Bayer AG where she developed Bayer's Innovation Agenda. Until 2013 she led the External Innovation Therapeutics function at Bayer HealthCare in Berlin, Germany, where she designed the therapeutic partnering strategies and established a number of novel and innovative partnership models with academia, biotech and Venture Capital as well as open innovation initiatives.

Prior to this she was CEO of the Ernst Schering Foundation, where she promoted innovative programs to foster emerging research areas and excellent young scientists. She spent 8 years as a scientist and lab head in the research laboratories of Schering AG performing drug development in the area of Women's Health Care.

She holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the Max Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics in Berlin and a Diploma in General Management from Ashridge Business School London. She served as a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the British council and is a former fellow of the Robert Bosch Foundation. In 2012 she received the BHC GDD Award for Collaborative Innovation. Her research interests focus on innovation management and success factors for value generating collaborations between industry, academia and biotech. She has published a number of articles regarding collaborative innovation and acts as a reviewer for leading journals such as Nature Biotechnology.