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## **HSBC Malta welcomes DwarnaBio for an on-site sample collection**

HSBC Malta recently welcomed the Dwarna team to its offices at HSBC Hub in Qormi to carry out an on-site sample collection session as part of DwarnaBio's ongoing recruitment efforts.

Dwarna (dwarna.mt) is Malta's national population-based biobank, which aims to serve as a resource for genomic research in the Maltese population. The initiative supports long-term research that aims to improve understanding of health and disease, with a strong focus on direct public engagement in research.

During the visit to HSBC Hub, the DwarnaBio team collected blood and saliva samples from HSBC Malta employees who generously volunteered to contribute to this research effort. Their participation helps expand the growing resource and reinforces DwarnaBio's aim to prioritise direct public engagement in research. It also reflects a move away from the traditional concept of research subjects as passive sample donors, towards a more proactive and collaborative approach that considers the general public as active research participants.

The session at HSBC Hub in Qormi was organised to make participation simple and convenient for the bank employees. Dwarna set up a temporary collection station on site, where participants were guided through the process by trained staff. Each volunteer provided informed consent and had the opportunity to learn more about how their contribution supports long-term research. The initiative was supported by the HSBC Malta Foundation, whose involvement helped make the on-site session possible.

Rita Scicluna, Operations Programme Integration Manager at HSBC Malta, who was instrumental in making the on-site DwarnaBio session happen, said: "We're proud to support collaborations like DwarnaBio that strengthen Malta's research and innovation ecosystem. By bringing the sample collection on site, we made it simpler for colleagues to take part and contribute to research that can improve health outcomes for the wider community. I'm also grateful to the HSBC Malta Foundation for its support in helping make this initiative possible."

Prof Nikolai P. Pace from Dwarna, said, "On behalf of DwarnaBio, I'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to HSBC Malta for the invitation and for the support provided in organising and delivering the on-site session. It was an incredibly fruitful opportunity that will help Dwarna's mission going forward, and we're grateful to the bank employees who volunteered so generously."

Dwarna is an active member of the pan-European Biobanking and BioMolecular resources Research Infrastructure (BBMRI) and a research partner in the 1 Million Genomes of Europe initiative.



***Photocaption: The DwarnaBio team collected blood and saliva samples from HSBC Malta employees***

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