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REASONS WHY ONE SHOULD SET UP A LIFE SCIENCES R&D ENTITY IN BELGIUM



EXCEPTIONAL
PEOPLE



UNPARALLELED
GRANTS AND
FINANCIAL
INCENTIVES



CENTRALLY
LOCATED
INFRASTRUCTURE



EXTENSIVE
NETWORK &
SUPPORTIVE
ENVIRONMENT



Exceptional people

1. Strong life sciences PRESENCE
2. Big in BIOPHARMA
3. ACADEMIC excellence
4. Global leader in CLINICAL development

1. Strong life sciences PRESENCE

Belgium boasts a dense network of more than 270 biotech companies in close physical proximity to and working closely with universities, research institutes and hospitals, and Belgium is number 1 in concentration of life sciences employees. A wide array of life sciences includes an important focus on **health biotech and medical technologies**. Belgium also houses the biggest R&D hub for **plant biotech** and emerging **industrial biotech**, with the largest integrated bio-energy production complex in Europe. Together with the universities, research institutes and hospitals, the entire value chain is represented.

2. Big in BIOPHARMA

Belgium is worldwide the **number 1** in terms of **medicines in development** per capita, the world's 7th largest investor in the world in biopharmaceutical R&D and in the Top 10 of the most innovative pharma valleys worldwide (*Nature*, 2010), which is a major accomplishment for a country with slightly over 10 million inhabitants. Belgian labs have developed 5 of the 100 essential medicines (WHO). 50% of world-wide HIV anti-virals sales comes from a product developed in Belgium.

Belgium has a **long history in pharma**, being the home country for more than a century to Janssen Pharmaceutica, UCB Pharma, GSK Biologics and Solvay Pharmaceuticals (now Abbott). In addition, many foreign top pharma companies have established R&D activities in Belgium, such as Baxter, Genzyme, AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Complementing these are a large number of listed and privately held biopharma ventures (Galapagos, Ablynx, Tibotec, ThromboGenics, TiGenix, reMYND, Ovizio Imaging Systems, Peptisyntha, Delphi Genetics, Cardio3 BioSciences, Promethera BioSciences, Bone Therapeutics, Euroscreen, Mithra Pharmaceuticals, Artelis/ATMI, Beta-Cell...).

Annual exports of the **Belgian biopharma cluster exceed € 34 billion**, and Belgium is as such the **2nd largest pharmaceutical export** country in the world.

3. ACADEMIC excellence

Companies can plug into a large pool of talented scientists and technicians. **8 world-renowned universities** support life sciences in Belgium. Four of these are joined in the renowned biotech **research institute VIB**, a breeding place for breakthrough research and new industrial activity, with more than 1,200 life science researchers and the source of high level biotech start-ups such as Ablynx. The **CMI, Center for Medical Innovation**, has been set-up to address the challenge of increasing the translational success from pre-clinical to clinical development, and encourages research collaboration in hospitals, universities and the pharmaceutical industry. The research is also supported by **INNOVIRIS** (the Brussels Institute for Research and innovation). In 2009, Wallonia and regional stakeholders launched an initiative to support excellence in basic research conducting to potential technology transfers in the fields of medical, pharmaceutical and veterinary biotechnologies: **WELBIO**, the institute for Walloon excellence in life sciences and biotechnology.

4. Global leader in CLINICAL development

Belgium has the highest number of Phases I to III clinical trials per capita, and the **highest number of Phase I clinical trials** in Europe in absolute terms with one of the world's fastest approval times for clinical trials (Phase I < 2 weeks). Medical research in Belgium can rely on the support of a **dense medical network** of 167 well equipped hospitals (7 university hospitals), with a top reputation in clinical trials.



Unparalleled grants and financial incentives

- 5. Strong CAPITAL and GRANTS
- 6. Supportive TAX INCENTIVES

5. Strong CAPITAL and GRANTS

The Federal and Regional **government** provide generous **grants and subsidies** for the research and development of innovative products & processes. **IWT**, the government institute for Science and Technology in Flanders, is a 1-stop counter for non-refundable subsidies for R&D programs, with an active guidance of applications with a success rate of over 80%. The Brussels Regional Investment Agency (**SRIB**), Business Angels Connect, the Participation Fund and the Warranty Fund offer different possibilities of funding start-ups and fast growing companies. Through the Technology Development Department (**DG06**), Wallonia has designed a series of incentives to boost innovation in Wallonia. R&D incentives include: grants for basic industrial research, refundable advances for applied research (up to 75 % of the R&D cost), specific assistance (such as technical and economic studies, human resources, technology transfer support).

Private investors and well-capitalized **VC funds** (local: Gimv, KBC, Vesalius, LRM, ING, Biovest, ...

and international: Abingworth, Sofinnova, Alta, LSP, Crédit Agricole, SRone, MP Healthcare, Aescap, Forbion, Ventech, Gilde, ...) are keen to invest in promising life sciences projects. The stock exchange of Euronext Brussels provides an attractive platform to raise public money, with a disproportionately high representation of biotech companies. Belgium holds the **3rd largest combined market cap** of public biotech companies in Europe.

6. Supportive TAX INCENTIVES

Attractive tax breaks (75% exemption from withholding tax) are available on researcher salaries. Belgium also offers one of the world's most **favorable tax systems** for **patent income** (only 20% of patent income needs to be recognized as taxable revenue, giving a maximum 6.8% tax rate). Other attractive tax breaks include the notional interest mechanism (tax break on about 4% of equity), the refundable R&D tax credit system, and an increased investment deduction and flexible depreciation rules for R&D.



Centrally located infrastructure

- 7. Tailor-made FACILITIES
- 8. CENTRAL POSITION in Europe

7. Tailor-made FACILITIES

Belgium provides multiple purpose-built **bio-incubators**, located on research parks close to the 8 main universities, where ample space (more than 500,000 sq ft) is available for incoming life sciences ventures at **attractive conditions**. These spaces provide newcomers also an immediate integration in the closely knit biotech network.

8. CENTRAL POSITION in Europe

Strategically located and with **excellent logistics**, Belgium offers access to a potential **market** of **500 million** people. Brussels, the **capital of Belgium**, is also the capital of Europe and is home to many political, economic and industrial decision centers. 1,700 multinational companies have their European headquarters in or around the city. Paris, London and Amsterdam are within a reach of 1 to 2 hours by train.



Extensive network and supportive environment

- 9. STRONG supportive regional BIOTECH CLUSTERS
- 10. Easy and attractive PLACE TO LIVE

9. STRONG supportive regional BIOTECH CLUSTERS

The biotech companies active in Belgium can rely on **strong regional biotech organizations** BrusselsLifeTech & Brussels Export, FlandersBio & FIT and BioWin & AWEX These health bioclusters are aiming to **maximize the innovation potential** of their members and are promoting their strengths inside and outside Europe.

10. Easy and attractive PLACE TO LIVE

Belgium is an attractive place to **live**, with a favorable public opinion on the pharmaceutical industry (with an approval rating of over 80%) and **work**, where one can get around in **English**, with a very **large expat community** being the capital of Europe and the home base for NATO and many European headquarters, **international school facilities**, modern **housing** available in pleasant areas at affordable prices regular public transport and plenty of leisure facilities.

More info about biotech in Belgium on www.belgiumatbious.be



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