

## **BioWin reports record investment in 2016, with €24.3 million (\$25.8M) received by members' R&D projects**

**Jobs and private investment are also up, reflecting the strength of Wallonia's healthcare industry**

**Gosselies, Belgium, April 26, 2017** - BioWin, a health cluster based in Wallonia, Belgium, today announces its review of 2016, based on a survey<sup>1</sup> conducted among its 164 members, revealing that:

- 2016 was a record year for investment in R&D projects, with €24.3 million (\$25.8M) in funding, including €7 million (\$7.4M) in private investment
- 2016 saw sustained growth in jobs in member SMEs with a yearly average of +17.9% since 2005
- A sharp rise in private capital investment in member SMEs: over €1 billion (\$1.1bn) in total over the last 11 years (2005-2016)

"We are pleased with these positive results, which reflect the vitality of the Wallonia region. 2016 was a solid growth year for our members, in all aspects: investment, jobs and private capital," said Sylvie Ponchaut, managing director of the BioWin cluster. "We will continue to provide support in 2017 to raise the profile and increase the appeal of the Wallonia region, particularly with regard to R&D, skills development, international outreach for our members, and obviously, a continued focus on investment."

The pharmaceutical industry is Wallonia's leading business activity in terms of added value, responsible for 25% of the region's exports. Wallonia represents more than 54% of the pharmaceutical sector jobs in Belgium, providing direct employment for 16,960 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE). If the 33,000 indirect jobs are added, the industry accounts for a total of nearly 50,000 jobs.

### **R&D projects**

In 2016, eight of the nine R&D projects submitted to the Wallonia regional government were endorsed by BioWin. Standing at €24.3 million (\$25.8M) in funding, including €7 million (\$7.4M) in private investment, the total budget allocation for these projects is the highest since the cluster was founded in 2006.

These projects fall within the cluster's priority areas, which include the application of digital technologies to bioproduction, implanted medical devices, drug discovery and the use of radiation in healthcare. The digital technology projects are in line with the current growth trend and alone account for a quarter of the total investment.

### **Support for training**

2016 also saw the certification of 4CELLS, the largest-ever training project awarded by the Walloon government in the cell therapy sector.

4CELLS is a training program devoted to cell culture technologies in human health. It aims to support the development of businesses that use these technologies and to underpin their competitiveness by creating a pool of skilled labor, enhancing employees'

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a survey of the 164 BioWin member companies in 2016 by independent consultant M5. Employment trends here relate to full-time equivalents (FTE). Only direct employment is recorded.

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skills and ensuring the delivery of the most innovative training, right from the start of the program.

### International support

In 2016, the cluster created a 'Europe unit'. Now under the leadership of Monique Marrec-Fairley, head of European projects, it aims to help Wallonia's SMEs develop European projects in response to calls for proposals from Horizon 2020, amongst others. Some team members within the cluster also received intensive training to be able to support such projects. As well as providing assistance with project set-ups, the unit also aims to develop BioWin's standing with European Union bodies.

To this end, throughout 2016, BioWin accompanied delegations of cluster members to **major international trade fairs** for the biotech sector (Bio-Europe Spring in Stockholm, Sweden, Fall in Cologne, Germany, Bio US in San Francisco, Bio-Japan in Yokohama and more). It also attended targeted networking initiatives related to specific European regions and thematic areas critical for the cluster (European Regenerative Medicine Forum in Nantes, networking with German Fraunhofer research centers in Wallonia, etc.).

### Key events

Success for **BioWin Day 2016**: In December 2016, the cluster's biennial event welcomed more than 450 attendees for a full day of international networking. A diverse audience of nationals from ten different countries – business people, academics, scientists, consultants, trainers and others – visited the 45 exhibition stands, while more than 200 B2B meetings were arranged, involving 150 participants. Preparations for the 2018 event are already underway.

BioWin is also involved in **investment initiatives** to support its members' growth. The cluster co-organized a day to provide the general public with the opportunity to meet a number of listed companies active in biotechnology, healthcare and medical technology; including UCB, IBA, ASIT biotech, Bone Therapeutics, Celyad and Mithra Pharmaceuticals.

As part of BioWin Day 2016, the cluster arranged two initiatives devoted to investment:

- *CFO Meeting*, to explain how to prepare a company for listing, using the examples of Promethera Biosciences and Bone Therapeutics
- *Attract Investors*, a session where young SMEs pitched to a panel of investors.

This year will see more of these kind of initiatives.

### About BioWin

Founded in 2006, the Wallonia, Belgium based, health cluster is the region's key player for all stakeholders in innovative R&D projects and/or skills development in the field of health biotechnology and medical technology (business, research centers and universities). The cluster has undertaken numerous initiatives to promote Wallonia's scientific and industrial excellence on the international stage. As of 2017, BioWin has 164 members, including seven major corporates, 24 medium-sized and 129 small companies, as well as four research centers. Members are active in a number of fields: biopharmacy and vaccines, cell therapy and regenerative medicine, bioproduction, diagnostics (in vitro and in vivo), radiopharmaceutical applications, implantable and non-implantable medical instruments and devices, and digital health care.

[www.biowin.org](http://www.biowin.org)

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