

PRESS RELEASE

BioWin and MEDVIA sign first strategic collaboration between health clusters in Wallonia and Flanders

The agreement will leverage strengths of two powerhouses dedicated to health to foster cross-border collaboration, building critical mass and consolidating sector to maintain Belgium's position as a leader in Europe's healthcare industry.

Namur and Ghent, Belgium, 14th May 2024 – BioWin, the health cluster of Wallonia, and MEDVIA, the health innovation cluster of Flanders, today announce a strategic partnership to foster innovation and cross-border collaboration in the Belgian health sector. This is the first agreement of its kind to be signed between a Walloon and a Flemish cluster.

BioWin and MEDVIA's members include a broad range of stakeholders in the healthcare ecosystem – academic and clinical research laboratories, approved research centers, large industrial groups, SMEs, service providers, higher education colleges and universities, incubators, investors, authorities and associated administrations. BioWin represents 18,500 employees, with 260 members, including 140 innovative industrial companies, 5 academic institutions and 6 research centers. MEDVIA represents 150 members, including 6 academic institutions, 7 hospitals, and 80 companies with R&D activities. Both clusters are poised to leverage their collective strengths for mutual growth and advancement.

Through this agreement, BioWin and MEDVIA will address challenges jointly and align funding streams to create joint projects between Walloon and Flemish companies, by facilitating relationships between key stakeholders in both regions, including governments, companies, research institutes and hospitals.

The two health clusters aim to further develop Belgium's vibrant healthtech ecosystem by utilizing each other's strengths to increase the quality of science across the regions, create jobs and grow company valuations, and attract international investors, while developing drugs and medical devices that have a real and positive impact on patients' lives.

The agreement emphasizes several key areas of expertise, including:

- **Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products (ATMPs)/bioproduction:** Initiatives focusing on this growing sector, including the development of a Belgian ATMP hub and talent development endeavors
- **Medtech/healthtech:** Collaboration on national and international initiatives, joint participation in European projects and facilitating access to financial resources for innovative companies
- **Research & innovation:** Joint calls for projects and optimization of initiatives with regional and national funding tools to drive research and innovation forward

"We are eager to begin working with BioWin, as collaboration is in the DNA of both of our organizations. We aim to draw on the unique strongholds and differences between our regions to complement each other, to the benefit of the whole ecosystem. Together, we aim to create maximum

economic and societal value, as well as solidify Belgium’s reputation as a player to be reckoned with in global health innovation,” said Ann Van Gysel, CEO of MEDVIA.

“This partnership with MEDVIA is an exciting opportunity to demonstrate the power of regional collaboration in fostering innovation in the biotech and healthtech field. Together we can be bolder and address the challenges in our ecosystem. We can leverage our strengths to consolidate Belgium’s position as a leading life sciences hub in Europe and have greater impact internationally to bring the best innovative treatments to as many patients as possible,” said Sylvie Ponchaut, managing director of BioWin.

The two clusters started working together in 2023, co-organizing several key conferences such as: Science for Health, supported by the HST Group consortium (Health, Science and Technology Group, a unique alliance of Pfizer, UCB, GSK and Janssen); and the first HealthTech Investor summit in Bruges, giving 75 pitching entrepreneurs access to more than 60 investors.

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About MEDVIA

MEDVIA is an industry-driven membership organization that fosters health innovation in Flanders. We are one of six spearhead clusters supported by Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (VLAIO), nurturing R&D at the intersection of biotech, medtech and digital technologies. We facilitate health innovation – which is increasingly arising at the intersection of devices, drugs, diagnostics and digital solutions – by providing members with funding and services, as well as jointly tackling the challenges facing health entrepreneurs. Together, we pave the way to better health for all. For more, visit medvia.be

About BioWin

BioWin is the health cluster in Wallonia, Belgium, the regional reference for all stakeholders in health, biotech and medtech research, and innovation projects. It includes 260 members from the private, public and academic sectors.

BioWin’s mission is to accelerate innovation to meet tomorrow’s public health challenges and develop the knowledge, employment and competitiveness of all players in the health sector ecosystem. By bringing together all the innovation players in Wallonia’s life sciences field, BioWin aims to stimulate regional economic redeployment. The cluster is also involved in implementing the sector’s industrial policy (industrial innovation and research, training, support for business growth), to develop and anchor skills, knowledge and jobs.

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