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Wallonia Export-Investment Agency

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THE HEALTH CLUSTER OF WALLONIA


  
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EXPORT INVESTMENT

## Wallonia: cell therapy powerhouse in the heart of Europe

Over the past two decades, Wallonia has emerged as a global powerhouse of cell therapy and regenerative medicine research and development.

Situated in the heart of Europe, the Belgian region of Wallonia has created a vibrant innovation ecosystem by equally investing in, and supporting the growth of, scientific excellence and entrepreneurial leadership. The life science sector in particular has experienced remarkable growth and dynamism, and in the cell therapy and regenerative medicine space, concerted efforts in cell characterization and isolation, technology transfer, and clinical manufacturing and development have resulted in technological and scientific excellence that is gaining increased international recognition (Fig. 1).

Key drivers behind this dynamic innovation ecosystem are AWEX, Wallonia Export-Investment Agency, and BioWin, the Health Competitiveness Cluster of the Walloon Region.

### AWEX: investing in a unique innovation ecosystem

AWEX is a public interest organization in charge of promoting foreign trade and attracting foreign investments to Wallonia with the support of the regional government. As such, AWEX helps drive regional innovation in areas ranging from aeronautics and space or environmental technologies to transport and logistics or life sciences. AWEX serves as a one-stop destination both for Walloon researchers and entrepreneurs interested in starting their own companies and for potential foreign partners and investors interested in partaking in Wallonia's unique innovation ecosystem.

Wallonia, with its world-class research institutions, a highly trained workforce, and one of the densest transportation networks in Europe, provides an excellent gateway into and out of the European market. AWEX embodies the region's philosophy of dynamic and open innovation through technological partnerships and a robust ecosystem.

### BioWin: accelerating life sciences innovation

BioWin is the life sciences gateway for Wallonia. The cluster's mission is to help drive innovation and to develop a competitive knowledge base and job opportunities in the health sector. BioWin takes a collaborative approach that brings together all players involved in this space: academic and clinical research laboratories, research centers, large industrial groups, small and medium-sized enterprises, service providers, engineering colleges and universities, business incubators, investors, policy makers, and associated bodies.



**Fig. 1 | The many strengths of Wallonia.** Wallonia, situated in the heart of Europe has emerged as a powerhouse of cell therapy and regenerative medicine. CDMO, contract development and manufacturing organization; GMP, good manufacturing practice; R&D, research and development.

Among BioWin's strategic areas, its focus on regenerative medicine and cell therapies serves as an example of how a concerted effort to (1) support research and development projects and build a network of infrastructures and platforms, (2) support business growth, (3) develop high-level skilled training programs, and (4) generate international business development opportunities can, over a short period of time, result in a thriving industry that is rapidly becoming a global reference in this space.

AWEX and BioWin are excited to showcase here (pages B19, B20, B22 & B23) some of the companies growing out of their joint efforts to develop the regenerative medicine and cell therapy potential in Wallonia.

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