



THE HEALTH CLUSTER OF WALLONIA

BioWin spearheads 'Talent Now', a unique initiative to tackle recruitment shortages and challenges in the healthtech industry

With the support of Walloon government and private companies, 'Talent Now' public-private consortium will pave way for EU Biotech Campus, set to open in Gosselies in 2025

Study performed by BioWin showed potential of close to 1,000 recruitments per year in biomanufacturing and R&D activities in Wallonia

Gosselies, Belgium, May 4, 2022 – BioWin, the health cluster of Wallonia, today announces the launch of 'Talent Now', a new initiative aiming to tackle the recruitment challenges in the biotech and medtech industry in Belgium. For the first time, public and private parties join forces to respond to the specific and urgent requirements of companies in need of talent recruitment in the biotechnology and healthtech sectors.

The partners in this unique initiative include leading private companies GSK, UCB, Univercells, ThermoFisher, Takeda and Janssen. The project also has the support of the Walloon Government, represented by Christie Morreale, Vice-President of the Walloon Government and Minister of Employment, Training and Health and Willy Borsus, Vice-President of Wallonia and Minister of Economy, Research and Innovation.

"We are thrilled that this initiative enables a fruitful collaboration between clusters, leading companies and public players in the region. It has become critical for life sciences sectors such as biomanufacturing and cell and gene therapies to inform, attract and retain expert talents while enabling continuing education and training to maintain our global competitiveness," said Christie Morreale, Vice-President of the Walloon Government and Minister of Employment, Training and Health.

"It is our ambition to collaborate on a national and European level to find immediate solutions to the talent shortage in the life sciences industry. It's time to give it a strategic boost to support innovative Walloon healthtech companies and our economic growth by engaging expert talents, and continue to strengthen the Belgian biopharmaceutical ecosystem," explained Willy Borsus, Vice-President of Wallonia, Minister of Economy, Research and Innovation.

The 'Talent Now' project is based on the outcome of a quantitative and qualitative study, performed by BioWin in 2019 and 2020, on the needs of biopharma, medical technology and data science companies. The study findings highlight the shortage of very diverse profiles at different education levels (high and medium skilled master's and bachelor's) in large, medium and small companies. Specific roles that are highly in demand include scientists, project managers, engineers, production technicians, operators and developers.

With the Covid-19 crisis, the need for these profiles has been amplified, especially in biomanufacturing and R&D. One of the eight recommendations of the report is to develop a dedicated, expert consortium such as 'Talent Now'.

Key findings from the study

- About 2,400 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs were necessary to fulfill the need for talent in the biopharma and medtech sectors for the 2020-2023 period. The need for 800 FTE's per year is still there with the Covid-19 crisis and its aftermath
- 50% of the required jobs are in biomanufacturing
- 30 to 40% of the jobs are in R&D activities, which indicates a high potential for development in the sector

A unique initiative in the healthtech sector to meet tomorrow's talent challenges

The three-year project, has three main objectives:

1. To develop a talent recruitment strategy/increase the pool of available talent (reconversions, mobilisation of atypical profiles, recruit abroad, etc.)
2. To centralise the recruitment and development demands of the industry and develop hiring and training solutions with companies, operators and the network
3. To increase the synergies between the players in the field of continuing education and training, such as aptaskil (Senneffe and Liège), Biotech GIGA, Forem, IFAPME, HeLSci and others to stimulate and reinforce collaboration

Philippe Denoel, chairman of BioWin, said: "The 'Talent Now' project will pave the way to the launch of the EU Biotech Campus in 2025. With these two ambitious initiatives I am confident that our industry will be able to face the challenge of finding the right skills and growing our talent pool to contribute to the development of new innovative health solutions and support our growth ambition and competitiveness."

The consortium will collaborate with Forem, the Public Service for Employment and Vocational Training in Wallonia (Belgium), and the 'Wallonie Compétence d'Avenir' initiative, the regional training operators and the European Biotech Campus. Among the planned activities are:

- Several communication campaigns to promote the attractiveness of the biotech and medtech sectors to job seekers
- The identification of candidates from other sectors who can be trained for life sciences roles via transferrable skills
- The use of modern approaches and technologies such as Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality (VR/AR) to accelerate learning



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European Biotech Campus to open in 2025 to develop healthtech talents to support start-ups and scale-ups

The EU Biotech Campus (EBC) should be up and running in Gosselies (Charleroi, Belgium) by 2025. It is a new on-campus multi-operator and multi-partner professional training centre and business accelerator dedicated to the development of talents, skills and businesses in the biotech and health industries. It offers state-of-the-art infrastructure and services that are made available for students and jobseekers, academics, spin-offs, start-ups, scale-ups and multinationals. This inclusive project aims to welcome training providers and business accelerators in a one-stop shop flagship setting. Together they will develop relevant training programs for job seekers, workers and students, as well as accelerating the business of start-ups and spin-offs (SMEs). This model aims to develop competencies whilst promoting a business mindset.

The EU Biotech Campus project is developed by Didier Malherbe, the president of BCI-Pharma and vice president of the Walloon Union of Enterprises (UWE), and by bio.be/essenscia, the federation representing the biotech and life sciences industry in Belgium. BioWin is on the board of directors. The goal is to implement cutting-edge infrastructure, attract the best experts from Belgium and abroad, and offer appropriate infrastructure so that a wide range of partners can offer their services.

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 250 members from the private, public and academic sectors.

Its 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, with the goal of stimulating 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.

www.biowin.org

With the support from  **Wallonia**

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