Clustering Spin-offs from regional to global level: The experience from Texas A&M and AWEX.
A Low-cost approach to innovation

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A experience at the pursuit of Regional knowledge-based competitiveness

Signature in April 2006 of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AWEX on one side and Texas A&M System on the other.

⇒ Wallonia is the partner of Texas A&M in the European Union for the commercialization of their technologies.
⇒ AWEX is the contact point in Belgium for the realisation of the MOU and federates all Universities, Incubators, and Competitiveness Clusters.
⇒ The MOU is based on reciprocity.
Research Resources at the Texas A&M System

- **Breadth and depth of resources:**
  - One of the top tier research institutions in the United States
  - 9 Universities -- 105,000 students -- 25,000 employees
  - More than 600 million dollars (US) in annual research expenditures
  - More than 2.5 million square feet of research space
  - Largest library of Knockout Mouse Clones in the world at TIGM

- **Deep intellectual capital across many disciplines:**
  - Physical sciences
  - Engineering (the largest in the US)
  - Life sciences
  - Agriculture (the largest in the US)
Texas A&M Office of Technology Commercialization

The Office of Technology Commercialization has:

• processed more than 2,400 inventions created by A&M System faculty and staff
• filed more than 2,700 patent applications
• closed more than 1,700 license agreements and MTAs that generate royalty revenues exceeding US$60 million
• Started three companies in the past 12 months with three more in the pipeline, and generated over US$80 million in new revenue in the past 15 months
AWEX AT A GLANCE

- A public interest organization helping Wallonia companies to export and a one stop shop for foreign investors
- Created in 1998
- Employing a staff of 445, 200 of which abroad
- Budget 2007: 70 millions Euros (65 millions for Foreign Trade and 5 millions for Foreign investments)
- Management contract
- Strategic Plan
A experience at the pursuit of Regional knowledge-based competitiveness

VISION

• Build global companies from start-up by leveraging a network of networks built by technology commercialization partners around the world
  – Technology networks
  – VC / High Net Worth Individual networks
  – Industry networks
  – Board networks
  – Management networks
Creating a Joint Enterprise

- Co-Identify
- Co-Protect
- Co-Invest
- Co-Locate
- Co-Market
Co-Identify

• Tech transfer offices select technologies from universities that can be commercialized
• Technologies that have pull in global markets and can attract investment
• If not already protected, individual offices conduct intellectual property and patent prosecution in own country
Co-Invest

• Seek investment from high net worth individuals or VCs with an affinity for the universities, region, technology and/or mission
Co-Locate

• Form a company around the identified technology
• Transfer the protected technology from the university to the company
• The company will have two locations from start-up – one location in Wallonia, and one in the US
Co-Market

- Allow the locations to market in their own countries
- Creates a company that has market penetration in Wallonia (EU) and the US from inception
Why Wallonia?

- Entrepreneurial spirit, capabilities, resources and infrastructure (9 universities, 6 science parks, over 300 research centers and many business incubators)
- Focus on innovation – attracting the next generation of breakthrough technologies
- A perfect gateway to Europe

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