

Does academic research impact our regional economy?

An interview with Dr Michel MORANT

President of the LIEU Network

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What are the aims of the LIEU Network and Knowledge Transfer Offices (KTOs)?

The universities and higher education institutions in the Federation Wallonie-Bruxelles have a great deal of potential for innovation, which they want to use for the development of the region. This is the aim of KTOs (Knowledge Transfer Offices).



DETECT valuable research results and companies' innovation needs

RAISE AWARENESS & INFORM about the scientific potential and innovation opportunities

Make the researchers and the socio-economic actors **MEET** and assist them in their innovation projects to **COLLABORATE** optimally

Since 2003, KTOs have been working together, through the LIEU Network, which is set for four objectives:

- to promote the scientific resources of universities & let the access to them easier for companies
- to develop research collaborations between companies and research units
- to operate the tech transfer, from scouting inventions to licensing and spin-off creation
- to support the teams in a continuous process of professionalisation.

What are your services for industry?

The LIEU network offers six sectoral gateways to the labs for companies seeking access to university expertise.

In close collaboration with relevant partners, their missions are to:

- visit companies to understand their innovation needs;
- analyse the requests from industry and direct them to the academic teams who are in the best position to handle the technical challenge;
- assist industry in setting up collaborations;
- promote new results, new technologies which are available for companies;
- organise dedicated events between research & business.



What services do you offer the 10,000 researchers of the Wallonie-Brussels Federation?

It is the responsibility of the LIEU and KTOs to mobilise researchers and support their efforts into the innovation process and also to contribute to the regional development. This mobilisation ranges from awareness-raising actions and intellectual property, to research contracts and funding. Responsibility of LIEU members is to help researchers to bring projects from TRL (Technology Readiness Level) 2 to TRL 4 or 5 even TRL 6. This includes managing IP (Intellectual Property), achieving the proof of concept, looking for relevant partners, setting up agreements, and finally transferring properly the technology the more suitable partner to get the market. Additionally, LIEU brings some support for promoting the laboratories among companies, using industrial language and standards, instead of pure scientific approach.

In 2016:



RAISING AWARENESS
AMONG
RESEARCHERS ◀

researchers sensitized to intellectual property and knowledge transfer

The "Services to researchers" team has a priority to develop common tools such as the "interactive Memo", dedicated to the explanation of the knowledge transfer process. The team also organizes training and awareness sessions in institutions: patent searches with Picarré and strategic intelligence with the serious game of the AEI.

A white calendar icon with a red number '16' and the word 'MEETINGS' in small letters below it, all on a dark gray background.

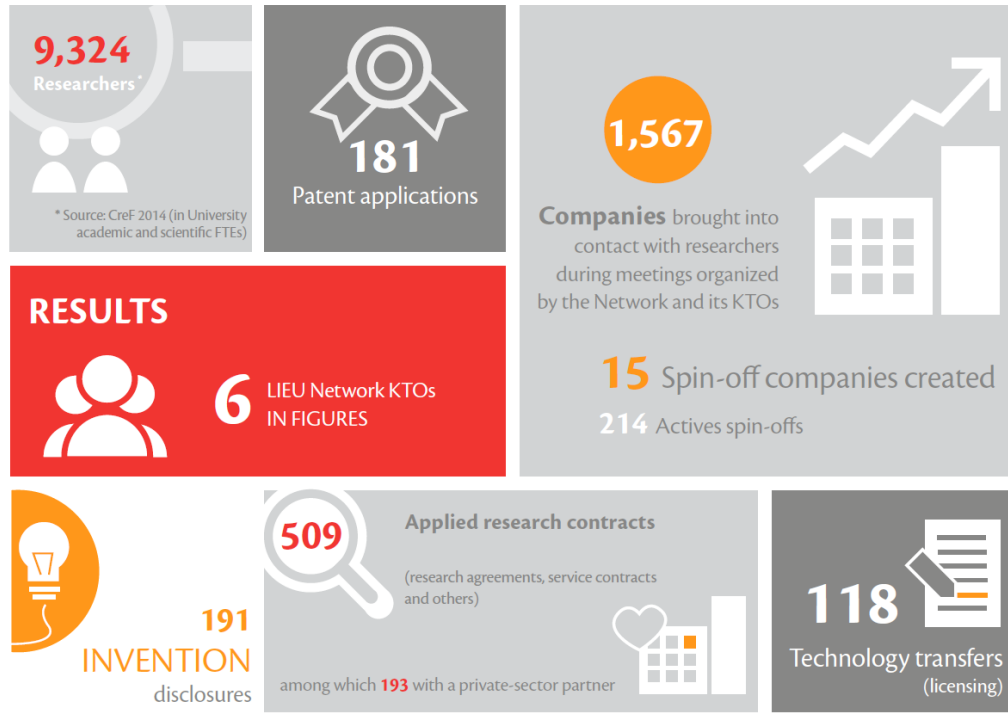
The KTOs advisors carried out 16 meetings between competitive clusters and academic researchers. This clusters roadshow enabled to better inform the researchers about strategic focus areas, to raise awareness of labs about project calls and enrich the research strategies in the different fields.

"For a competitive cluster, it is essential to be in contact with Research. The LIEU network as a gateway to the university skills helps us identify the most relevant labs for our industrial partners."

Bernard Piette, *General manager – Logistics in Wallonia*

What results have you achieved in 2016?

As in previous years, the results are that the KTOs and the LIEU Network have closely collaborated and had in 2016 a tangible impact on the regional economy, as you can see below:



What has the LIEU Network achieved so far in terms of technology transfer and spin-offs created?

Since the nineties, more than 250 spin-offs have been created, that is about 10 a year, of which about 80% are still active. However the development of research is not limited to the creation of spin-offs and the transfer of research results. University trainings or master classes in high tech sector, or people exchanges with the private sector are also key factors for connecting industry and academia. The same situation can be emphasized for research collaborations, which are significant factors in the joint generation of knowledge in close collaboration with the companies. Open Innovation is the base of all interactions with companies, and also the base of the funding system in Wallonia, as it is in H2020.

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