



Press Release

Ghent, Belgium – 26 September 2006

Flemish biotechnology is flourishing: minister Moerman and VIB open second bio-incubator in Ghent

Ghent, Belgium – In response to the needs of the growing biotech sector in Flanders, the Flanders Interuniversity Institute for Biotechnology (VIB) is opening a new bio-incubator in the Technology Park in Zwijnaarde. The new bio-incubator stands next to – and is an exact copy of – the first bio-incubator, thus doubling the available space for biotech companies that are just getting started. The additional space will make it possible to start up new Flemish companies and to attract foreign companies to Flanders. The new bio-incubator provides space for over 100 new jobs in the knowledge economy.

Today, during the academic session which took place before the official opening of the bio-incubator, Fientje Moerman, Vice-Minister-President of the Flemish Government and Flemish Minister for Economy, Enterprise, Science, Innovation and Foreign Trade, announced that for the next management agreement VIB's grant will be augmented by 20%. This means VIB will receive yearly €38.1 million for the period 2007 until 2011.

Helping biotech companies get started

With the two bio-incubators, VIB offers R&D-intensive companies in the life sciences the chance to start up quickly in a specially equipped, up-to-date infrastructure. Because the required permits have already been obtained, the companies in the bio-incubator get off to a flying start. This applies to young, starting Flemish companies as well as to foreign companies that want to establish themselves in Flanders. The first bio-incubator dates from 2000, and the demand for space from start-ups has turned out to be greater than the supply. The occupancy rate of both bio-incubators indicates that this trend is still going strong: at the time of its opening, 90% of the total space has already been rented. At the moment, 115 knowledge workers are employed in the first bio-incubator. Thanks to the new bio-incubator, at least 100 more people can be recruited.

Incubating bio-clusters

The two bio-incubators together cover 7500 m² and contain a total of 24 units, each of 200 to 250 m², and a common area with meeting rooms among other amenities. At present, the VIB bio-incubators house 7 biotech companies: Ablynx, ActoGeniX, AlgoNomics, Biomaric, BIP, Peakadilly, and Yakult. The bio-incubator also clusters young companies that can share their experience and technology. For more information about the bio-incubators, visit: www.vib.be/bio-incubator.

Note to the Editor

VIB, the Flanders Interuniversity Institute for Biotechnology, is a research institute where 850 scientists conduct gene technological research in a number of life-science domains, such as human health care and plant systems biology. Through a joint venture with four Flemish universities (Ghent University, the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, the University of Antwerp, and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and a solid funding program for strategic basic research, VIB unites the forces of nine university science departments in a single institute. Through its technology transfer activities, VIB strives to convert the research results into products for the benefit of consumers and patients. VIB also distributes scientifically substantiated information about all aspects of biotechnology to a broad public.

For more information:

Please contact VIB's Communication service: +32 9 244 66 11