



> CENTERS OF COMPETITIVENESS

While the Wallonia Region enjoys exceptional expertise, increasingly fierce international competition requires it to improve its performance levels in the fields of activity where Wallonia business and research have already proved their worth. Conscious of the challenge, the Wallonia government has identified the fields of activity where the Wallonia Region could increase its importance and play a leading role at European and global levels, and is concentrating net investments of some €280 million euro in those fields over a period of four years. The clear objective of this huge investment is to support these sectors in their pursuit of excellence, by generating dynamic growth and new employment, thus giving the Wallonia Region an advantageous position in the international arena. This created centers of competitiveness in the following sectors of excellence:

- aerospace (Skywin)
- life sciences (Biowin)
- food processing (Wagralim)
- transportation & logistics (Logistics in the Wallonia Region)
- mechanical engineering (MecaTech).

The mission of the clusters: to bring together the public and private bodies concerned in

a shared vision of their development and a strategy of innovation. In other words, businesses, universities, research centers and training centers in each of these five sectors will contribute their knowledge and skills, working together to implement original and innovative projects. These partnerships are designed to enable the businesses involved to develop, and to achieve new levels of excellence – thus becoming more visible and more competitive in the European and global markets. Each cluster will focus its activity on three axes: economic development, research and training. The bodies involved in the clusters will not necessarily pursue any specific activity in one of these fields, but they must all contribute by bringing an added value to the projects developed by the clusters.

Clearly enough, the “Centers of Competitiveness” approach responds to global economic momentum, that of excellence and innovation networks, partnerships and clusters. In the Wallonia Region, as in most European regions, the point of creating Centers of Competitiveness is to make the Region more attractive – and to develop employment by triggering economic dynamism and increased synergies among the bodies involved.

www.polesdecompetitivite.eu

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The networking engendered by the creation of these five Centers of Competitiveness will be particularly beneficial to SMEs, who will be able to implement research projects that would otherwise have been beyond their limited resources – thus

responding to the requirements of their reference markets faster, or even anticipating them. Every year the Wallonia Government identifies and co-finances the best innovative projects submitted to it.

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• Skywin: the aerospace Centers of Competitiveness

The strategic focus of the Wallonia air and space industry lies on three axes:

- **More composites:** following and anticipating market trends, i.e. to replace metallic materials with composites that are lighter, last longer and have less impact on the environment
- **More intelligence:** to meet market requirements more effectively – the aircraft of tomorrow will be packed with electrical and electronic equipment. Also to develop future technological niches: reliable equipment, high-performing maintenance services, improved navigation.
- **More applications and services:** centered on the space industry, this aspect of the cluster is intended to provide solutions to the problems of tomorrow, among them safer, more economical transport, higher-performing logistics consuming less energy, effective environmental management at both local and global levels.

www.skywin.be

• Biowin: life sciences Centers of Competitiveness

Biowin's objective is to develop and market new therapeutic and diagnostic products in three priority fields: **cancer, inflammation and brain diseases**. "Generic" needs have been defined for all these, such as the development of new biomarkers, new predictive models to evaluate effectiveness and toxicity (in silico, in vitro and in vivo), new drug-delivery systems, and the identification of new molecules with potential therapeutic uses (candidate drugs).

www.biowin.org

• Wagralim: the food processing Centers of Competitiveness

Three strategic directions have been defined:

- to develop a culture of innovation, with products that add more value
- to boost profitability by fostering integration and sustainability

- to increase the production capacity and size of businesses by positioning them in growing markets and by expanding their capacities and sales skills.

Industrialists in the sector have selected the following four development axes to increase the competitiveness of businesses operating in the food-processing industry: **healthy food, innovative production or preservation technologies, biopackaging and development of sustainable food-supply chains.**

www.wagralim.be

• Logistics in the Wallonia Region: the transport and logistics Centers of Competitiveness

This cluster was created to develop the transport and logistics sectors in the Wallonia Region, and to promote them outside its borders – by coordinating initiatives, defining a common strategy, and to optimizing human resources and technologies. The following three development axes have been identified:

- promoting logistics externally, and managing the establishment of European distribution centers
- developing and disseminating knowledge through training
- cross-sector networking involving all the Wallonia bodies operating in the fields of transport and logistics, and helping businesses to identify potential partners – particularly in R&D.

www.logisticsinwallonia.be

• MecaTech: the mechanical engineering Centers of Competitiveness

MecaTech cluster projects are grouped along four strategic axes:

- future materials and surfaces, specifically the development of **nanotechnologies** (carbon nanotubes);
- global forming technologies (aluminum, magnesium and steel alloy thixoforming, prototyping)
- microtechnologies and mechatronics;
- intelligent (reliable) maintenance).

www.polemecatech.be

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