KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

FINDING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE JUNGLE

FOR RESEARCHERS

VUB VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL

INDEX

"Excellent, future-driven research in biomedical, engineering or human sciences lies at the root of valorisation, as well as an entrepreneurial spirit and passion."

Hugo Thienpont,
Vice-rector Innovation & Industry Relations

Dear researcher,

Knowledge and technology transfer can be done through partnerships with industry and/or society, different kinds of research collaborations, licensing of knowledge, the creation of spin-off companies and consultancy services.

Society invests in our researchers. By valorising research, the university wants to give something back and have a positive impact on society. Researchers take on the challenges of the 21st century, which are multidisciplinary and require an integrated approach to fundamental, strategic and applied research. Research and innovation go hand in hand. This is what distinguishes a university and turns it into a unique place.

The multidisciplinary VUB TechTransfer team facilitates the implementation of strategic and applied expertise into society. We are there to guide you on your research path and to provide you with the necessary technical, legal or other information and tools. These pages are a rough guide to know-who, know-how and know-where at crucial moments during the valorisation process of your research results.

We hope that this booklet can help you find your way in the jungle and wish you much success on your valorisation journey!

The VUB TechTransfer team

SOME FACTS & FIGURES 2021

EUR 73.2 M
FUNDING FOR APPLIED RESEARCH
FROM BRUSSELS, FLANDERS, EUROPE

EUR 14 M
REVENUE FROM CONTRACT RESEARCH WITH INDUSTRY AND VALORISATION OF RESEARCH

SPIN-OFF COMPANIES
THE VUB HAS 43 ACTIVE SPIN-OFFS IN MANY DOMAINS

VICE-RECTORATE INNOVATION & INDUSTRY RELATIONS

THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY **TECHTRANSFER TEAM** ASSISTS IN INTERACTION WITH INDUSTRY AND SOCIETY:

- industrial partnering
- funding
- legal issues
- contracts
- patents
- business development
- Entrepreneurship
- communication

193
RESEARCH GROUPS
INCLUDING 20 JOINT INT'L
31 VUB-UGENT AND 12 VUB-ULB

2,916
ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC PERSONNEL

INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH FUND
SUPPORTS **19** GEARS
(GROUPS OF EXCELLENCE IN APPLIED RESEARCH)

SUPPORTS UZ BRUSSEL
PIONEER AND WORLD PLAYER
IN VALORISING THEIR KNOWLEDGE, DISCOVERIES AND TECHNOLOGIES

PATENTS
180 ACTIVE PATENT FAMILIES
41 INVENTIONS DISCLOSED
22 NEW PATENTS FILED

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER?

Knowledge and technology transfer encompasses a very wide range of activities in support of mutually beneficial partnerships between the academic and the business world or the public sector.
This guide focuses on the transfer of expertise and tangible and intellectual property (IP) between the university and industry/society, through the creation of spin-off companies, the licensing of IP, contract research or service agreements based on the results of the scientific and technological research of all faculties. This usually involves sciences and engineering, but increasingly importance is attached to social sciences and humanities.

The process of technology and knowledge transfer begins with observations and experiments that lead to discoveries and inventions. An invention is any useful process, machine, composition of matter, or any improvement of the same thing. Often, several researchers may contribute to the invention. Inventions are the basis of new products and processes, and by transferring these research results to society and industry, the university plays an essential role in the development of society.

Research results are typically transferred through an agreement whereby the university grants a licence to a third party to use or further develop these results into a commercial product or service. When your research results have the potential to offer clear social, technical or commercial advantages over existing or known products or services, there are great opportunities for setting up spin-off companies, for licensing to companies or for R&D collaborations, especially when such research results are well documented and covered by intellectual property rights (IPR). Without strong IPRs, few companies or investors will be interested in entering into a licensing agreement or investing in a spin-off as they will be limited in keeping out competition.

Moreover, knowledge transfer does not necessarily imply a technological product or service. It can also refer to a qualitative partnership between research and society in other ways such as educational projects or knowledge debates.

KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER - Finding your way through the jungle

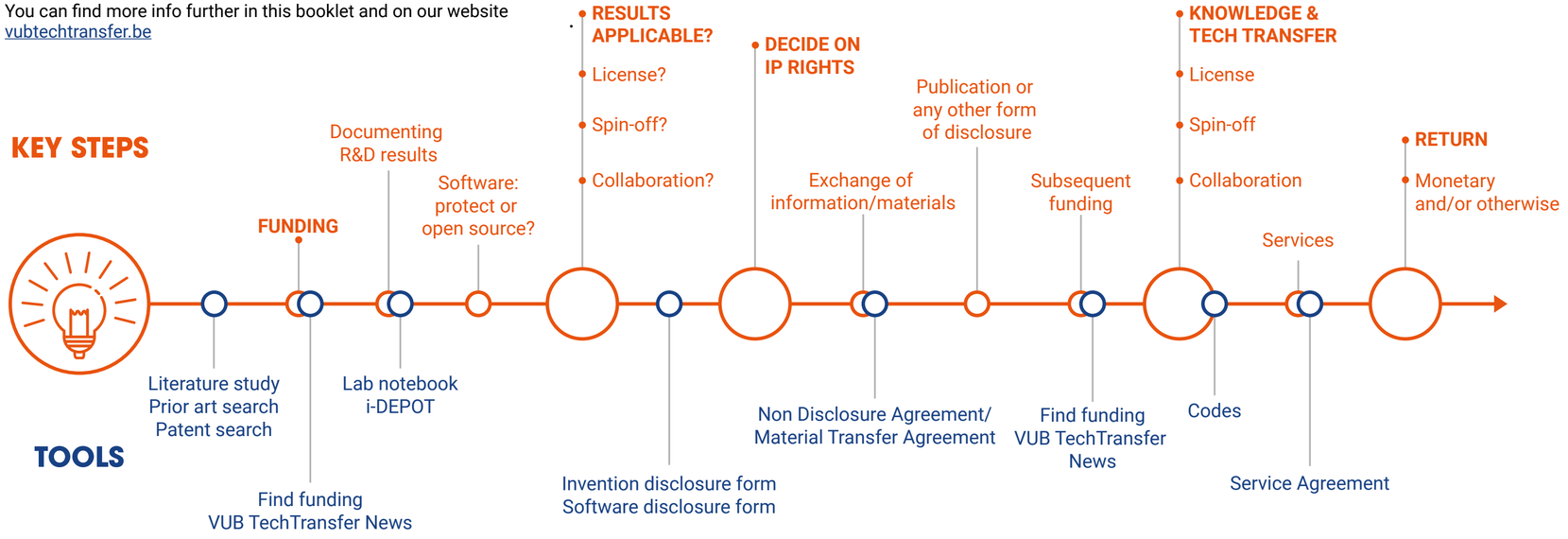
HOW CAN VUB TECHTRANSFER ASSIST YOU?

The transfer of technology and the valorisation of research results cover a very wide range of interactions between the university and society. VUB TechTransfer consists of a multidisciplinary team of experts in technology transfer, business advice, contract negotiation, scientific funding, legal and IP issues, entrepreneurship, event organisation and communication. They provide follow-up and advice to researchers in every stage of a collaboration with third parties.

WE ASSIST YOU IN

FROM RESEARCH TO KNOWLEDGE & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

The itinerary of knowledge and technology transfer from ideas and experiments to innovative research results is represented in this interactive timeline. Check out the different STEPS and TOOLS. You can find more info further in this booklet and on our website vubtechtransfer.be



Consider your intellectual property rights in time

FUNDING FOR STRATEGIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH

TYPES OF RESEARCH FUNDING

There are many ways to fund research, depending on the content, academic discipline, duration, scale and purpose of your research project.

BASIC or **FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH** is carried out to increase understanding of fundamental principles. The main aim of this type of research is not to create or invent anything. In many cases, the end results have no direct or immediate commercial benefits. In the long run, however, it can form the starting point for many marketable products and applied research.

STRATEGIC BASIC RESEARCH is high-level basic research with an emphasis on risk, inventiveness and innovation. The strategic importance and the dimensions of the valorisation perspectives on the medium-long term (3 to 10 years) of this kind of research are set out from the beginning. This type of research is still generic; it does not focus on a single industrial sector but clearly has potential applications, of which a large group of possible end-users recognises the potential economic and/or societal value. This type of research is often carried out by large consortia of research groups.

The main purpose of **APPLIED RESEARCH** is to discover, interpret and develop methods and systems for the advancement of human knowledge on a wide variety of scientific matters. There is a lot of competition between different players on the market; end-users clearly drive this type of research. Collaboration with industrial partners is typical for applied research.

VUB TECHTRANSFER GIVES ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO RESEARCHERS FOR:

- Flanders VLAIO & FWO calls
- Brussels-Capital Region funding through Innoviris
- Projects with SOCs and spearhead clusters
- EU projects with application-driven purpose
- Funding for applied projects with valorisation potential by other (international) organizations or administrations

Contact the VUB TechTransfer team

INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH FUND

A special type of government funding gave birth to the **Industrial Research Fund (Industrieel Onderzoeksfonds or IOF)** in 2004. To meet the general academic demand for a more attractive and flexible research environment and more diverse types of researchers, this fund enables the development of an elaborated long-term policy for strategic and applied research at universities. Flemish universities receive funding according to their output performance, such as the number of contracts with industry, publications and citations, share in the European Framework Programme for R&D, number of patents and spin-offs.

IOF funds are awarded to research groups that are clearly above the average scale of a standard research unit of a university. IOF groups are able to conceive a detailed roadmap and long-term vision and have strongly motivated how the additional IOF funding can contribute to their proprietary valorisation strategy. These **Groups of Expertise in Applied Research or GEARS** focus on building a portfolio of application-oriented knowledge for economic purposes and its effective valorisation. These groups have to prove their existing track record in valorisation activities, as demonstrated by their revenues from industry/licensing revenues, patents and spin-offs.

The Industrial Research Fund also funds **proof-of-concept projects** that aim to bring scientific research closer to the market and focus on research at a later stage of transition from proof-of-principle to proof-of-concept. IOF **Accelerator projects** are designed to support ongoing GEAR programs with a one-off financial injection to achieve a significant acceleration effect in IOF parameters.

The coaching and support of IOF-funded mandates and projects is the responsibility of VUB TechTransfer. All legal information on the Industrial Research Fund can be found in the *'Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering betreffende de ondersteuning van de Industriële Onderzoeksfondsen en de interfaceactiviteiten van de associaties in de Vlaamse Gemeenschap'*.

A portfolio of all research groups that receive IOF funding can be found on vubtechtransfer.be.

TOOLS

LITERATURE STUDY

Before starting or applying for a research project you should conduct a thorough literature study. It documents the state of the art in your field and allows you to justify the need for your own research.

- **University library catalogue:** search for scientific literature.
- **Google Scholar:** provides an easy way to search widely for scholarly literature in many disciplines and sources: peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and articles, from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organisations.
- **Patent search:** see below

PRIOR ART SEARCH

To assess the patentability of an invention, a thorough examination of the prior art must be carried out. **Prior art is any evidence that your invention is already known.** The mission is to find evidence that disproves the novelty of your idea, invention, research results. You hope you will fail of course, but try to be your own biggest critic and do not ignore evidence you may not like. Keep a record of everything you look at and everything relevant you find. Also, regularly update your prior art searches as you develop your idea/invention.

PATENT SEARCH

Another preliminary search **to check whether your invention is patentable** is obviously checking whether any patents already exist. To maximise your chances of finding relevant information, use keywords or search terms which best describe your invention/idea. Obvious key words or general terms will not help. The most productive search terms may be specialist technical terms. It may also take a few preliminary searches to find better keywords. Once you have listed the relevant keywords, prepare strings of up to four keywords (four is the maximum number when using Espacenet, for example) in different combinations. Look for multiples and variants and use abbreviations to cover them (in Espacenet one can use '*'). When searching for patents, it is very helpful to use the patent classification system. Try to find out through a number of preliminary searches or by browsing in the list of patent classes (Espacenet provides a separate search function to find the proper patent class) the classes relevant to your invention/idea. It is important not to think too narrowly.

Free public databases:

- European Patent register
- Espacenet
- Patentscope
- US Patent register

TOOLS FOR FUNDING AND PROJECT CALLS

FIND FUNDING:
An overview of strategic and applied research funding as well as recent calls can be found on our website.

VUB TECHTRANSFER NEWS:
Calls are announced in our weekly newsletter on Thursdays, which is automatically sent to all academic staff.

DOCUMENTING R&D RESULTS

Adequate documentation of your research results is essential for obtaining or using the necessary IP rights.

TOOLS

LAB NOTEBOOK
Important to establish date of invention, inventors and documentation of research work.

I-DEPOT FOR IDEA OR CONCEPT
Consider submitting an i-DEPOT prior to disclosing any idea or concept (including e.g. research ideas, inventions, algorithms, software code, designs, questionnaires, methods and processes, etc) to third parties. Registration of an idea or concept through e.g. i-DEPOT helps greatly in documenting prior confidential information to be disclosed under a Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA). An i-DEPOT is not an intellectual property right. It is just a means of registration. The information disclosed cannot be publicly accessed by any third party.

RESULTS APPLICABLE? LICENSE, SPIN-OFF, OR COLLABORATION?

In this stage of the valorisation trajectory it is important to consider which kind of valorisation you are aiming at. Valorisation can be done through partnerships with industry and/or society, contract research, licensing, the creation of spin-off companies and consulting services.

PATENT VERSUS PUBLICATION

CONSIDER YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN TIME: PRIOR TO PUBLICATION OR COLLABORATION WITH 3RD PARTIES.
Publication of your research results can be perfectly combined with patent prosecution. It only requires the right strategy, as any public disclosure (presentation, abstract, paper, thesis, etc) prior to a patent application can be detrimental to the patentability of your invention, regardless of the location of the disclosure, the carrier, the nature, etc. Therefore, publication of your invention should only occur after the filing of a patent application and after disclosure and discussion of your research results to the VUB TechTransfer IP team.

Moreover, any party outside the VUB cannot obtain a patent on inventions publicly disclosed by the VUB. Thus, by combining patent applications with academic publication(s) we can secure freedom to operate on your inventions and research results, while safeguarding your academic output.

TOOLS

INVENTION DISCLOSURE FORM
An invention disclosure form is a confidential document describing an invention. It is written by a scientist or engineer and sent to the VUB TechTransfer IP team, which advises on the patent strategy that is most appropriate.

SOFTWARE: PROTECT OR OPEN SOURCE?

Software code (as well as other aspects such as software architecture, flow charts, etc) is protected through copyright. However, software code implements algorithms that might be patentable (if novel, inventive and sufficient technical effect). A patent would provide protection of such algorithm regardless of how it is expressed in code.

Since patent applications are published, patent databases might also contain a lot of interesting information to develop your own solutions. Many patents listed in the patent databases may not have been granted or may no longer be valid (in Belgium or other countries) and consequently the information contained therein can be freely used.

TOOLS

SOFTWARE DISCLOSURE FORM

A software disclosure form is actually an invention disclosure form, a confidential document that describes an invention, but focuses on software. It is written by a scientist or engineer and sent to the VUB TechTransfer IP team, which advises on the patent strategy that is most suitable.

DECIDE ON IP RIGHTS

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Intellectual property (IP) rights are a powerful tool to facilitate R&D collaboration between VUB research teams, society and industry. It is therefore crucial **to consider your IP rights in time during the valorisation process**, when you develop your research results into commercial applications.

Intellectual property rights prevent unauthorized use of your research results by third parties and as such allow you to determine (through negotiation) the conditions of research collaboration, attract funding or investment. They enable the VUB and yourself to benefit from commercial exploitation and - last but not least - to safeguard your freedom to operate.

There are several types of IP rights. A good understanding and strategic combination of these types of IP - including publications of your research results - guarantee the the best results and fit with your R&D and valorisation strategy.

TYPES OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- Patents
- Trademarks
- Designs
- Trade secrets / confidential know-how
- Copyrights

USEFUL LINKS

- Belgium - FOD Economie
- Benelux - BOIP
- Europ - EUIPO
- Worldwide - WIPO

PATENT PROCEDURE

Prior to a patent being granted on your invention, your patent application undergoes an exhaustive examination procedure in which the patentability requirements are assessed.
The patent application procedure consists of four main stages:

REPORTING
The invention needs to be thoroughly described in our VUB Invention Disclosure Form and inventors need to be diligently identified. Initial study of prior art and discussion with VUB TechTransfer IP team allows to evaluate the disclosed invention and patent strategy.

Do not publish about your invention prior to any patent application being filed.
Contact VUB TechTransfer in time for advice.

PRIORITY APPLICATION (0-12MONTHS)
The date of filing of the initial patent application establishes a priority date. Only prior art (including your own!) publicly available before this priority date will be used by the patent office(s) to examine the patentability of your invention.

INTERNATIONAL (PCT) PHASE (12-30 MONTHS)
An international patent (PCT) application allows to broaden the geographical scope of protection of your invention and needs to follow the priority application at the latest 12 months after the priority date. The PCT application will be published 18 months after the priority date. Any draft publication relating to your invention might contain further elements that are not covered by any priority application. Consequently, any draft publication prior to the publication of the PCT application needs to be checked for such additional elements. During the PCT phase, the patent office will provide an international search report (ISR), listing the relevant prior art documents, and written report (WO) summarizing the patentability of your invention the way it has been claimed. Further patent prosecution will be based on this ISR and WO.
It is essential to identify strategic R&D and commercial partners, and provide proof of concept for your invention and validate your initial research results before the end of the international application phase (30 months after the priority date).

NATIONAL PHASE (> 30 MONTHS)
Eventually patent applications are being granted by national authorities. At the end of the international application phase, a choice of countries has to be made. The decision to move into national phase as well as the choice of countries is dependent on outcome of international search report, status of R&D validation and proof of concept, R&D collaboration, commercial valorisation opportunities and strategy.

SUBSEQUENT FUNDING

To valorise your research, subsequent funding is often indispensable. Take a look at the 'Funding for strategic and applied research' chapter.

TOOLS

FIND FUNDING
An overview of strategic and applied research funding as well as recent calls can be found on our website.

VUB TECHTRANSFER NEWS
This weekly newsletter, containing calls, techtransfer related events and news, is automatically sent to all academic staff.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION/ MATERIALS

An important alternative to patent applications for protecting your invention is to keep the invention confidential. Confidential information is regarded as intellectual property, but is not covered by a statutory IP right. Before talking to companies or individuals not bound by confidentiality, determine exactly how much you can tell them without describing the crucial parts of your invention. Do not discuss the technical aspects going into too much detail, but instead discuss the competitive advantages. When dealing with companies do not disclose anything without at least a signed Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) and free forms of legal protection, such as copyright or unregistered design rights. However, you should try to avoid obsessive secrecy or a demand for payment before disclosing any detail.

A Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) is a contract that governs the transfer of tangible research materials between two organizations, when the recipient intends to use it for his or her own research purposes. The MTA defines the rights of the provider and the recipient regarding the materials and any derivatives.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF BACHELOR/MASTER STUDENTS

Bachelor/master students are often involved in R&D work within VUB research teams and have access to confidential VUB information. As the VUB is often bound by confidentiality towards our R&D partners, students must also be bound by confidentiality obligations when they are involved in R&D partnership projects or when they are involved in research being developed towards further valorisation.

CONFIDENTIALITY TOOLS

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT FOR VUB STUDENTS

MATERIAL TRANSFER AGREEMENT - USE THE NDA FORM

PUBLICATION OR ANY OTHER FORM OF DISCLOSURE

Once you have determined your IP strategy and taken the necessary steps to protect your intellectual property, consider publishing your research results. The number of publications from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel is steadily increasing from year to year. This not only yields better publication and citation ‘scores’ for the university, but also higher funding. Research performance, measured by publications, citations and PhDs, is indeed an important parameter in the policy of the Flemish policy, which aims for increasingly internationally competitive universities.
Optimal visibility of your research results is crucial for good communication to colleagues in the field, and thus for the ‘impact’ of your research. All researchers are therefore strongly encouraged to actively participate in a good research publication culture.

GENERATING MAXIMAL VISIBILITY & IMPACT

- Publish your research results in media that are read by as many researchers as possible in your domain (and if possible also in other areas), including a selection of international journals with a peer review system.
- Publish your research results in media that are easily accessible (at least the content) to a large part of the academic world, for instance in open access journals or in journals included in the citation indexes of Thomson Scientific.
- Make as many openly available full-text versions of your publications available as possible, for instance in an institutional repository, on your own website or in a database organised by your research domain (always respecting rules of editors or confidentiality agreements!).
- Increase the visibility of you and your team in the international research community by collaborating with other research teams (in publications, projects, networks,...) and by referring to your partners and their work (in your publications, on your website,...).
- Ensure that your correct and complete affiliation is mentioned in publications, especially those completed by co-authors. Mention the full university name ‘Vrije Universiteit Brussel’ in Dutch, preferably accompanied by the abbreviation VUB and the address.

KNOWLEDGE & TECH TRANSFER SPIN-OFF – LICENSE – COLLABORATION

STARTING A SPIN-OFF COMPANY

The establishment of spin-off companies is increasingly becoming a key mechanism of knowledge and technology transfer. Spin-offs are start-up companies whose main activities are based on the formal transfer of research results originating from the university. This transfer can take different forms (e.g. a license agreement or share capital participation) depending on the specific case. Up till now more then 50 spin-off companies originated from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, of which over 40 are active today.

A privileged relationship between a lab and a spin-off company is beneficial to the growth of the company, and certainly in its early stages. These agreements can refer, for instance, to rights on future results generated in the lab, the use of equipment and technical support, and the financial conditions for the use of these facilities.

Establishing a spin-off is an iterative process, which involves constantly (re)evaluating previous decisions based on new information. Nevertheless, a number of fundamental steps must be taken and intermediate milestones reached in order to work successfully towards incorporation.

RESEARCH

GATE 1: IDENTIFICATION/ QUALIFYING SPIN-OFF IDEAS

- opportunity recognition
- IP strategy
- Idea Notification form

OPPORTUNITY FRAMING

GATE 2: PROOF OF VIABILITY

- proof of concept
- proof of market
- entrepreneurial commitment

PRE-LAUNCH

GATE 3: DEVELOPMENT PHASE

- market positioning/ validation
- product development
- business plan
- assembling a company team

SPIN-OFF

GATE 4: SPIN-OFF GENERATION

- creation of start-up
- licensing of research
- VUB Transfer Agreement
- spin-off creation
- investment/funding

CONTACT VUB TECH TRANSFER FOR ADVICE & SUPPORT

KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER - Finding your way through the jungle

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

VUB TechTransfer organizes yearly (Advanced) Starter Seminars aimed at introducing business and entrepreneurship to young professionals. Students and researchers acquire the vocabulary and mindset needed to develop their venture and interact more efficiently with tech transfer offices, investors and other partners. They learn about finance, marketing, Intellectual Property rights, HR, ... in order to define a viable strategy in a complex business world.

"As an engineer or scientist you don't have any background in business management. Through the starter seminars I obtained the necessary basic knowledge about marketing, business planning, financial and other aspects when starting up a company. In addition, I had the privilege of passing on my own expertise gained from starting a business to other entrepreneurial researchers."

Daniël Van Nieuwenhove, President Sony Depthsensing Solutions
Co-founder and former CTO VUB spin-off Optrima, merged with SoftKinetic in 2010, acquired by Sony in 2015

TOOLS

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

CODES

(ADVANCED) STARTER SEMINARS

FUNDING (THE PREPARATION OF) SPIN-OFFS

Funding a start-up is yet another challenge entrepreneurs will face. VUB TechTransfer can show the way to different funding schemes offered by public authorities and commercial investors.

Depending on the required amount, one can choose from various sources of funding:

- the so-called 3F's: family, fools & friends
- Business Angels
- venture capitalists (a.o. QBIC Fund)
- financial institutions
- government initiatives
- EU Innovation in SMEs programme

Check our website for funding through Innoviris and VLAIO (Agentschap Innoveren en Ondernemen).

QBIC FUND

Qbic is a seed and early-stage and sector agnostic interuniversity fund investing in spin-offs and young innovating companies that have a technology link with Qbic's partner universities and research institutions.

The **Qbic Fund** is the successor of the Baekeland II Fund of UGent and the BI3 fund of VUB. The two institutions pooled the expertise of their respective tech transfer services to improve the success of risk companies through economies of scale and further professionalization.

The first Qbic fund, Qbic I, was founded in 2012 and had a fund size of € 40M. Its investment period ended in December 2016.

Qbic II was launched in 2017 and collaborated with a larger network of Belgian universities, research institutes and hospitals. Qbic II also broadened its investor base, bringing the fund size up to almost € 60M. The investment period of Qbic II ended in 2022.

The most recent fund, Qbic III, was launched in 2022 and constitutes the spin-off fund for an even greater network of Belgian knowledge partners. The fund recently had a first close at € 49M.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR INCUBATORS...

The VUB co-manages two business incubators: **IICB** in Flanders and **ICAB Business & Technology Incubator** in the Brussels Region and is developing a third one, a **bio-incubator**, on the VUB main campus. They provide office space and a broad range of support.

ICAB

The **ICAB Business & Technology Incubator** became fully operational in October 2009. ICAB is located in the Arsenaal site next to the VUB campus in Etterbeek. ICAB is a business and service centre for entrepreneurs who want to launch a company in ICT or engineering.

IICB

Business Incubator IICB offers young and dynamic enterprises, active in or planning to enter the market of high-technology products or services, the possibility to grow in an environment stimulated by the presence of other enterprises already active in similar fields. It is located in the Research Park Zellik, close to the VUB university hospital, UZ Brussel.

BIO-INCUBATOR

The VUB and VIB are working together to build a bio-incubator on the VUB Brussels Humanities, Sciences and Engineering Campus. To this end, they have set up **Bio Incubator Brussels bv**. In this incubator, starting spin-offs will be able to develop during the first years in the vicinity of research groups active in life sciences.

COLLABORATING WITH THIRD PARTIES

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel supports all R&D activities throughout the entire process, from scientific discovery and exploration of new knowledge, to invention and development. These activities touch a yearly research budget provided by project financing of different governments, the university's own funding sources and income from the private sector.

In this network of synergies, it is not always easy to align the interests of all stakeholders. The handbook 'Responsible Partnering' issued by the European Commission highlights maximum beneficial and responsible use of public research and proposes a set of actionable guidelines to implement them. This for instance involves treating collaboration strategically, organizing lasting relationships and establishing clear intent. It is a must read for any researcher planning to interact with the industry.

In the context of a research collaboration or when providing scientific services, the university is subject to a legal and regulatory framework when collaborating with companies and other third parties. The provisions thereof are set by:

- the Flemish Decree on Higher Education which regulates the scientific or social services by universities or university colleges and with regard to relationships of universities or university colleges with other legal entities;
- the Regulation on scientific and social services;
- the Regulation on overheads;
- the Regulation on valorisation.

CONTRACT RESEARCH

Every – however small – collaboration must be formalised in an agreement in order to confine legal risks. When negotiating a collaboration agreement, you should inform and consult the legal advisors of VUB TechTransfer in time.

While preparing your deal setup, keep the following issues in mind:

TASK DESCRIPTION
A detailed description of the tasks to be performed by the VUB is essential, in particular with regard to the definition of the results.

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS
The total cost for the execution of a research project comprises the following elements:

1. all costs with regard to personnel, working, equipment and any other cost related to the project;
2. overheads (see regulation on overheads);
3. 21% Value-Added Tax (VAT).

The financial department of the VUB is responsible for the invoicing, but this needs to be initiated by the promoter.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS
Background knowledge of the VUB (already existing knowledge of the VUB which was not generated in execution of the project) remains at all times the ownership of the VUB and user rights can be granted under conditions to be agreed (market conform terms). The results generated in execution of the project can be made available under different forms (transfer of ownership, granting an exclusive/ non-exclusive license, co-ownership, etc...). To be agreed on a case by case basis.

PUBLICATION
The right to publish has to be safeguarded and can be made subject to conditions to be agreed (when necessary for protection of confidential information or the research results).

FAIR FINANCIAL RETURN
In case the results can be valorised, a fair financial return needs to be granted to the university. The distribution follows the previously described valorisation procedure.

WARRANTIES - LIABILITY
The execution of a project can only be done on a 'best effort' basis. No warranties whatsoever can be granted. A limitation of liability of the VUB is essential.

APPLICABLE LAW - DISPUTE RESOLUTION
Belgian law and the courts of Brussels have jurisdiction.

SCREENING AND SIGNING OF CONTRACTS
Each contract needs to be screened by VUB TechTransfer. Only the rector of the VUB is authorised to sign contracts. Promotors and co-promotors will co-sign for acknowledgment and acceptance.

TOOLS

CODES

TEMPLATES:

- SERVICE AGREEMENT
- NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (NDA)
- NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT FOR VUB STUDENTS
- INVENTION DISCLOSURE FORM (IDF)

RETURN: MONETARY AND/OR OTHERWISE

The transfer of knowledge from university to industry generates financial return to the university which subsequently can be reinvested in research. The Vrije Universiteit Brussel has developed a policy and code on the transfer of these research results to industry.

These rules on technology transfer can be summarised as follows:

- All research results obtained by researchers (no master students) within the framework of their relationship with the VUB are the property of VUB.
- All research results capable of commercialisation or social implementation must be notified to VUB TechTransfer prior to publication in order to assess the need for protection.
- Researchers shall provide all due assistance to the VUB during the technology transfer process.
- VUB organises the transfer of research results by a primary or a secondary procedure. The primary procedure denotes the procedure financed by the patent fund of the VUB. The decision to initiate the primary procedure is taken after receipt of the disclosure form. If VUB decides not to start or to stop the primary procedure, the research team is authorised to continue the secondary procedure autonomously at their own expense.
- All income acquired during the primary valorisation procedure is distributed as follows:
    1. One third of the net income (income after deduction of central management costs, overheads, and technology transfer costs, including costs for IP protection) is for the VUB patent fund;
    2. Two thirds, minus a possible deduction of a personal fee to the inventors, shall be awarded to the research team(s) to finance further scientific research.
    3. A personal fee can be paid to the researchers and can't exceed a total of more than one third of the net income.

Back to timeline

KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER - Finding your way through the jungle

MISSION VUB TECHTRANSFER

TOGETHER WE CONNECT SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

Our mission is to valorise scientific research results in order to make an innovative contribution to improve society. Income from these activities can be reinvested in excellent research. VUB TechTransfer continuously strives towards connecting the university's research-expertise with industry-society.

OUR PARTNERS

Together with VUB Foundation, the philanthropic fundraising team, and Crosstalks, the interdisciplinary networking platform, VUB TechTransfer forms the Vice-rectorate Innovation & Industry Relations headed by Vice-rector Prof. Dr. Ir. Hugo Thienpont.

VUB TECHTRANSFER

VUB TechTransfer
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