

As we move beyond two decades of socio-economic valorisation of research and successful university-business collaborations, the LiEU Network reaffirms its pivotal role in establishing and strengthening connections between Research, Industry and Society in Wallonia and Brussels.

Since its foundation in 2003, the LiEU Network (Liaison Entreprises-Universités) has steadily evolved, adapting to the ever-changing landscape of innovation, knowledge transfer and socio-economic development. Founded by the Council of Rectors of the universities in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (CRef) and supported by the Walloon Region, the Network was initially created to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between universities and businesses.



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Nathalie Burteau, President of the LiEU Network emphasizes that: “More than 20 years later, the Network has grown into a robust and multidisciplinary system with teams composed of more than 80 experts and advisors. We remain committed to driving innovation in the Region and consolidating collaborations between universities, businesses and all key players of our innovation ecosystem.”

A Bridge Between Research, Industry and Society

The LiEU Network was designed to address the need for a structured approach to transferring research results to industry and society. This includes the creation of spin-offs, fostering partnerships, and promoting intellectual property rights to protect innovations. Today, it has become the cornerstone of knowledge transfer in the Region.

Its operational director, Eric Wyart, notes: “The LiEU Network plays a vital intermediary role between academic research and socio-economic stakeholders in Wallonia, helping to shape innovation across sectors.”

As a true condition for inclusive innovation, the Network plays the role of a unique gateway bridging research and industry. It has introduced strategic advisors who specialise in areas aligned with Wallonia’s innovation priorities and strategic axes. These experts work closely with businesses to ensure research results generate tangible socio-economic impact, contributing to the Region’s competitiveness and growth.

With a clear contact point, its system of thematic referents and its ability to guide companies towards the right expertise, the LiEU Network ensures an equitable and accessible access to research, fostering a successful innovation ecosystem.

Building a Professionalised Network

The journey toward a professionalised network of Knowledge Transfer Offices (KTOs) was gradual but significant. More than twenty years ago, few knowledge transfer structures existed within the French-speaking universities of Belgium. However, in 2003, under the CRef's guidance, these scattered entities were consolidated into the LiEU Network, marking a turning point for research valorisation in Wallonia and Brussels.

A Gateway to University

Research Expertise and Resources

The LiEU Network has firmly established itself as a gateway to the resources and findings of academic research, fulfilling the mission laid out by the CRef. This mission stresses that universities must not only conduct research and transmit knowledge, but also engage meaningfully with society. Within the Network, the 5 universities count more than 10,000 researchers and hundreds of research units and laboratories. Their research can be made accessible to businesses, associations and organisations, thereby reinforcing their competitive position in the socio-economic landscape and positively impacting the development of the Walloon and Brussels Regions.



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As a real strategic interface, the Network identifies and translates the needs of companies into addressable research questions for academic researchers, while ensuring that all parties' expectations, timelines, constraints, and objectives are aligned. This structuring role enables converting the methodological and scientific depth of universities into projects, companies, and employment opportunities, thereby enhancing the socio-economic landscape.

Eric Wyart highlights: "The LiEU Network has been instrumental in creating numerous

success stories. One example is the development of spin-offs and licenses that bring university innovations to market, benefitting local businesses, organisations and the wider economy. Additionally, the Network offers a wide range of services, including a dedicated intellectual property service through the PATLIB unit, along with trainings and concrete tools for researchers on intellectual property and valorisation”.

The LiEU Network also plays a prominent role in showcasing the technological offerings and resources of its universities at key international events such as BIO Europe, BIO US, BIOVARIA, Space Tech Expo, and the Assises de la Francophonie Scientifique.

Looking Ahead: A New Era for Innovation

As the LiEU Network enters its third decade, it faces a dynamic and evolving landscape of challenges and opportunities. The Network has adapted its operations to meet the growing needs of its partners, both in Wallonia and internationally. For instance, in 2023, a portion of the network’s activities was integrated into the Wallonie Entreprendre programme, a key initiative aimed at generating more value for the Region through innovation-driven projects.

Moreover, facing the significant contemporary challenges including ecological transitions, health issues, and digitalization, the LiEU Network addresses the necessity for developing interdisciplinary solutions that integrate various disciplines, technologies, and expertise from the academic, industrial, and public sectors. At the core of the Network’s valorisation activities is its multidisciplinary team supported by a combination of regional, academic and private funding. This diverse group of scientific advisors, experts in valorisation, business developers, communication specialists, data managers, legal experts, patent managers, investment funds, and more, are all working together to drive and support innovation.



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Additionally, the LiEU Network has established a solid governance framework and an organized operational structure, supported by management bodies, steering committees and a system of coordinators. This multidisciplinary and structural approach enables LiEU to continue evolving, providing tailored and coordinated solutions to external

partners, while fostering close collaboration between each KTO and the researchers of their institution. Mutual trust and cooperation between the KTOs of different universities have been a defining factor in the Network's success.

According to Nathalie Burtreau, "Over the past 20 years, we have developed a spirit of collaboration that transcends competition between institutions. This trust allows us to offer coordinated responses to our partners, strengthening our position as a key player in research and innovation."

Conclusion: Charting the Future of Knowledge Transfer

As the LiEU Network continues to mature, its commitment to fostering innovation remains unwavering. Looking forward, the Network aims to expand its impact by embracing new technologies, enhancing collaboration with external partners, and ensuring that Wallonia remains at the forefront of research-driven socio-economic development.

With its strong foundation of collaboration, expertise, and vision, the LiEU Network is well-positioned to navigate the evolving demands of the knowledge transfer landscape, ensuring the region continues to thrive in an increasingly competitive global economy.

For more information on the LiEU Network and its activities, visit: www.reseaulieu.be

Highlight #1

Key Achievements: A Snapshot of Success

Every year, the LiEU Network delivers results, including...

- 40 patents filed,
- Over 1,100 research proposals submitted in response to Walloon funding calls,
- 10 new spin-offs created,
- 140 licenses concluded with companies and organizations.

These achievements are made possible thanks to the constantly renewed involvement of the teams and the unwavering support of the authorities of our institutions, the SPW Research, the ERDF, Wallonia-Brussels International and the office of the Minister of the Economy, Research and Innovation in the Walloon Region.

See also our 2024 Activity Report:

<https://reseaulieu.be/en/2026/06/02/2024-business-review/>

Highlight #2

A network, 5 universities

The LiEU Network brings together the Knowledge Transfer Offices (KTOs) of the 5 French-speaking universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation:

- Université catholique de Louvain:
<https://www.uclouvain.be/en/research/innovation-partnerships>
- Université libre de Bruxelles:
<https://www.ulb.be/en/research/innovation-and-business-services>
- Université de Liège:
https://www.recherche.uliege.be/cms/c_9006501/en/recherche-innovation
- Université de Mons: <https://web.umons.ac.be/en/missions/research/>
- Université de Namur: <https://www.unamur.be/en/research>

