

# Non-scientific jobs in Life Sciences – Part II



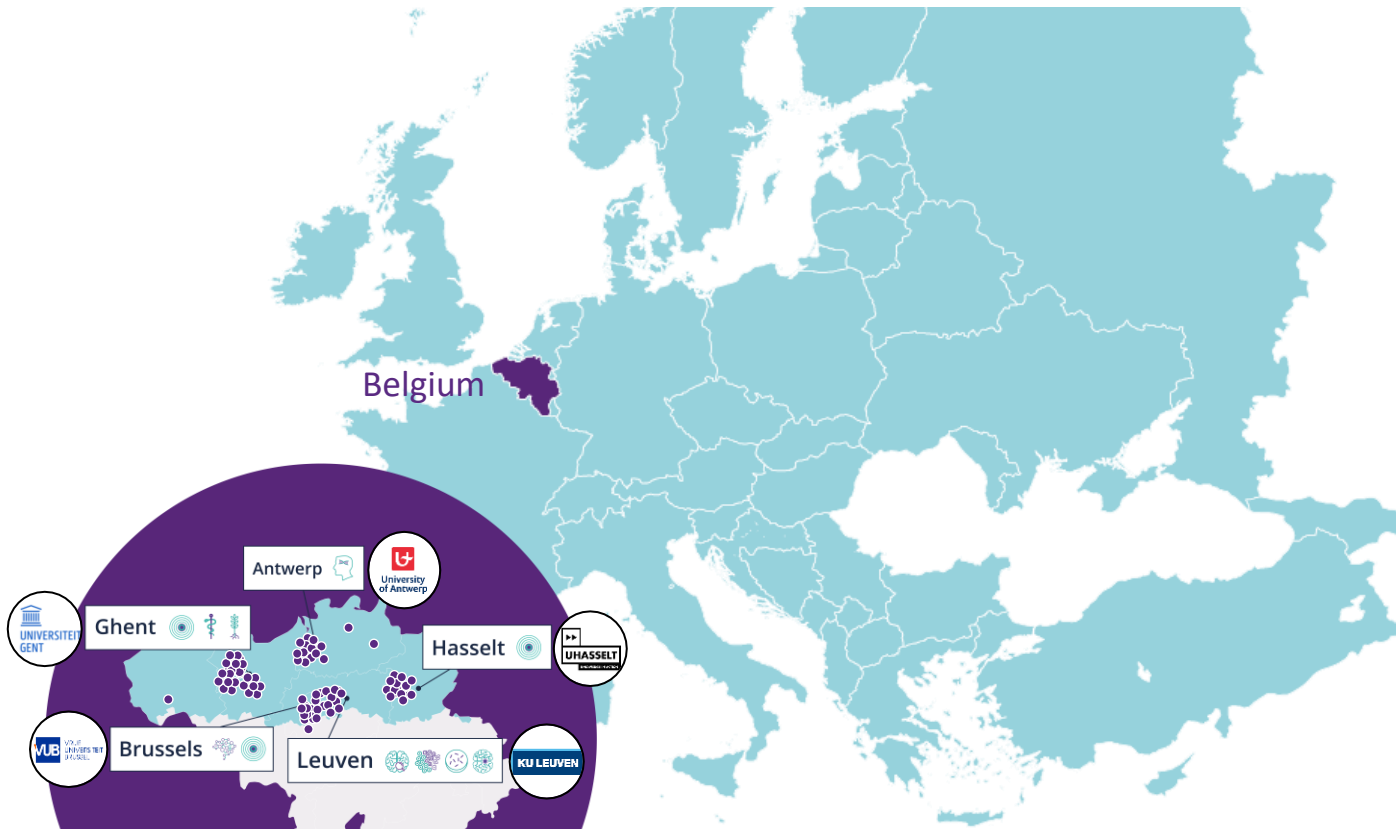
Ethan Kuo, *Business Development Manager*

VIB | Innovation and Business



28 NOVEMBER 2024 | GHENT ICC  
BCFCAREEREVENT

# Setting the scene: VIB at the center of the Flemish life sciences cluster



- ### Highlight
- Belgian biotech market cap is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest of Europe
  - Fast growing biotech start-ups
  - High concentration in pharma
  - Leader in clinical trials
  - Strong government support
  - Private investment from local VCs

**DENSE CLUSTER IN FLANDERS**  
 knowledge institutions, pharma & life sciences companies

- 300 companies
- 20,000 employees



## VIB's Mission



UNIVERSITEIT GENT VIB

Medical Biotechnology

Inflammation

Plant Systems Biology

AI & Computational Biology

Universiteit Antwerpen VIB

Molecular Neurology

UHASSELT KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION VIB

Inflammation



VUB VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL VIB

Structural Biology

Inflammation

KU LEUVEN VIB

Cancer Biology

Brain & Disease

Microbiology

Neuroelectronics

AI & Computational Biology

### VIB 2024

- 1960 scientists & staff
- 14 core facilities & 5 incubators
- 5 universities & 11 research centers, 96 labs covering red & green biotech
- 39 spin-offs & 8 exits, with > €1.8B VC funding & > €5B enterprise value
- 30% PI has ERC grants, 20% PI are highly cited (top 0.1%) in their field
- 3 VC funds with €190M AUM
- > 700 total patents & 282 active patent families
- > €350M total industrial income from partnerships

Impact: €700M+ economic impact yearly, 10,000+ local jobs created (another 13,000 worldwide)



# Ethan Kuo, PhD – Career journey 2019-2024

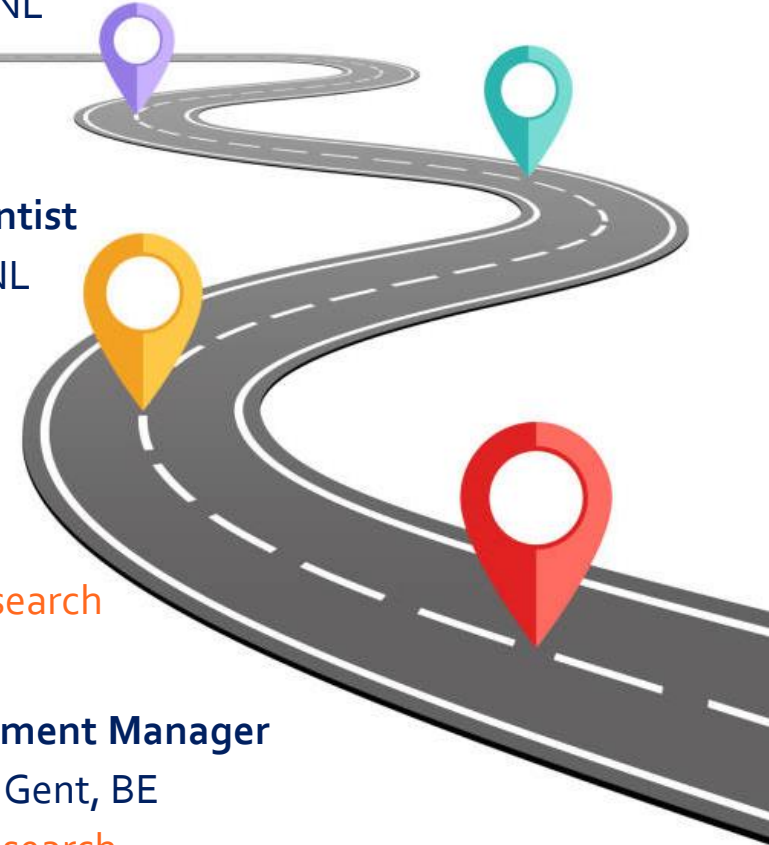


▶ **2012-2014 MSc Life Sciences**  
▶ **2015-2019 PhD Medical Biochemistry**  
Leiden University, Leiden, NL  
*Academic research*

▶ **2019-2021 Postdoc scientist**  
uniQure NV, Amsterdam, NL  
*Industry research*

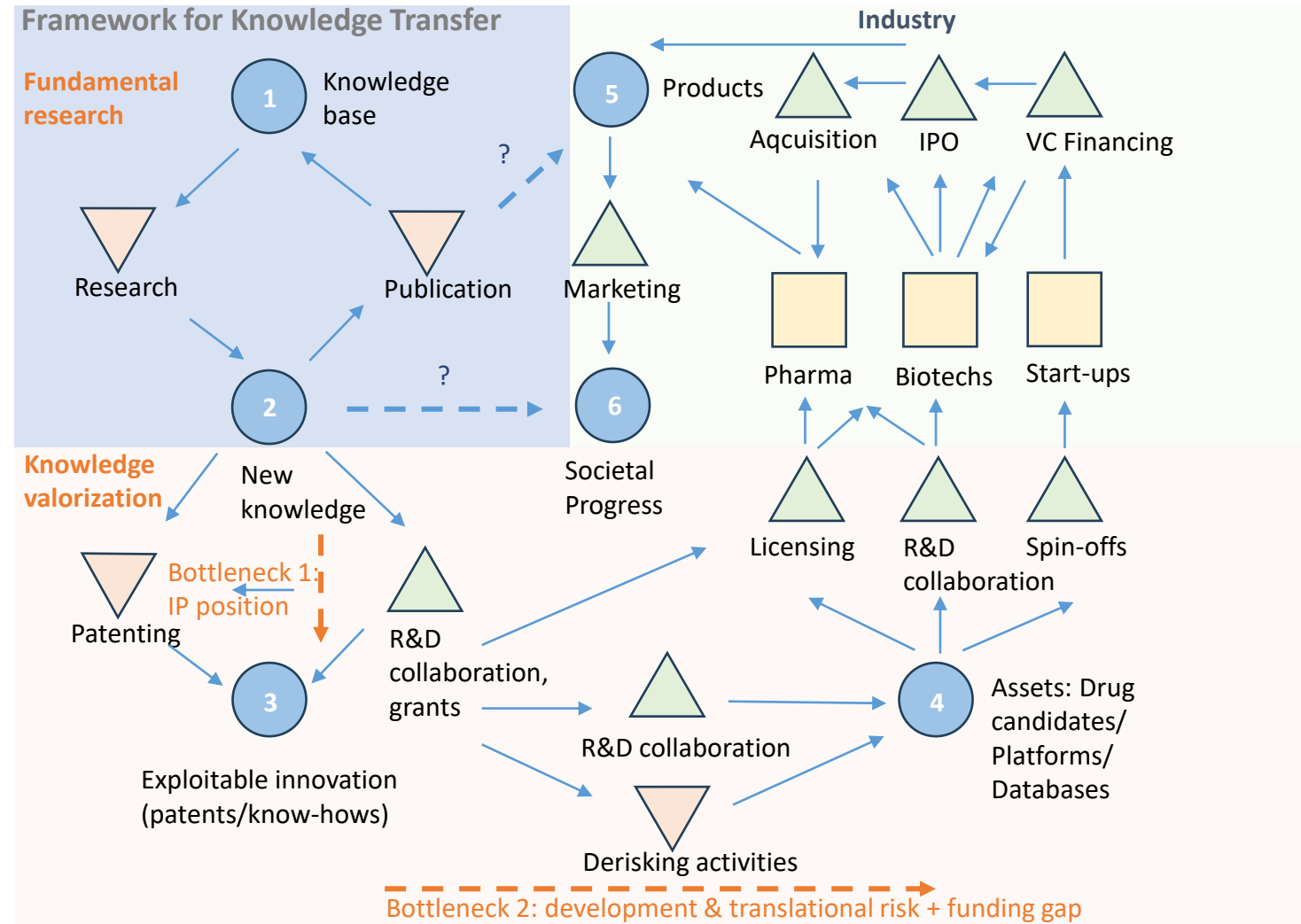
▶ **2021-2023 VC Analyst**  
V-Bio Ventures, Gent, BE  
*Investment opportunity research*

▶ **2023- Business Development Manager**  
VIB Innovation & Business, Gent, BE  
*Valorization opportunity research*



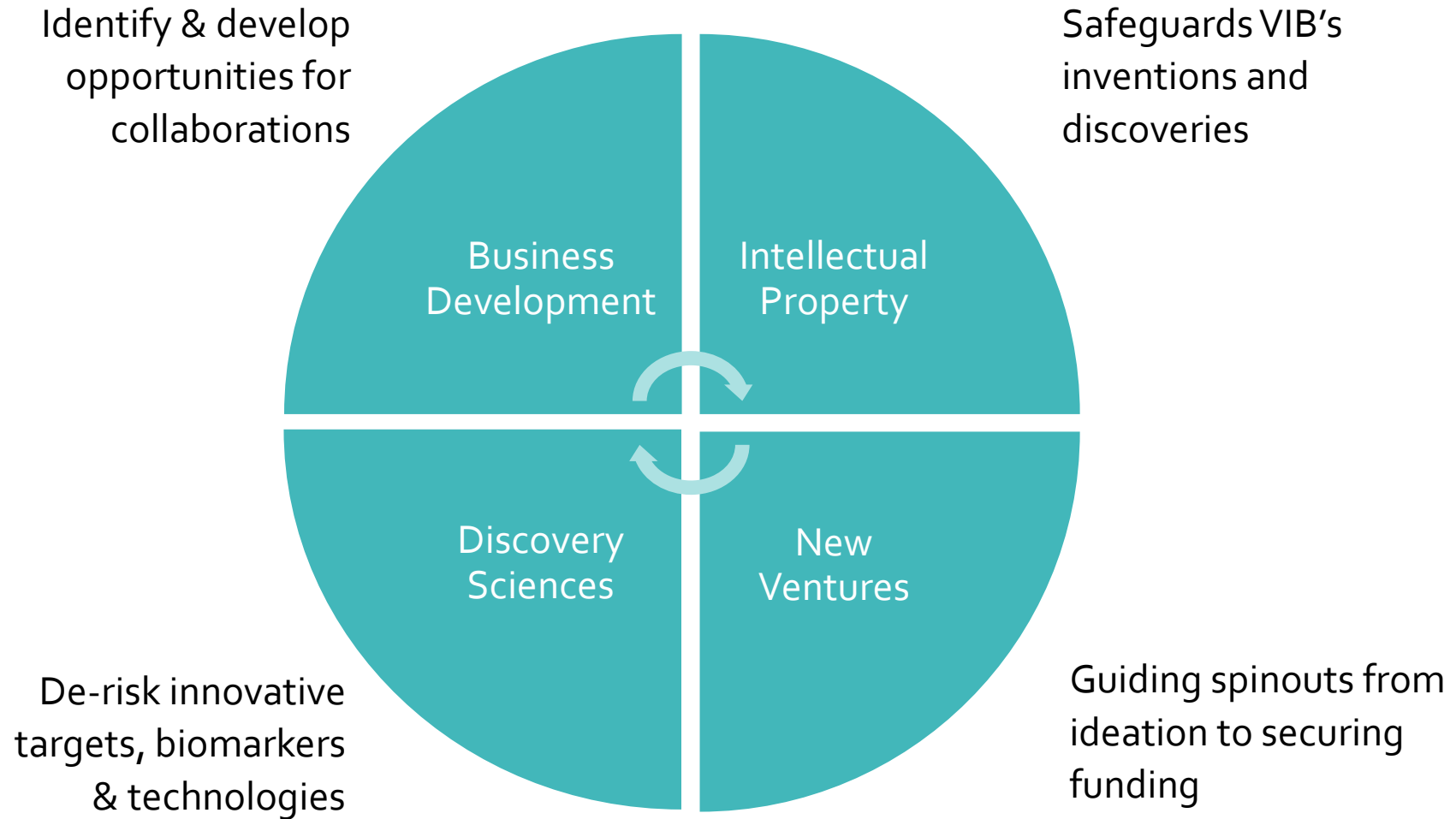
# Bridging science and societal progress – steps involved

- **Why?**
- From research to societal progress is not a spontaneous process.
- Most of the time: practical applications are needed
- Many more steps are involved.
- Beyond scientists' capacity.
- **How?**
- Tech transfer offices: turning science into valorization opportunities.
- Specialists trained in both science and industry + funding instruments to address the **two bottlenecks**.
- So industry can take over.





# VIB's Innovation and Business team



# The VIB Business Development team – with scientific focus areas or specialized functions



**Erwin Sablon**  
Head Business Development



**Jan Staelens**  
Head Contracts and Alliances



**Griet Verhaegen**  
BD Manager Inflammation



**Koen Tyberghein**  
BD Manager Medical Biotech/inflammation



**Susanne Ständer**  
BD Manager Structural Biology



**Sofie Coelus**  
BD Manager Technologies



**Ana Rita Santos**  
BD Manager projects



**Jiska Van der Reest**  
BD Manager Oncology/projects



**Laura Lapienyte**  
BD Manager Neurology



**Thijs Vackier**  
BD Manager Microbiology



**Michiel Verlinden**  
Contract Manager/lawyer



**Ethan Kuo**  
BD Manager Business Analyst

**Project management:** Support Horizon Europe Teaming for Excellence Project (RACE Project)

**Business & market analysis:** Data analytic support for I&B projects and valorizational grant applications



**Yadira Olvera Carillo**  
BD Manager Plant System Biology



**Michiel Bontinck**  
BD Manager Plant System Biology

# Success story:

## *Nanopore Sequencing*



### VIB's bacterial pore protein CsgG

- CsgG-derivatives were found to give stable currents and generate data of superior quality compared to other nanopores
- Patent granted

Han Remaut lab (VIB-VUB)



### Licensed to Oxford Nanopore Technologies (2016)

- Licensed the CsgG nanopore
- Co-developed properties of CsgG to deliver optimal nanopore sequencing data
- Continuation of collaboration to improve further nanopores



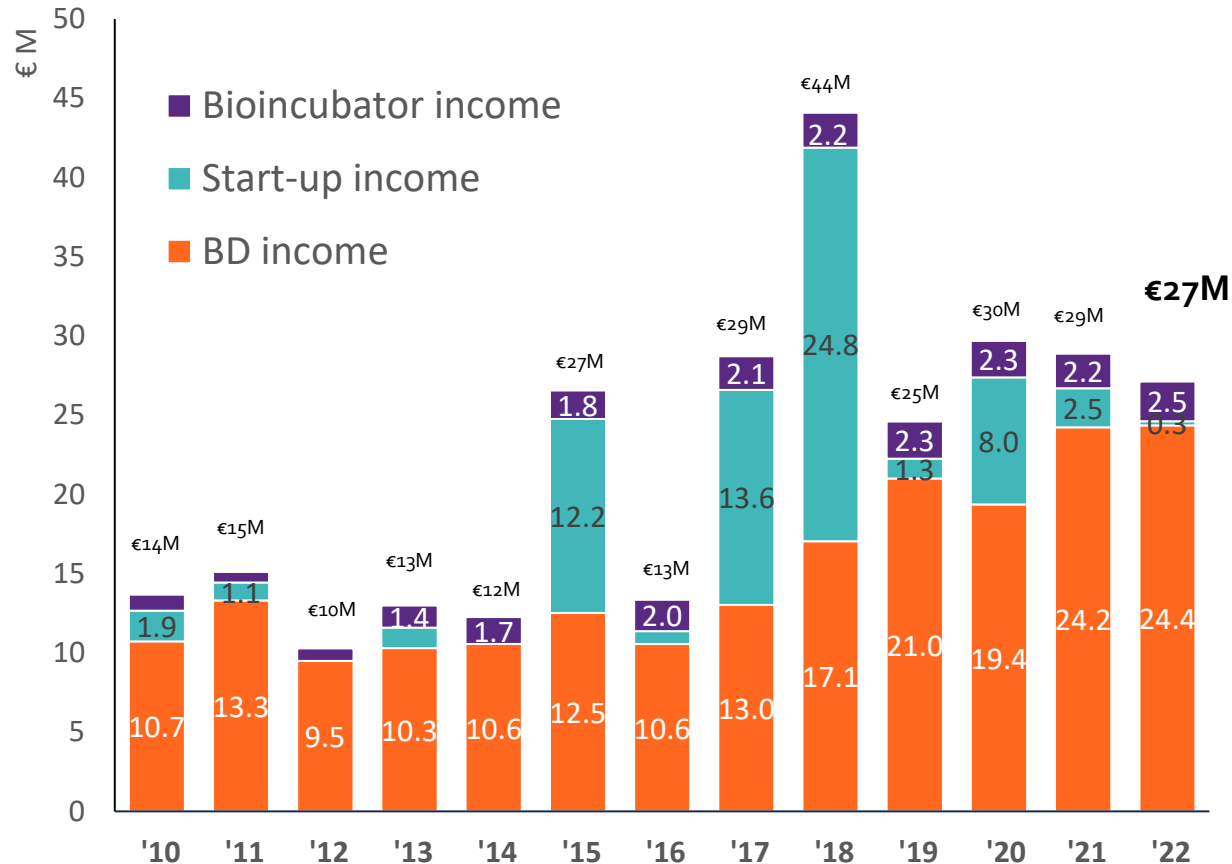
### Global commercial availability

- (2015) Global commercial launch of MinION® DNA sequencer
- (2016) CsgG nanopore integrated in the upgraded MinION™ handheld DNA sequencer and the PromethION™ system

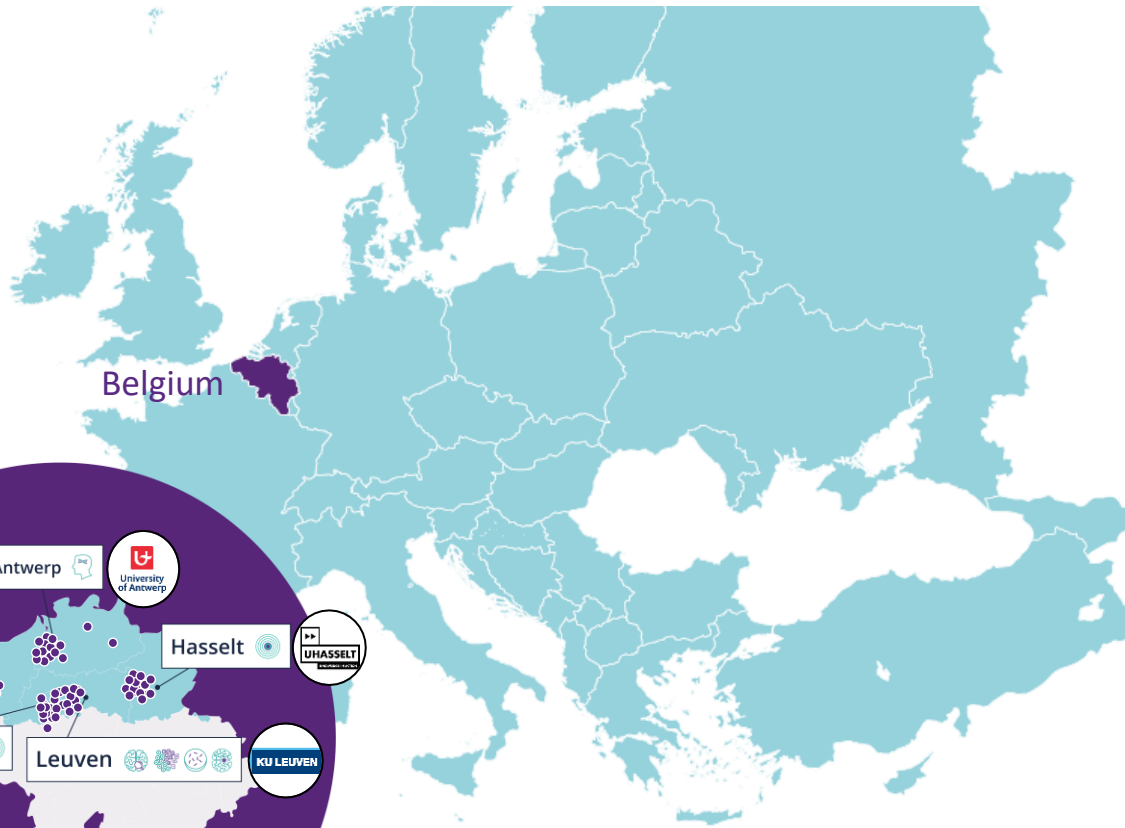




# The impact: Industry collaboration set up by BD team fuels future basic research & tech transfer – VIB's number



# Concluding perspectives...



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- ▶ The Flemish ecosystem offers exciting career opportunities for scientists who wish to pursue non-science jobs
- ▶ Identify what matters to you (value), and explore where your passion lies (step out of comfort zone if needed)
- ▶ **Networking...now**



