

Press Release
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bio.be/essencia and Agoria join forces to accelerate the digitalization of biotechnology companies in Belgium

Brussels, 21 March 2019 – Digitalization is a major challenge for the industry to address to remain competitive. The Belgian biotechnology sector is well aware of that. To continue to lead in the development and production of innovative goods and services, the industry must quickly align its tools, processes and workforce to new technology and attract new talent and expertise in the field. bio.be/essencia, the Belgian federation of the biotechnology companies, has joined forces with Agoria, the Belgian federation of the technological industry, to address this challenge as a joint initiative.

Today, in Brussels, the "Biotech meets digital" event brought together 150 experts and bio.be/essencia and Agoria facilitated exchanges between actors from biotechnologies and 4.0 technologies - both worlds in which Belgium excels. Companies and specialist consultants from both sectors presented many concrete examples of digitalization, but the actors also came together around the theme of how to attract talent, so critical to the success of the digital transformation of the biotechnology industry.

Biotech companies in Belgium are internationally renowned for their ability to innovate, produce and export innovative goods and services in the fields of health, industrial and agricultural biotechnology. Digitalization of both their research and development tools and their production equipment, will allow them to optimize their innovation process and accelerate the marketing of products and services at optimal cost. However, the main challenge will be in finding the skilled talent required for the collection, management, analysis and relevant use of huge amounts of data from multiple sources, because many other sectors are also seeking those talents.

Frédéric Druck, Secretary General of bio.be/essencia: *"The Belgian biotechnology sector offers many job opportunities in companies at the forefront of innovation and development of solutions to address challenges facing our society today: health, climate, environment, sustainability. Together with Agoria, we want to develop a training offering that will allow not only those workers already within the sector, but also the new generation, to develop their skills in connected and digitized 4.0 companies. "*

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About bio.be/essencia

bio.be/essencia, the Belgian federation of companies active in life sciences and biotechnologies, represents the interests of the sector as regards to legislation and standards at various policy levels (Belgium, EU, OECD). The federation fosters a supportive environment and a stable legal framework in line with the trend for innovation in biotechnology. bio.be/essencia is part of essencia, the Belgian federation for chemistry and life sciences industries and is member of EuropaBio, the European association for bioindustries, and the International Council of Biotechnology Associations (ICBA).

About Agoria

Agoria means progress through technology. We are paving the way for all technology-inspired companies in Belgium pursuing progress internationally through the development or application of innovations and which, together, represent some 300,000 employees. We are proud that more than 1,800 member companies trust in the three pillars of our services: consulting, business development and the creation of an optimal business environment. Follow us on www.agoria.be and <https://twitter.com/agoriafr>.

Dominique Demonté, Director at Agoria Wallonie: « Combining biotech and digital is no longer an option, it's a necessity and represents a major opportunity. Obviously, linking our two sectors will provide our companies with a competitive advantage and bring new business opportunities. This will strengthen our leadership on the global stage. Of course, the main challenge will be skills!

The 'Biotech meets digital' seminar is jointly organized by bio.be/essenscia and Agoria, supported by Takeda, Osborne Clarke and Altran.

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