

## **“Hey, Start-me up!”: a look back at the highlights of the event dedicated to biotech start-ups**

On Tuesday 13 February, 130 professionals from 11 countries met in Toulouse for the international “Hey, Start-me up!” event, organised by TWB. The exclusive industrial biotechnology sector event was the opportunity to bring together start-up firms, companies and investors. The aim was to present the European biotechnology ecosystem, host organisations and start-up funding sources and exchange views on the life-cycle stages of start-up companies. The sector is flourishing as it helps companies to produce better and sustainably.

Here’s a look back at the day.

### **The biotech market, a growth sector**

Biotech firms are revolutionising production techniques by using living organisms (micro-organisms and enzymes) to offer eco-friendlier biological solutions. Industrial biotechnology was embryonic just a few years ago but is now turning into one of the biggest economic markets in Europe, ahead of digital technology.

Strong growth in Europe saw the sector generate a turnover of 57.5 billion euros in 2016 compared to 31.5 billion euros\* in 2013. According to experts, growth is set to continue over the next few years, with revenue estimations of 99.5 billion euros\*. Biotechnology covers numerous applications that are key to European industry, such as health, food processing, cosmetics, raw materials, materials and the environment. It already accounts for 486,000 jobs\*, 94,000 of which are direct\*, and should exceed more than one million by 2030.

Both companies and investors are increasingly interested in industrial biotechnology, with more than 993 million dollars invested in 2017\*\*.

### **“Hey, Start-me up!” event review**

TWB brought together 130 participants from 11 countries, some forty start-up companies (EnobraQ, Pili, MicroPep Technologies, MetGen, Deinove, Global Bioenergies, SilicoLife, BFC France, Aviwell, Syngulon, Antabio, ...), biotechnology innovation and promotion organisations (Labiotech.eu, Pôle IAR, Europabio, French Tech Toulouse, ...), companies (L’Oréal, Michelin, Adisseo, Lallemand, ...), investors (BPIFrance, Wiseed, Sofinnova Partners, Auriga Partners, IRDI, ...) and banks looking for innovative solutions for eco-friendly production techniques. The event was organised with support from the Agence d’Attractivité Toulouse Métropole, and was sponsored by Toulouse Métropole, Toulouse Business School, SuperBIO, IRDI Soridec Gestion and Cabinet Plasseraud.

After an overview of the European biotech market, start-up companies were able to make pitches and access professional, specialist advice in various subject areas (communication, intellectual property and funding, etc.) to help them grow. There was also an opportunity for networking with companies and investors, who saw this event as chance to spot tomorrow’s leading lights.

One of these start-ups, Dust BioSolutions, also won a competition organised by TWB, called “Pitch me your biotech start-up!”, with 4-months’ access to TWB technology platform services, together with scientific and business planning support, worth €50,000. The Munich-based start-up uses a fine-coating procedure with soil micro-organisms to control dust emission, stabilise sloping land and also offers new solutions to replace oil-based chemical binding agents, in numerous industrial applications. This means that dust transforms into stone and in the future, for example, landslips could be contained.



*Pierre Monsan, Director TWB & Martin Spitznagel, CEO Dust BioSolutions*

**The success of this event proves that investors and companies are keenly interested in biotechnology and its future prospects to find eco-friendly solutions that tackle future priorities, such as combatting climate change and preserving our environment.**

*\* Source: EuropaBio, Final Report 2016*

*\*\*Source: Synbiobeta*

#### **About TWB:**

Toulouse White Biotechnology (TWB) is a preindustrial demonstrator whose goal is to speed up the development of industrial biotechnologies by facilitating exchanges between public research and industry. Its vocation is to contribute to the expansion of a bioeconomy based on the use of renewable carbon in various fields (chemistry-biochemistry, materials, energy, etc.). Various kinds of collaborative research and development projects are proposed, as well as personalized services for businesses.

In March 2011, TWB was awarded the call for project for the Investments for the Future Program (PIA – Programme Investissements d’Avenir). It receives State aid through the ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche - National Research Agency). TWB is a UMS (Unité Mixte de Service – Mixed Service Unit) managed by INRA under triple INRA/INSA/CNRS tutelage. With €20.8 M of signed contracts since its creation, TWB confirms the relevance of its role at the interface of the public/private transfer.

**More information** [here](#)

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