

A look back at 2020: TWB deals with the crisis and strengthens all its activities

Despite the health crisis, TWB recorded major results in 2020 reinforcing its position as an expert in the management of R&B projects in industrial biotechnology, (new government subsidies, new consortium members). TWB presents its ambitious strategic direction for 2025, with the notable aim of becoming the European leader in the field of industrial biotechnology.

Positive performance indicators and recognition for TWB

In spite of the health situation backdrop and total closure of its facilities for more than 2 months, TWB managed to hold its course in 2020 with turnover only slightly impacted, (€7.3M compared to €8.4M in 2019). Although the Covid-19 crisis has markedly reshuffled the cards, TWB has continued to bank on the future by strengthening its teams over the past year, particularly in the 'Business and Partnerships' division. Committed to becoming a major player in industrial biotechnology research, TWB has moved into new premises, situated on the INSA Toulouse campus, doubling its floor area. This new building, (financed by the Occitanie State/Region contract plan of €3.9M, the Toulouse Campus Project for €2.6M and self-financed by TWB to the tune of €0.5M), contributes to the creation of a 15,000 m² industrial biotechnology complex unique in France.

In 2020 TWB; with the aim of becoming the European leader in industrial biotechnology by 2025; secured the renewal of its French State funding. This 7 million euros grant aims to support TWB over the next 5 years and reward its model of excellence in France. It demonstrates both recognition of the TWB results from 2012/2019 and a confidence in its strategic roadmap for 2020/2025. In addition, TWB obtained a further €1.4M in response to the latest EquipEx+ (PIA3) call for projects to support the acquisition of scientific equipment to the best international standards.

With 61 R&D projects managed during the year, of which 30 were new, TWB has been able to meet its commitments despite deadlines having been impacted by lockdown measures. The cumulative total of R&D projects for the period 2012-2021 has reached 214.

Finally, on 1st January 2021, the canvassing activities of TWB combined with its reputation led to fruition with the welcome of 5 new partners into its consortium; two large companies, (Lesaffre and Clarins) and three start-ups, (Awiwell, BioEB and Dynveo).

"There is no doubt that the year 2020 was unpredictable. Despite suspension of our experimental activities, TWB was able to stay on course towards its vision for 2025 and is emerging from this unprecedented experience. The optimisation of our internal organisation and strengthening of the teams, as well as our installation in new premises allows us to confidently look to the future. Major results, based on already well-established partnerships, have been achieved. The credit must go to all TWB staff, whose constant commitment and responsiveness against the prevailing winds and tides of the pandemic must be applauded." **Olivier Rolland, Managing Director of TWB**

Expansion into growth markets

TWB continues with its development and capitalises on its experience in order to operate in those fields of application where industrial biotechnology provides a solution to new challenges. This diversification

is part of the 2020/2025 TWB strategy, the objective of which is to increase value creation through the use of industrial biotechnologies.

Last August TWB received the label of industrial integrator for bioproduction, thus becoming one of 6 French technological platforms of the 'Biomedicines Grand Challenge' launched by the General Secretariat for Investment (SGPI) of the French government. This accreditation enables TWB to put its expertise at the service of health industries and to support them in projects for the production of innovative biomedicines, (proteins, therapeutic antibodies).

Other future sectors: bio-control and bio-stimulation are two areas in which TWB wishes to fortify its position. TWB has already supported several companies in this field, for example Amoeba and the start-up MicroPep.

Finally, TWB continues its innovations in the field of biomaterials. Since 2019, in partnership with ResiCare, a subsidiary of Michelin, and other project partners, TWB has worked on the BioImpulse programme, the aim of which is to create a new resin based adhesive, free of worrying substances, to replace certain formaldehyde based adhesives.

Increased action with innovative start-ups

TWB continues to bolster its activities with innovative start-ups. Thus someone was recruited at the beginning of 2021 to cover this area. To date, 5 start-ups are hosted by TWB and a further 2 new recruits are expected in the coming months. TWB has also become a partner of the AgriO consortium, labelled "French Tech Seed business provider" for Bpifrance, which aims to support technological start-ups of less than 3 years old, in the post-maturation phase, which engender strong, technology-intensive innovation in the agricultural, agro-industrial or food-processing sectors.

Lastly, TWB continues its privileged collaboration with start-ups that develop original technologies, thereby broadening its service delivery. Of particular note, TWB is partnering with the start-up Altar, owner of a natural selection process for micro-organism strains. This innovation is now integrated into the TWB Bioprocess platform and complements its range of services. For its part, Altar benefits from the numerous projects developed at TWB to test its process.

About TWB

Expert in steering scientific projects, TWB contributes to the development of new sustainable production pathways by providing innovative and economically sound alternative biological solutions. In order to accelerate the transition towards an eco-responsible industry, TWB has drawn on collective intelligence to drive pioneering links between researchers, industrial groups and investors. By fostering worthwhile, practical and innovative research, TWB meets a two-fold challenge: to effectively address the issue of climate change whilst creating economic value.

Since the creation of TWB (2012), under the triple supervision of INRAE, INSA and CNRS, and, as of the 1st January 2021 strengthened by 53 partners; (industrial groups, start-ups, investors, research bodies, local and regional authorities, etc.); TWB has contributed to the launch of 214 collaborative research and development projects and to the growth of numerous start-ups which in total have raised more than 100M€.

More information: <https://www.toulouse-white-biotechnology.com/en/>

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