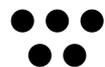




## WALLONIA'S WELCOME OFFICES



Wallonia.be

EXPORT  
INVESTMENT

# THE HEART OF EUROPE

## Wallonia - Belgium, economic and cultural crossroads at the very heart of Europe

WALLONIA-Belgium is located in the immediate vicinity of Western Europe's major cities and in the heart of the most important distribution area in Northern Europe. Only a few hours away from Paris, Strasbourg, London, Amsterdam, The Hague, Luxembourg, Cologne, Frankfurt, Munich and Geneva, Wallonia-Belgium is directly linked to the most important decision-making centres in Europe.

Wallonia also provides a direct link to the sea ports of Antwerp and Rotterdam. Its exceptional geographical position, transport, and communication network with state-of-the-art multimodal facilities give Wallonia a great potential to increase your profits. A qualified, hardworking and multilingual workforce, and the readily available industrial and logistics parks, allow very low investment and operating costs. Symbols of innovation and competitiveness, the universities and research centres in the region, also provide significant added value in the logistics supply chains.

With many entertainment opportunities, highly regarded gastronomy, tourism opportunities, and the high quality of life in the historical centre of Europe, Wallonia is the best place for distributing products within the European market.



## Wallonia-Belgium, economic and cultural crossroads at the very heart of Europe

- Belgium ranks #1 for logistic investments & distribution in Europe (2009 Cushman & Wakefield's survey)
- The most developed and secure road network in the world (lighting, safety, toll-free)
- 500 million consumers within a 4-hour drive (65 % of the European market)
- 2 international and cargo airports (accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, European hub of worldwide express integrator TNT)
- Host of the EURO-CAREX platform (Cargo High Speed Train in Northern Europe)
- Liège : third largest river port on the European continent directly connected to Europe's major seaports
- 11 multimodal logistics platforms
- 224 business, industrial and science parks

## Qualified workforce

Wallonia-Belgium has developed an extended, high-performance network of colleges, universities and graduate schools. The training meets market requirements and a large majority of graduates are able to secure employment right out of school. Businesses benefit from a hard-working workforce: productivity is 20% higher than the European average.

## Serving innovation

Wallonia-Belgium, with its nine university centres housing 300 research facilities and 11,000 researchers, is internationally recognized for being innovative and research driven. This region has received of 6 Nobel Prizes.

Original, creative, technology-intensive, and good value for money, Wallonia's expertly designed and manufactured goods compete with the world's best products, and productivity is amongst the highest in the world.

The information and communication technologies market is growing by 10% a year and is supported by 2,500 graduates.

| Location | London | Amsterdam | Paris  | Frankfurt | Luxembourg | Cologne | Düsseldorf | Rotterdam | Brussels | Lille |
|----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|---------|------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| Distance | 350 km | 282 km    | 243 km | 436 km    | 210 km     | 247 km  | 261 km     | 228 km    | 69 km    | 78 km |
| Time     | 4h20   | 2h55      | 2h40   | 4h20      | 2h50       | 2h35    | 2h45       | 2h20      | 0h50     | 0h55  |

# BUSINESS - AT THE HEART OF WALLONIA'S STRATEGY

## Wallonia's Business and Competitiveness Clusters

The Wallonia Cluster Policy is based on two organisational structures: Business Clusters and Competitiveness Clusters. These are complementary tools forming part of a government policy focusing on creating the right conditions to develop clusters in Wallonia.

Whereas Business Clusters are funded to develop an economic drive, Competitiveness Clusters are mainly supported within the framework of the Marshall Plan to implement investment, R&D and training projects, in line with their competitive positioning strategy. Both types of clusters are intended to promote innovation with regard to industrial, commercial and technological partnerships.



**Wallonia Clusters**



# Wallonia's Business and Competitiveness Clusters incorporate 13 Industry and Business Networks:

## Competitiveness clusters:

### *LOGISTICS IN WALLONIA:*

the Transportation and Logistics cluster was created to promote Wallonia's transport and logistics sector both within the country and abroad, by coordinating activities, defining a common strategy and optimizing human and technological resources.

[www.logisticsinwallonia.be](http://www.logisticsinwallonia.be)

*SKYWIN:* the Aerospace cluster established a sound strategy in order to face the technological challenges that are currently required. It aims to develop technological niches for the future, diversifying and creating new companies, and meeting market demands in terms of yet lighter components or increased performance in the structures, without forgetting to minimize its ecological footprint.

[www.skywin.be](http://www.skywin.be)

*B/OWIN:* this Health cluster unites all stakeholders from Wallonia participating in innovation and training in the field of biotechnology and health. R&D efforts, supported by the cluster, cover all fields related to health, divided into 8 technological themes.

[www.biowin.org](http://www.biowin.org)

*MECATECH:* this Mechanical Engineering cluster has defined 4 strategic lines of development:

- Materials and surfaces of the future;
- Comprehensive forming technologies;
- Microtechnologies and mechatronics;
- Intelligent maintenance.

[www.polemecatech.be](http://www.polemecatech.be)

*WAGRALIM:* the Agro-industry cluster's object is to improve the competition between companies in the food industry and boost business and employment in the sector, through different strategic development areas such as health food, industrial efficiency, packaging or development of sustainable networks in the agro-industry.

[www.wagralim.be](http://www.wagralim.be)

*GREENWIN:* Environment and Sustainable Development is covered by GreenWin, aiming at innovation in green chemistry and sustainable materials (including their applications in zero or near zero energy buildings).

[www.greenwin.be](http://www.greenwin.be)

## Business Clusters:

- CAP 2020 (Building industry)
- ECO-CONSTRUCTION (Green building)
- INFOPOLE (ICT)
- CLUSTER PHOTONIQUE (Photonics)
- PLASTIWIN (Plastics industry)
- TWEED (Technology of Wallonia, energy, environment and sustainable energy)
- TWIST (Cinema and digital media)

<http://clusters.wallonie.be>

## ICT Platform

As a specific sector and global development framework for all other sectors of our society, ICT requires an integrated approach in a real cross-ICT platform for Wallonia.

A place of integration, convergence and online distribution, this platform is powered by the AWT (Wallonia Telecommunications Agency), and provides digital governance and a strategic vision for ICT in Wallonia. This platform is also a partnership of various public and private ICT actors in Wallonia (ICT Cluster, TWIST Cluster, Cetic, professional federations, ...). More on [www.awt.be](http://www.awt.be)

# WELCOME TO WALLONIA

*The Wallonia Export-Investment Agency* (AWEX) facilitates collaboration between the Science Parks of Wallonia (SPOW) and technological firms. Numerous agreements have been negotiated between private partners and public bodies.

AWEX offers companies the opportunity to *test the European market* from a new WELCOME OFFICE dedicated to companies wishing to expand in Western Europe.

*Brand new offices and personalized services are* available FREE of charge (excluding telecommunications costs) to companies from the Indian subcontinent who can devote themselves exclusively, at very low cost, to the growth of their business - and all this from a base in Belgium, enabling exceptional ease of travel to all major European cities.

*"The choice of La Louvière for our new European distribution center was mainly inspired by the logistical options, the intersection of a number of major highways and the proximity of the airport of Charleroi. Moreover, we have an excellent relationship with the Wallonia Export-Investment Agency, on whose support we have always been able to count throughout this entire project."*

Tom HEYMAN,  
CEO of Janssen Pharmaceutica (Johnson & Johnson group)

*"AWEX has provided great support since the early days of our company. They have functioned as a genuine partner and a facilitating agency, not only by giving us free office space, but also by introducing us to new partners and potential clients. We really appreciate their professional yet customised approach towards new companies."*

Mr. Surinder KUMAR,  
Owner, LED Concepts & Design Pvt. Ltd.



## Personalised service (free of charge)

- An expert who speaks your language (on demand)
- Assistance in understanding the language and culture
- Advice with practical and logistical matters (visas, travel permits, accreditation, legal issues, everyday issues...)
- Administrative assistance with initial prospect identification in the European market (e.g. market studies)
- Introductions to leading European professionals in your industry
- Access to the trade offices of Wallonia in Europe (more than 50 offices in the capitals and major European cities)

## All types of services

The Wallonia Export-Investment Agency (Awex), in partnership with the Science Parks of Wallonia (SPOW), provides:

- A specialized office for companies to launch their activities in Europe
- Scientific and economic “incubators”
- Ultra-modern telecom services (Internet access, optic fibres, ADSL/SDSL, video-conferencing...)
- Hi-tech business centres equipped to welcome companies and facilitate expansion
- Specialized sector-specific offices (Aerospace, Life sciences, Agro-food, Mechanical Engineering...) for supporting start-ups
- Training and financial support to create your own distribution centre in the heart of Europe

## Connections throughout Europe

In addition:

- The dissemination of information with a technological advantage to companies operating in science parks
- The promotion of technology transfers between research and industry, with many European partners
- Lively technological activity between companies (networking with innovative businesses at European level, creating opportunities for technological exchanges between players from industry and/or research)
- Access to EUROPEAN RESEARCH PROGRAMS through experts directly connected to the relevant departments of the European Commission in Brussels.



# SUPPORT FROM BELGIAN PUBLIC AGENCIES

Wallonia Export-Investment agency (AWEX) is *the one stop shop* for all prospective foreign investors wanting to locate in Wallonia. We are committed to helping foreign companies launch their activities successfully and integrating them into European Economic Networks.

We offer foreign companies links to local authorities, universities and technological partners thanks to special relationships with local Economic Development Agencies and the Science Parks of Wallonia.

Alongside this initial “kick start”, we also organize *meetings with experts* from various federal and regional departments, and guide you through the relevant administrative steps.

As a foreign trade agency, AWEX’s mission is to provide *promotional and export support* for the benefit of both Wallonia and the foreign business community.

Our team of specialized multilingual advisors will assist you personally from the feasibility study through to the realization of your investment and export strategy. Our experts will be pleased to help at *every stage of your activities*.



## Investment support

OUR MISSION is to provide invaluable advice and guide you through the following projects phases:

- Search for available sites (land) and buildings
- Assistance with incorporating your company (access to venture capital, legal and logistics support)
- Advice and assistance in the search for suitable human resources (including initiation and training programs)
- Assistance to obtain grants provided by regional and European authorities. Depending on the proposed location, the combined subsidy from both regional and EU sources can amount to as much as 50% of the total investment
- Assistance with understanding and benefitting from Effective tax rates - Expatriate regime (unique in Europe) - Fiscal ruling (prior agreement with the Fiscal Administration on corporation tax rate) - Holding company Fiscal regime - Fiscal immunization regime - Real-estate tax exemption and Notional interest deduction tool (unique in Europe)

## Export support and incentives

Foreign companies choosing Wallonia as their European hub to distribute products within European markets can benefit from export-oriented services such as:

- General and commercial information on European and foreign markets (AWEX has more than 50 offices in Europe)
- Organization and planning of marketing activities (international trade shows, economic missions, sector-based contact days...)
- Establishing contacts with business federations and international organizations
- Financial support and export financing
- Training in international careers and free traineeships

## Technological support

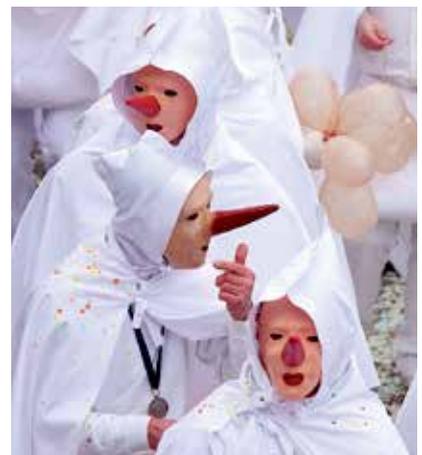
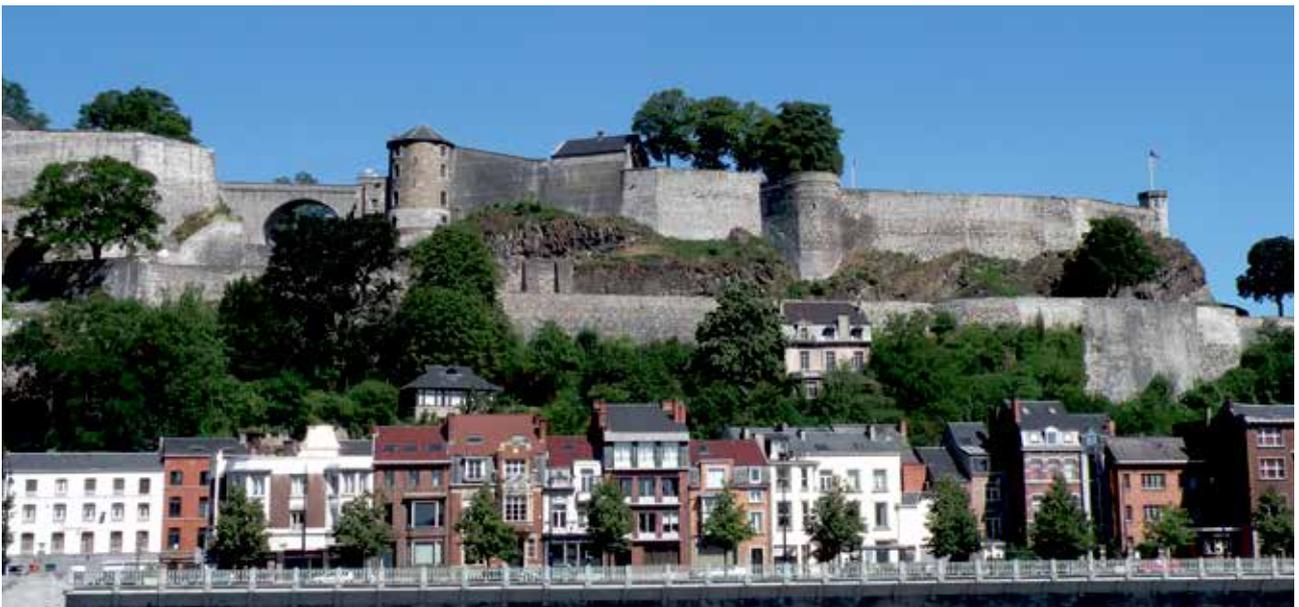
- Business plans: assessment of the viability of the business plan on a technical, commercial and financial basis
- Research funding: preparing for the fundraiser
- Access to public incentives: analysis and personalized action of available public support
- Advice for Patent income deduction, deduction for investments in R&D centres and patents (direct grant of up to 70% of intervention for an SME if innovative quality of the project is satisfactory and expected results are generated within the region)



# LIVING IN WALLONIA

Wallonia has plenty of attractive assets. Harmoniously alternating between rural and urban areas, cities and villages, Wallonia is a region full of charm in many respects: hospitality, a love of fun, age old traditions, architectural masterpieces which are recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites, legendary gastronomy, a welcoming atmosphere, relaxation, and much more.

But beyond its evident charms that draw hundreds of thousands of tourists each year, Wallonia is also an area for quality living, where spacious accommodation and accessible schools are easy to find, and where people benefit from a remarkable health and social protection system.



## LIFESTYLE

Wallonia has much to offer in terms of what there is to enjoy in life. Its landscapes are a harmonious patchwork of the rural and the urban, of towns and peaceful villages. Wallonia's personality can be summed up by its friendliness, its positive outlook, its centuries-old folklore and its architectural jewels, recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites. Last but not least, its legendary culinary tradition and sense of hospitality and relaxation make Wallonia a warm and welcoming region.

## ACCOMMODATION

A complete overview of the accommodation available to rent and buy is frequently published in various newspapers and on the Internet.

Several specialized agencies can also advise on and guide you through the options, and find your ideal accommodation according to your needs, location preferences and budget.



## EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

Wallonia has a good quality and diversified education system. There are many alternatives for parents when choosing a nursery, primary or secondary school, including local, European and international schools.

Education is both formal and free in Belgium. While kindergartens welcome children from the age of 2<sup>1/2</sup>, compulsory education includes primary and secondary schools for children from 6 to 18 years old.

If you are staying in Belgium for a short-term assignment, most expat families send their children to the local public school or to an international school where English is one of the main teaching languages. In both cases, French classes will be offered.

Finally, the higher education network of the Walloon community includes universities ranking among the world's best institutions, with nearly 20% of foreign student enrolment.



## HIGH-QUALITY HEALTHCARE

Belgium takes pride in its healthcare network, one of the most modern and efficient in the world. It comes top in the ranking of countries with medical infrastructures that meet the needs of its inhabitants (IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2013).

For employees and the self-employed, Health insurance is part of the compulsory social security contributions, which makes it almost free and of a very high standard.

You are also required to take out the private health insurance of your choice, which will ensure the partial or total refund of medical care and the purchase of certain medications.



# WALLONIA WELCOME OFFICES

You are at home in the very heart of Europe...

## CHINA WELCOME OFFICE

Haichen WANG - Welcome Office Manager

(Mob.) +32 498 11 41 66

hwang@investinwallonia.be

## INDIAN SUBCONTINENT WELCOME OFFICE

Joachim GALAND - Welcome Office Deputy Manager

(Mob.) +32 485 344 120

jgaland@investinwallonia.be

## LATINAM WELCOME OFFICE

Marina SILVA SANTOS - Welcome Office Manager

(Mob.) +32 490 11 26 38

m.silvasantos@awex.be

## EUROPEAN PRIORITY MARKETS WELCOME OFFICE

Eric DE CLERCQ - Welcome Office Manager

(Mob.) +32 479 74 75 52

e.declercq@awex.be

## ASEAN WELCOME OFFICE

Dimitri DUONG- Welcome Office Manager

(Mob.) +32 473 64 69 30

dduong@investinwallonia.be

## NORTH AMERICA & CLEANTECH WELCOME OFFICE

Philippe WANDERPEPEN - Welcome Office Manager

(Mob.) +32 492 72 43 59

pwanderpepen@investinwallonia.be

[www.investinwallonia.be](http://www.investinwallonia.be)

