BioWin

THE HEALTH CLUSTER OF WALLONIA

YOUR GATEWAY TO
HEALTH BIOTECH & MEDTECH
EXCELLENCE

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Wallonia Clusters

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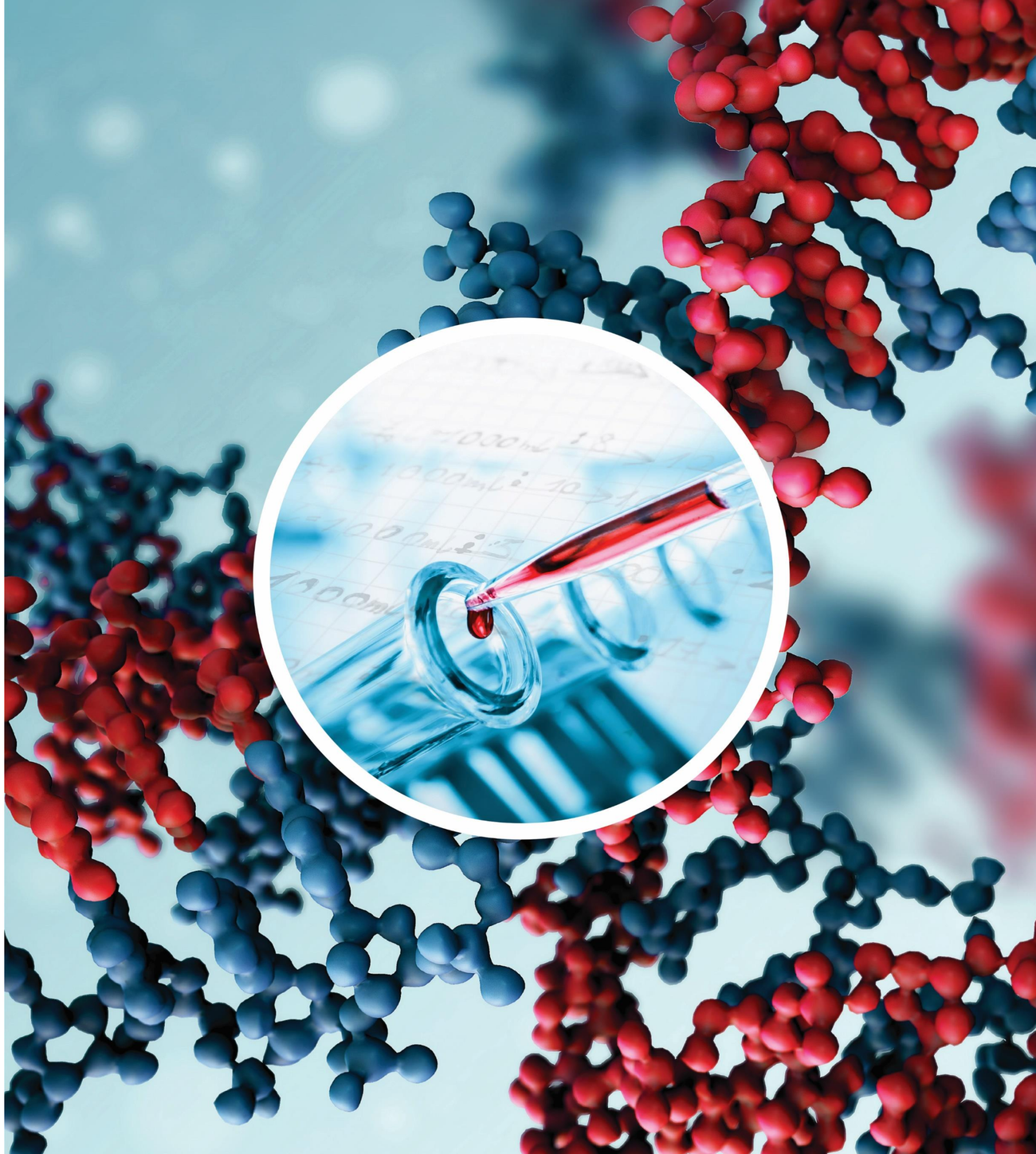

The Walloon response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic:

a prime example of versatility, problem-solving, and teamwork

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Context

World

Belgium

Wallonia

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Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus = close to 30 million cases and one million deaths worldwide between December 2019 and September 2020

In the Spring, nationwide lockdown by the government

Walloon Health and Life Sciences ecosystem showed a remarkable reactivity and creativity in their response to the pandemic. Universities as well as companies offered creative solutions to the numerous problematics through numerous national and international collaborations and projects.

Rapidly activated Walloon resources, identified expertise and talents needed for the projects being initiated, and facilitated collaborations between the different actors.

Summary of the more impactful Walloon initiatives

Personal protective equipment (PPE) and materials

Mask production

- DELTRIAN — WE INNOVATE FOR YOUR FUTURE

Selected by the government to ensure the large-scale manufacturing of surgical masks

3D printing of swabs

- 3D-SIDE & Any-Shape — additive technologies for industry

Mask decontamination

- salamanderU — thinking outside the box & solid frog

Combination of a proprietary confinement chamber and decontamination device

- LIÈGE université

Coordination

- lasea — PRECISION LASER SOLUTIONS — UV decontamination method
- Sterigenics — A Sotera Health company — Ethylene oxide decontamination method
- AMB ecosteryl — Dry heat decontamination method

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Summary of the more impactful Walloon initiatives

Testing

Testing methods

- UNIVERSITÉ DE NAMUR
  The ambitious volunteer-driven project SANA (SARS-CoV-2 Namur) led to the development of a high-quality diagnostic test (for nasopharyngeal swabs)
- LIÈGE université
  Development of an automated version of the SANA testing method
- CORIS BioConcept
  Development of the rapid viral antigens detection method

Serological testing

- ZenTech
  Collaboration with a Zheda (China)
  Development of a rapid IgG/IgM detection test

Testing

- Diagnostic platforms (no longer active)
  - Universities of the Wallonie-Bruxelles federation
    UNIVERSITÉ DE NAMUR, LIÈGE université, UMONS Innovation Center, ULB
  - Industry
    biogazelle, ucb, gsk GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson
- "Bis" testing platform
  5 back-up diagnostic centres in case of increase in SARS-CoV-2 cases
  University of Antwerp KU LEUVEN, LIÈGE université CHU de Liège, ULB Hôpital Erasme, UCLouvain Cliniques universitaires SAINT-LUC UCL BRUXELLES, UMONS Innovation Center
- kaneka & Eurogentec
  Provided reagents and equipment to the diagnostic laboratories

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Summary of the more impactful Walloon initiatives

Treatment

Vaccines

- GlaxoSmithKline — Collaboration with Curevac (Germany)
- UNIVERCELLS — Collaboration with Reithera (Italy) and Leukocare (Germany)
- novasep (passion & smart processes) — Collaboration with Astra-Zeneca

Other treatments

- DELPHI genetics — Development of an anti-viral treatment

Digital solution

Digital solution

- DNAlytics (Data-driven Healthcare) — Collaboration with University of Leuven (KU Leuven), and Sciensano
- DNAlytics (Data-driven Healthcare) — Data-based guidance for research institutions and public organisms
- KEYRUS (insight into value) — Consortium including universities, industrial partners, and other Belgian Scientific entities
- Development of a mobile tracing application (not selected by the federal 'tracing' task force)

Conclusion

The initiatives and collaborations presented above illustrate the drive and resourcefulness of public and private sector instances of the Walloon region.

2 valuable lessons:

Exceptional richness existing in the Walloon and other EU Bio-Regions Health and Life Sciences ecosystems . Rely on the nimbleness and reactivity of the clusters & systems.

The key to a fast and effective response to future large-scale health crises - all clusters were taken by surprise - so being prepared & anticipation is a must!

3 consequences for BioWin:

Promote synergistic collaborations between industrial actors and hospitals for the benefit of patients as for the Belgian economy.

Rely on the collaboration with Clusters in the EU Bio-Regions to leverage the extreme richness & agility of the ecosystems and their SME's.

As Belgium is taking a global leading position in the sector of biomanufacturing, BioWin aims to reinforce biologics production activities in the region, by providing support to both established and developing companies, as well as by attracting foreign actors to fill currently unexploited niches in the field.

YOUR CONTACT AT BIOWIN:

MARC DECHAMPS

Director International Affairs

marc.dechamps@biowin.or g

BIOWIN

THE HEALTH CLUSTER OF WALLONIA

Maison de l'Industrie

Rue Auguste Piccard, 20 | 6041 Gosselies | Belgium

+32 (0)71 91.92.85

contact@biowin.org

WWW.BIOWIN.O

Our partners: ayming KEYRUS life science

Wallonia Clusters Wallonia.be Wallonie