

Dear friend of HIHR,

Now that our 2024 pitch events are completed, we'd like to give you an update on our findings and the developments of HIHR over 2024, plus an first look at our plans for 2025.

First we like to express our sincere gratitude for your ongoing support of HIHR. We feel very privileged by your financial help, but also strongly encouraged by your in-kind support and alignment with the mission and goal of our platform - the need to connect, encourage and help potential academic ventures in their transition from research to market oriented spin off projects.

It's so nice to see how HIHR is gathering momentum and is increasingly recognised as a valuable player in early stage healthcare ventures.

**Two editions, HIHR-14 and HIHR-15**

We are pleased to once again have run two editions with quality venture ideas and a high level of interaction, including both very young and more developed academic spin off projects.

Both editions consisted of:

- 1) online Quickfire sessions
- 2) a live KTO Meet up (new)
- 3) live pitch event

*We thought you'd like to see some summary numbers:*

In 2024 we presented in total:

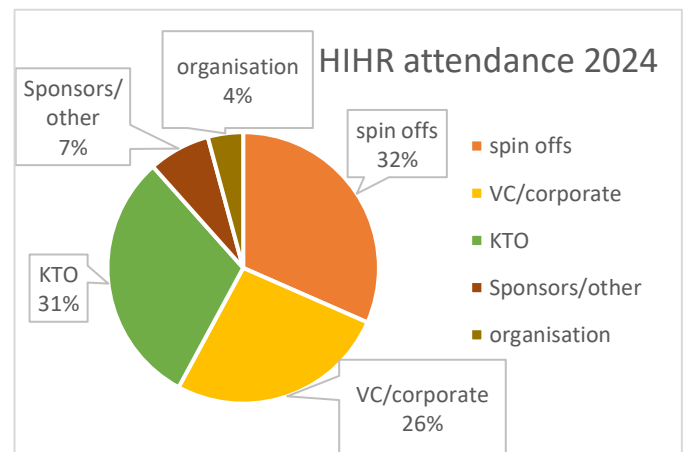
- 23 Quickfire sessions
- 17 start up pitches
- 3 alumni projects (with an update on their new milestones and sharing their lessons learned since their first pitch at HIHR)

Of these 43 projects were:

- 13 Therapeutics & Biotech
- 26 Medtech /Diagnostics
- 3 eHealth
- 1 other

They originated from:

- Netherlands: 27
- Flanders: 11
- Walloon: 2
- Luxembourg: 3



We're glad to have welcomed several projects from Walloon and Luxembourg again.

All together 190 people participated in these 2 editions (live pitch events + Quickfire sessions of both events), led by the energetic expert moderation of Jeff Skinner of London Business School to whom we owe much gratitude. Both editions were rewarded with a good overall appreciation of 8,4.

**Ad 1) Quickfire sessions:**

We are very pleased that we could offer the floor to 23 very new projects in total. All together 199 people participated (many joining multiple sessions) and gave constructive, tailor-made feedback. The

intimate and small-scale character of this format works out well. Every session again, it is a joy to experience the atmosphere, enthusiasm, feedback and inspiration. Ever since the beginning this formula remains to attract good people, willing to share their expertise and to help young projects, even outside their own domain.

2) In 2024 we introduced the so called *KTO-Meet ups*.

This new format sought to bring together KTO-people in the Netherlands, Flanders, Walloon and Luxembourg to share their experiences and difficulties in academic spin off development. The first edition in Antwerp was attended by 24 KTO-professionals and evoked lively discussions, offering new ideas and hands on approaches based on concrete practical cases. The Antwerp edition focused on *deal terms and IP strategies of universities*. The participants from Walloon were extremely enthusiastic, since they hardly ever had joined expertise sharing on this topic before. The second edition, attended in total by 26 people, was organised together with people from JNJ and UCB and focused on the theme of *collaborating with industries* and how both parties can better respond to each other's demands and needs.

Ad 3) *Pitch event*

In total 17 new start-ups and 3 alumni presented themselves to a mixed audience of stakeholders. Again all projects were very well supported and coached by a dedicated group of KTO professionals, investors and industry people in their preparation to the pitch. We are extremely happy and proud of this strong substantive help that continues to be provided on an entirely voluntary basis. The introductory webinar, pitch try out session, tailor made feed-back on PP presentation and individual coaching in between again led to a substantial improvement of the presentation of the propositions.

Both editions however, suffered from clashes with other events (Bio Equity in May and BioEurope, several KTO-events and HTIS in November/December), which resulted in lower physical attendance than usual. We did receive quite a few apologies with the request to stay tuned and promise to join us again at next editions. Overall, the good atmosphere at both live pitch events with many questions and lively discussions and interactions made up a lot.

The parallel session of BioTope in Antwerp on May 13 worked out well and we intend to continue to connect our event to Flanders Bio, on the eve of Knowledge for Growth.

Our efforts to combine our pitch event with the TTT Team Up day in Utrecht on November 13 did unfortunately not work out; it was not possible to match both our programmes.

This year we prolonged our *expert sessions* and we are very grateful for the inspiring contributions of Prof. Dr. Annelies Bronckaers of the university of Hasselt on 'Tooth organoids in dental health innovation'; and a session on 'the Future of cel- and gene therapy' by Prof. Nathalie Cools, researcher and Vice Dean of Research and Valorization at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Antwerp.

All in all, we have again noticed a lot of enthusiasm, especially in the area of constructive interaction and honest discussions during the pitches, KTO meet-ups and the Quickfire sessions. An increasing number of people from Quickfire projects start to visit our live event – a trend that we welcome very much and perhaps can further elaborate on. HIHR appears to respond to an existing need that stimulates young projects and offers concrete tools to continue their entrepreneurial path with new energy.

### **Webinars**

We've offered 3 webinars throughout the year:

- twice on [Resonating with investors](#), given by Jeff Skinner, London Business School. Our highly appreciated introductory sessions to our selected pitchers (and other interested people) as a start of their pitch preparation; April 16 and October 15.
- [IP for AI in Biotech and Healthtech](#) by Arnold&Siedsma on March 19

Again we are very grateful for this expertise freely given. For 2025 we are considering to build these webinars directly into our pitch guidance and thereby concentrate them in the preparatory process.

### ***Funding***

Over the entire 2024 HIHR made a small loss (approx. 8kEuro). The overall income was substantially lower than previous years (-13%). This was caused by less sponsoring income and less participation to live events. We managed to compensate partly for this by reducing both out-of-pocket costs (mainly through lower venue- and catering costs) and organisational costs. The latter was possible by spending less time on meetings with (potential) partners and governance and by ending the support.

### ***Public Research Organisations (PROs)***

The income from participating KTOs remained stable. VIB decided to put an end to their connection but Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus stepped on board again.

### ***Investors***

After our efforts in 2023 on attracting funding from investors, we had to conclude that, except for a selected group, there is a gap between the value that we deliver and their willingness to make a financial contribution; the niche that we operate in seems too fragile and the direct return on investment is too far away.

There is however, a solid core group of approx. 8 funds supporting our platform year by year on an annual fee. This group is enthusiastic about our platform, the connections they make and the ability to help young researchers. And, as one of the venture developers mentioned after HIHR-15: “4 follow-up conversations have been planned. Business return still to be seen but there were very relevant cases for us that we otherwise would have missed.”

### ***Industry***

We're very grateful for the continuous support of Johnson and Johnson, both financially, as well as in kind with their expertise and network. Thanks to them UCB is now connected as sponsor to HIHR as well and joined us in the KTO-meet up preparation of the fall edition. Both JNJ and UCB have expressed to continue their support in 2025.

First acquaintances are made with Argenx and Sanofi; we hope this will lead to a permanent relationship.

Unfortunately, the Medtech domain remains difficult to encounter and convince.

### ***(Semi)public sector***

HIHR-14 was also financially speaking a good event, thanks to the support of Stad Antwerp, Flanders Bio and Medvia.

Health Holland has become a solid partner of our platform, by both financial support as well as in kind help in the selection and guidance of projects. They will continue their support in 2025.

We are also very grateful for the ongoing support of EIT Health and hope they will continue to do so in 2025.

Throughout 2024 several talks with BioTechBooster have taken place. The idea was that their projects could easily flow into our events (stage 1 for Quickfire sessions, stage 2 to pitches), but unfortunately they suffered from some delay. We look forward to including the projects from their programmes in our events of 2025.

### ***Other sponsoring***

We're very happy with the sponsoring of Arnold&Siedsma. In addition to their financial support they have stepped up their in kind contributions by offering a webinar, participating actively in most of the Quickfire sessions and providing tailor made feedback to pitch projects. They will continue their support for 2025 and will even step up their involvement, see later on.

### ***Organisation***

Carla van Heck has continued to help during the first half of '24. However, for budgetary reasons as well as her own growing agenda, Carla is now taking on a more advisory role. We are very grateful to Carla for her substantive and strategic help and commitment.

Since September '24 Willem Dhooge stepped in as volunteer. After his long career at Flanders Bio Willem brings an amazing track record, experience and network with him in the Flemish Biotech field and has offered his help in further stabilizing our position. We much look forward to working together with him.

### ***Plans for 2025***

#### *Funding*

JNJ, UCB, Arnold&Siedsma and Health Holland already have expressed to continue their commitment in 2025. In the coming few weeks we will contact the other partners and PROs.

#### *Timing, selection and preparatory process*

With many relevant events taking place in November / December it's better to stay away from that competition. One option is to bring our live-event forward to midst October, while avoiding school holidays as much as possible. This implies however that we have to concentrate our selection and guidance in 4 weeks' time, which puts higher demands in time management of the selection committee.

Another suggestion is to include two webinars in the preparatory process. Starting with the Introductory webinar from Jeff Skinner on Resonating with investors, Arnold&Siedsma has suggested to pick up on that with a webinar on IP management, covering issues such as the basics and costs of IP, how to communicate with your KTO on this, how to present your IP position to investors? Since this puts no demands on our selection committee, this can be implemented easily.

#### *Live event*

Our aim is to continue with a half day pitch-program, supplemented with a KTO-meet up.

The suggestion has been made to offer 1:1 meetings, even with companies from the Quickfire sessions. However, such 1:1 meetings require a strict organization and would have to take place after the pitch session, but could also disturb the networking drink.

Another idea is to offer Quickfire projects the possibility to *present* themselves shortly in a live session: not to pitch as an investment opportunity but to showcase the pipeline of promising dossiers at research level. Over the winter months we will explore these options and decide on the way forward.

#### *Collaboration*

During 2025 we will continue to explore collaboration with Biotech Booster, TTT-programmes, Medvia and Flanders Bio. Default position in this remains that we maintain our unique character.

### ***Recap***

HIHR is on the radar as a valuable platform in the field of academic business development and plays a small but solid role in the transition from research to market-oriented projects in the Benelux. We can count on a solid core group of stakeholders, who fit well to our small-scale, intimate setup. No show events, no competitive element, but focus on hands-on helping new projects in a unique setting with honest, professional and clear feedback tailored to their needs.

I'm very privileged to bring this high level of expertise together and helping young projects moving forward.



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**HIHR-14, May** – press [here](#) for syllabus with summaries of all projects

\* alumni pitches

*Pitch-presentations*

Artison, Cartagena\*, Pulsify Medical\*, LucidWave, Moccha Discoveries, MORSE, biotactical, AIKON HEALTH, AVIGI Therapeutics, INBORN, VUS Diagnostics

*Quickfire-projects*

Hafnolox, Sightera Biosciences, ARTIC, CloudSound, Peptias, Leven Vision, NAbSense Kinetics, Phos4nova, AETECH

**HIHR-15, November** – press [here](#) for syllabus with summaries of all projects

*Pitch-presentations*

EarDiTech, Axite B.V., AlphaPace, Amotio B.V, AtMoves\*, VirXcel BV, Aurelius Therapeutics BV, Lumox, AETECH

*Quickfire-projects*

PADFLOW, Skinetix, Hale-X, Glacies Biome, Vocalive, FonoCheck, LightUp, Xcellerate, NASPA, PillarWave, SATA Medical, Smarter Nanobody Vaccine for Cancer Therapy, Clear2Cure B.V., Visualise.bio B.V.

#### Participating innovation drivers in 2024

Arnold & Siedsma, BGV FIRST Fund, BioO2 bvba, Biotech Booster, BOM Brabant Ventures, Brightlands Venture Partners BV, Capricorn Partners, Comate Ventures, EIT Health Belgium-Netherlands, Falcon Bio, Health-Holland / LifeSciences@Work, IDE Group BV., imec.istart.nl, INKEF, Johnson & Johnson, London Business School, LRM, Orthogonaal Advies, POM Antwerpen - at.las ATMP Community, Stad Antwerpen, Delft Enterprises, Thuja Capital, UCB, Utrecht Holdings Seed Fund, V-Bio Ventures, Xpand Partners

We are very grateful for our Golden partner

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LRM | Thuja | Utrecht Health Seed Fund | V-Bio Ventures

our event partners



# Participating Public Research Organisations (PROs)

## Supporting PROs



## Regular PROs

