

Strategic Position 2024

Who are we?

Our mission

MEDVIA is an industry-driven membership organization that stimulates health innovation in Flanders. We do this by supporting R&D at the intersection of biotech, medtech and digital technologies, providing funding and services as well as jointly tackling the challenges entrepreneurs face to launch health innovations to the global market. Together we pave the way to better health for all.



Our vision

MEDVIA is one of six spearhead clusters in Flanders, Belgium, nurturing innovation in key sectors in the region. Our focus is on health innovation, which is increasingly arising at the intersection of devices, drugs, diagnostics and digital technologies (the 4Ds).

Our aim is to create maximum economic and societal value, which we achieve by acting as a objective partner to connect government, knowledge institutions, businesses and citizens in a ‘quadruple helix’ model. We align the interests of the different stakeholders – addressing gaps, developing initiatives, setting policy targets and pursuing long-term goals in the health-innovation arena. We work to ensure that high-quality, novel health products reach the global public rapidly to further solidify Flanders’ status as an international leader in health innovation.

Our methods

To enable swift market entry for health innovations and enduring value for both innovators and patients, we provide members of our organization with:

- **Project funding** (VLAIO) and access to international funding opportunities
- **Collective problem-solving** for the challenges faced by health innovation pioneers, such as reimbursement and market access
- **Training & education** in our MEDVIA Academy on topics such as internationalization, funding and pitching
- **Visibility & networking** via events and MEDVIA communication channels
- **Partnering & matchmaking**, both local and international, through personalized connections and project consortia

What sets us apart?

MEDVIA is a **unifying force for all stakeholders**, uniquely able to bring about **complex collaborations** between diverse partners and **tackle difficult challenges** to bring about **benefits for everyone** in the healthcare ecosystem.

- MEDVIA's **unifying role** is fundamental to our organization and firmly entrenched in our governance structure based on trust and mutual respect. Our membership encompasses a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including biopharma, biotech, medical devices, digital health, healthtech, hospitals, research institutes, Venture Capitalists, service providers and patient organizations.
- We **support R&D consortia** applying for funding, where regional VLAIO grants serve as vital stepping stones, enabling higher-risk and longer-term projects, to develop health innovations beyond the level achievable by individual organizations. These MEDVIA projects pave the way to further funding, including federal, EU, and international grants.
- We actively identify and enact **solutions to complex challenges** encountered by health innovators. We host discussions where our members highlight the intricacies and hurdles of the current entrepreneurial landscape. These insights enable us to engage constructively with governmental bodies and other stakeholders for actionable progress.
- The **MEDVIA Academy** empowers our members with essential skills needed to thrive in the dynamic health-innovation landscape. Through a diverse array of workshops, courses, and partnerships with leading experts and organizations, we deliver top-notch training opportunities tailored to meet the evolving demands of the industry.
- The **MEDVIA-team** is solution-oriented, consistently seeking practical answers to complex challenges. This combination of strategic thinking, pragmatism, knowledge

and an unwavering focus on impact sets our team apart and empowers us to excel in the ever-evolving landscape of the health industry.

- Our collaborative endeavors are embodied in **our current strategic initiatives: digital health and ATMP**. These arose from member-driven dialogues and are based on members' needs and strengths. Together we prioritized topics that hold significance on a global scale, reflecting the inherently international landscape that health innovators must navigate.
- We enthusiastically collaborate with **regional, federal and international organizations** that share our aspirations and objectives, maintaining a broad perspective and fostering a collective drive towards advancing health innovation.
- We aim to **create enduring value for health pioneers** by accelerating the global adoption of health innovations with sustainable business models. While our mission does not include the immediate implementation of these technological innovations in global healthcare systems or institutions, we maintain that such integration should naturally evolve as a consequence of our efforts.
- We **actively involve end users** in the conception and design phases of health innovations to ensure that these solutions address immediate, real-world needs. This approach allows our members to gain access to invaluable insights within these specialized markets early on, ensuring that subsequent products are readily embraced by healthcare providers and patients.

Our message to the Flemish government

We are pushing our INNOVATORS towards the U.S.

In addition to technological and scientific hurdles, health innovators face formidable barriers hindering swift access to local and EU markets. The rapidly changing healthcare ecosystem, lack of much-needed new processes and systems, together with the absence of adjusted regulatory and reimbursement frameworks, poses a significant obstacle for entrepreneurs in Flanders attempting to develop sustainable business models. Faced with uncertain timelines, innovators are left without the essential foundations they need to establish a thriving venture and get their products to patients.

The current situation is driving our entrepreneurs into alternative international markets, with over 85% of health innovators in Flanders indicating a preference to initially launch their products in the US. This shift jeopardizes the timely access of Flemish citizens to innovations developed using local public resources.

To confront these health innovation barriers head-on, MEDVIA proposes the following actions:

1. We call for the allocation of **25% of VLAIO project funding** to be also utilized in developing innovative processes and systems that enable technological and scientific innovations to flourish within Flanders. By doing so, we can establish a robust foundation encouraging companies to invest and thrive in Flanders, benefiting both the local economy and people.
2. We will continue to collaborate with regional and federal industry representatives – including beMedTech, pharma.be, Agoria, bio.be/essenscia, and BioWin (the regional health representative from Wallonia) – to address these barriers to health innovation at the Belgian federal level.
3. Concurrent to actions 1. and 2. – and in alignment with the MEDVIA vision – we will continue to support our member companies in their efforts to conquer international markets. However, we recognize the potential danger to the Flemish ecosystem, as these actions may increase the risk of companies relocating from the region. We will therefore keep striving for further improvements to the local health innovation landscape.

Building on our strengths

Simultaneously, Flanders stands out on the global stage for its robust technical expertise. Overseas enterprises consistently seek collaboration with Flemish technical development experts, design firms and manufacturers. Esteemed knowledge centers like imec enjoy worldwide recognition. Excellence, expertise and pioneering problem-solving are among our foremost assets. MEDVIA is committed to leveraging these distinct characteristics within the realm of health innovation, **positioning Flanders as a significant player in the international arena, particularly in the US market**. Through our collaboration with Flanders Investment and Trade, we aim to:

1. Attract increased investments to Flanders allowing new ventures to scale more rapidly and quickly establish a strong and sustainable footprint in Flanders, capitalizing on the region's strengths in technology and innovation.
2. Support more established companies (e.g. engineering and design companies) in healthcare to expand globally, reinforcing Flanders' reputation as a powerhouse of ingenuity and advancement in health technology.

MEDVIA stands as the sole entity in Flanders facilitating the development of cutting-edge health solutions at the intersection of biotech, medtech and advanced digital technologies. Our organization is unique in serving a diverse range of stakeholders, including industry, academia, hospitals and other healthcare providers. To secure the future excellence of health innovation in Flanders, it is imperative that MEDVIA continues to receive the

unwavering support of the Flemish ecosystem. By uniting to tackle common goals and challenges, we can ensure lasting economic and health benefits for all.

Contact details:

MEDVIA

Ann Van Gysel

CEO

Ann.vangysel@medvia.be

+32 475 33 66 00

Sint-Michielsstraat 18/201

9000 Gent

www.medvia.be