

## SynAbs: A spin-off involved in the production of innovative monoclonal antibodies

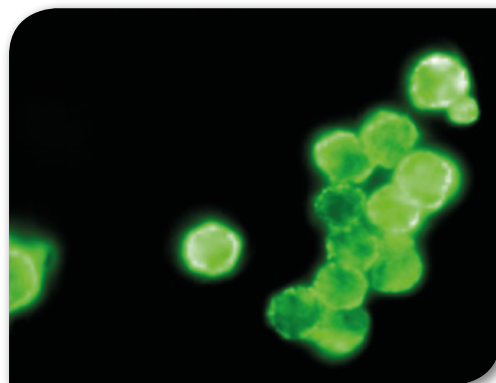
SynAbs was set up in September 2015 out of Professor Pierre Gianello's experimental surgery laboratory (CHEX) in order to develop greater expertise in the production of monoclonal antibodies, essentially of rats but also of mice.

The UCL spin-off was set up as a result of coordinated action by the laboratory, the Louvain Technology Transfer Office (LTTO), Wallonia Biotech Coaching and a French group, Biotech Investissement (which owns RD Biotech and Diaclone).

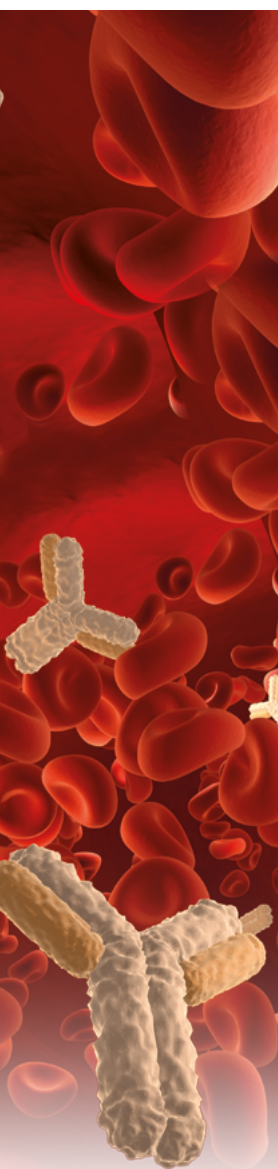
The equity investment by Biotech Investissement (based in Besançon, France) was decisive in validating the business plan. This group provides services to biopharmaceutical companies and produces custom monoclonal antibodies. The complementary nature of the two entities, SynAbs and Biotech Investissement, will make it possible to consolidate SynAbs's activity in Belgium and to expand its sales network in France and the Netherlands.

This partnership, the key element in setting up the spin-off, was also possible thanks to the partnership between the LTTO and Wallonia Biotech Coaching (WBC), the incubator for life sciences in Wallonia. Thanks to WBC, the SynAbs project has benefited from the CxO measure for «orphan» projects which meant that a business mentor could be recruited for the final phases of setting up the company. The work by Didier Argentin, the business mentor assigned by WBC to SynAbs and now the CEO of the spin-off, was decisive in establishing the collaboration with Biotech Investissement.

SynAbs SA is currently involved in the production of rat monoclonal antibodies, serving CROs (mAb and custom immunoassays) and with a product catalogue (more than a hundred secondary anti-immunoglobulins) and has gained strong international recognition which its founders (Pierre Gianello, Yannick Nizet and Didier Argentin) wish to increase further. This «rat mAb» expertise is almost unique in the world and offers access to a differentiated antigen repertoire. SynAbs currently has 4 scientists working for it, has 130 m<sup>2</sup> of production laboratories and expects to generate earnings of 1 million euro in the short term.



Biotech investissement



## **Didier Argentin**, CEO of SynAbs :

*“With a senior team that is experienced in immunology and with constant and discerning support from Sopartec, UCL (Prof. Pierre Gianello) and WBC, in less than a year we have been able to build a unique value proposition in the domain of monoclonal antibodies, a proposition that Biotech Investissement immediately supported.*

*This approach has developed even faster since SynAbs was set up, as it is currently developing innovative non-murine monoclonals, antibodies directed against small molecules (antibiotics, toxins, etc.) as well as R&D concepts that might revolutionise in-vitro diagnostics.*

*I am confident that, thanks to these developments, its financial capacity, management and experienced board of directors, SynAbs will quickly become a major player in the Belgian biotech landscape.”*

Contact : [www.synabs.be](http://www.synabs.be) ; [argentind@synabs.be](mailto:argentind@synabs.be)

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## **Pierre Gianello**, professor and founder of SynAbs :

*“The laboratory has maintained production of these ‘special’ monoclonal antibodies for research purposes within UCL for several decades thanks to the inventive contribution in the past of Professors H.Bazin and D.Latinne. It was clear that this quite unique type of innovation has continued throughout the years because of its originality and specificity. As the monoclonal antibody sales environment had become increasingly competitive, it was now essential to make the tool more professional to make it better known and to take over from the university. SynAbs is likely to find itself very quickly at the centre of several activities in this field and will of course open up its knowledge to many scientific and commercial partnerships.”*

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## **Serge Pampfer**, CEO of WBC :

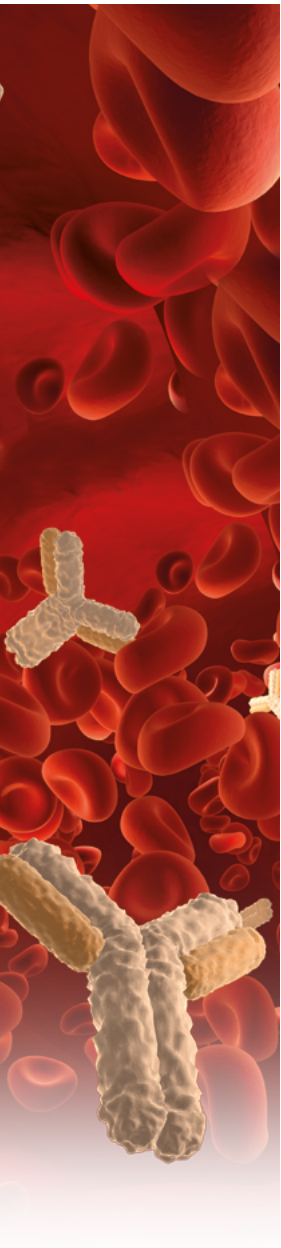
*“We are particularly happy to see SynAbs emerge as a means of developing a very successful platform for monoclonal antibody production, especially because it will provide cohesion and dynamism to the network of companies already working in this sector in Wallonia. From the perspective of an incubator like WBC, the industrial adventure of SynAbs is just beginning and we are already considering how best to serve the ambitions of its founders and to support the company’s technological and commercial expansion in the coming years.”*

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## **Philippe Durieux**, CEO of Sopartec and co-director of LTTO

*“Thanks to the CxO measure and WBC’s support, we were able to find a novel way to set up SynAbs, UCL’s 72nd spin-off, with an industrial partner taking a majority interest alongside the founders. This technology transfer illustrates the LTTO’s active role in developing the regional economy.”*

Biotech investissement 



**RD-Biotech** (part of the Biotech Investissement group), a service provider to biomedical research and life sciences, has gained solid experience in the last ten years in the in vitro production of monoclonal antibodies. In 2009, RD-Biotech bought up BioMérieux's MRC-5 cell production unit, which still makes RD-Biotech the only French supplier of these cells to hospital virology laboratories. In 2012, Biotech Investissement acquired Diaclone, a recognised specialist in monoclonal antibodies (immunology, inflammation) and the ELISA and ELISpot kits. As well as its catalogue products, Diaclone sells its antibodies in bulk (range of 200 specificities and around 500 hybridomas) to many customers involved in in vitro diagnostics and pharmaceutical research. The group's aim is to grow in the monoclonal antibody market by taking participating interests in or acquiring companies with complementary expertise to that of RD-Biotech and Diaclone.

Contact : Philippe Dulieu, CEO  
[www.diaclone.com](http://www.diaclone.com) ; [www.rd-biotech.com](http://www.rd-biotech.com)

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## Louvain Catholic University (UCL) and CHEX

Founded in Louvain (Belgium) in 1425, Louvain Catholic University (UCL) is one of Europe's oldest universities. It offers around one hundred courses to more than 29,000 students from 120 countries. In the international rankings (Shanghai, QS World University Rankings, Times Higher Education) UCL is in the top 1% of the world's universities, which makes it the top university in Belgium's French-speaking community. Education, research and service to society are UCL's three fundamental aims. Rooted in a tradition of excellence, UCL has always been open to partnerships in its region, Europe and the world. Research, closely related to learning and teaching, is the *raison d'être* and the driving force behind the university's activity. Every day, UCL's research, both fundamental and applied, involves more than 2000 researchers, responsible and passionate men and women. It confirms that investment in research is still vital for the country's socio-economic and cultural development.

Contact : [www.uclouvain.be](http://www.uclouvain.be)

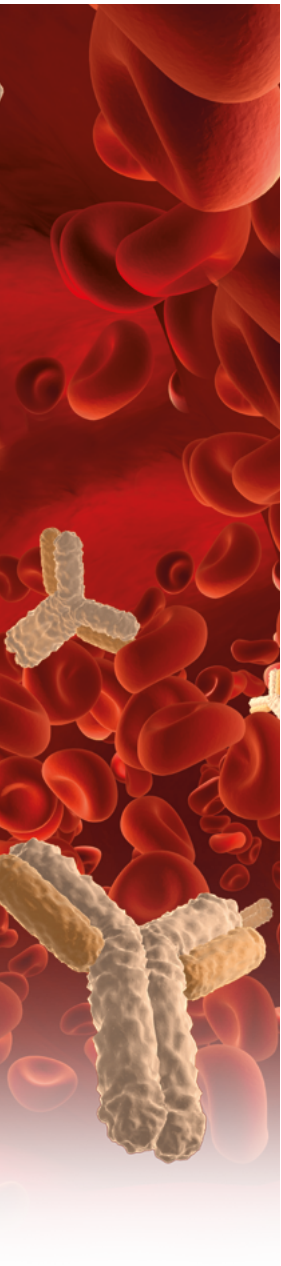
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**CHEX** is UCL's Experimental Surgery and Transplantation Unit, headed by Professor Gianello; it concentrates on studying physiopathological problems related to the practice of visceral surgery and developing new therapies involving technical developments in surgery and new basic knowledge.

Development of antibacterial monoclonal antibodies for detection tests.

Contact : [www.uclouvain.be](http://www.uclouvain.be)

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The **Louvain Technology Transfer Office** (LTTO), comprising Sopartec and UCL's Research Department (ADRE), covers the entire technology transfer process: funding research contracts, identifying inventions in laboratories, protecting and managing intellectual property, technological readiness and commercialisation (by means of licences and/or spin-offs). More specifically, SOPARTEC coordinates the management of licence agreements and the technological readiness of UCL's spin-off projects. More than 70 spin-offs, now generating more than 2,000 jobs, have been set up based fully or partly on the results of research conducted at UCL. These include, in particular, Ion Beam Application (IBA), IRIS Group, IBT, Telemis, Viridaxis, Promethera, GreenWatt, Keemotion, Iteos Therapeutics, DelfMEMS, Novadip Biosciences, SmartNodes, etc.

Contact : [www.ltto.com](http://www.ltto.com)

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**Biotech coaching** Biotech Coaching SA is an incubator (known commercially as WBC Incubator) whose aim is to develop innovative, competitive and sustainable life science companies in Wallonia.

WBC Incubator helps to organise and build up scientific and technological projects using a set of generic and specific support tools that cover primarily management and funding-related aspects as well as the prototyping, production and commercialisation stages.

Contact : <http://www.wbc-incubator.be>

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**SYnAbs** s.a.  
The rat mAbs experts

### **Monoclonal Antibody Manufacturing Center**

6 Chemin du Cyclotron  
1348 Louvain-la-Neuve  
Belgium  
Tel. +32 470 89 56 18 or +32 2 764 95 21  
Fax +32 2 764 95 20

VAT registration BE 0637.716.206  
Bank account : Belfius, BE72 0689 0305 9216

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**Diaclone**   
[www.diaclone.com](http://www.diaclone.com)

**R<sup>^</sup>D**  
Biotech  
[www.rd-biotech.com](http://www.rd-biotech.com)

**SYnAbs**  
The rat mAbs experts  
[www.synabs.be](http://www.synabs.be)