**PRESS RELEASE VERHAERT**

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**ESA puts Verhaert in pole position for technology transfer in Europe.**

**Minister Sleurs witnesses contract award by ESA to Verhaert**

**As leading innovation centre, Verhaert will assure the implementation of the technology transfer initiative throughout the ESA member states. With the specific TechXfer approach, the company, together with its subcontractors, will be in charge of new applications of aerospace technology in the different sectors of the industry. This contract emphasizes the increasing importance of professional technology transfer and ensures extra efficiency of the investments in aerospace. As such, demanding technological innovations can benefit from the technological developments which have been realised in the context of various aerospace missions. With this new contract, Verhaert wants to speed up product innovation on a European level, by building a bridge between industry and start-up through technology transfer.**

Today, Verhaert proudly announces that ESA, the European Space Agency, based on an international tender procedure, has assigned Verhaert for the implementation of its European Technology Transfer Initiative in the context of the agency’s Technology Transfer Programme.

Objective of this technology transfer programme is to fortify the European industry by identifying and developing new business opportunities which use technology developed in ESA’s aerospace programmes.

In this context, ESA TTPO- Technology Transfer Programme Office – collaborates with a network of technology brokers and incubation centres and it submits ESA’s intellectual property and its patent portfolio. This network will operate under supervision of Verhaert.

**APPROACH**

Verhaert has developed a specific approach and programme for this purpose: TechXfer.

This programme differentiates from the classical approach for technology valorisation by on the one hand diverging from a technology “push” model to a user-focused “pull” model and on the other hand through an integration of the complete chain of technology valorisation; ranging from opportunity creation to feasibility research, to the development and construction of demonstrators and prototypes.

**NTTI**

The Belgian aerospace policy has always supported the importance of a broader valorisation of aerospace technology. Belgium was one of the pioneers in elaborating a Technology Transfer Initiative on national level, the so-called NTTI.

In 2014, Verhaert was selected by Belspo and ESA to develop its Techxfer programme in the context of a national technology transfer initiative in (NTTI) Belgium.

This appointment has enabled Verhaert to demonstrate its approach to ESA, as well as the successes which were realised with it; all this has resulted in today’s selection of Verhaert to implement this approach on a European scale.

**INNOVATION HUBS**

Verhaert appeals to 15 sub-contractors throughout Europe, from Sweden to Greece and from Great-Britain to Austria.

These so-called brokers identify local opportunities and assist, supported by Verhaert, the local industries and start-ups while applying this new technology. They can also rely on a network of 15 Business Incubation Centres (BIC’s) and hence form a unique network of innovation hubs.

**AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY**

Aerospace is an extremely demanding application field. As a result, aerospace is a forefront and in the context of space missions, strikingly many new technologies are being developed, for instance sensors, new materials, low power systems, light-weight structures, optical systems, advanced robotics and extremely reliable software.

It is therefore not surprising that these technologies can also offer solutions for all sorts of social challenges and technical problems.

In your press handout you will find a book published by ESA with a number of examples of earthly applications which have been enabled by the use of aerospace technology.

**IMPACT**

In the execution of this contract, Verhaert will be responsible for one of the biggest technology programmes in Europe with a realisation of more than 400 spin-off companies and technological transfers.

“Thanks to this contract, Verhaert will be propelled instantly to being one of the leading actors in Europe with respect to technology transfer and incubation of technological starters and Verhaert will strengthen its position as a partner for the management and operation of incubation and acceleration programmes for corporate and knowledge institutions”, according to Koen Verhaert- CEO Verhaert Group.

**FUTURE**

Today, Verhaert invests strongly in the expansion of its Techxfer service for the following reasons.

Technology transfer has long been a side activity of research institutions and universities. In the last few years however, we notice an increase of the importance of it, which has turned it into a strategic activity for these institutions, where technology valorisation also directs the research agenda and determines the technology route map.

In aerospace policy, we expect a similar movement where it would be beneficial if we were to evolve towards a situation where we, in the set-up and selection of aerospace programmes, take account of the valorisation potential and where each mission’s budget would also include activities to enable this technology valorisation.

We also notice that companies, in an open innovation context, continuously seek ‘best practices’ from other sectors, and technology transfer becomes increasingly important where large corporations take a closer look at start-ups to feed their innovation pipeline.

On a European level, Verhaert wants to form a bridge between these large corporations and the start-up community, based on technology incubation and acceleration services to hence speed up product innovation. This contract forms a new milestone in this context.

Imagery:
<http://www.esa.int/For_Media>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3k5daFs_naY&list=PLA4B58198501C8FA0>
Technology Transfer - dedicated movie:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4gUq_OSgcI>
FLEYE: Example of Start-up Tech Transfer:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-4_wKpS6yUf8all-bV8c_Q>

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**ABOUT VERHAERT**

**Verhaert is a leading service provider in the field of product and service innovation. Verhaert has long-standing experience in aerospace and technology transfer.**

**In the Nineties and early Millies, Verhaert played a pioneering role in the development and construction of the laboratories in the International Space Station (ISS) and of the Proba mini satellites for ESA.**

**Later on, this activity was expanded by Verhaert to Verhaert Space, which was then sold to the British Qinetiq.**

**Following this, Verhaert has continued to aim itself successfully at technology transfer and the use of its aerospace expertise in the development of products for daily applications for its clients. This resulted recently in the creation of a focussed program cell within the Verhaert group which is aimed at technology transfer.**

We call ourselves ‘Masters in Innovation’. We work for ambitious companies in different sectors covering Aerospace, FMCG, Medical, Connect and Industry, for international market leaders like AB-Inbev, Atlas Copco and Novartis and for start-ups.

With them we create breakthrough innovations on system levels in areas which are strategic but do not always fit with their core competences, capabilities and culture.

We believe successful innovation requires an integrated approach. Therefore we manage towards the ‘sweet spot of innovation’ being the integration of technology innovation, business innovation and design innovation. We deliver managed innovation services integrating those disciplines throughout the process from strategy over product development towards launch.

Our experts are generalists and make the difference by their capability to handle highly conceptual and complex matters in a very pragmatic and tangible way.

We do so by visual thinking and rapid prototyping, by working in autonomous multidisciplinary teams fuelled by 8 specialist Labs, by our proprietary development methodology RICE and through the transfer of knowhow and technology between different sectors. All this in a highly flexible and open manner towards our clients.

We have been doing this successfully since 1968 and we have developed over 500 breakthrough products leading to more than 100 patents for our clients.

Today we have four innovation centres; two in Belgium, one in the Netherlands and one in Portugal. We work with about 125 engineers, designers and PhD’s and manage an R&D budget of about 15M€.

**ABOUT TTPO**

ESA’s Technology Transfer Programme Office (TTPO) aims at strengthening European industry by identifying new business opportunities for providers of space technology and systems. It plays an important role in enhancing the know-how and competitiveness of these providers while broadening their business horizons.

Through its lines of business, TTPO supports strengthening the European economy continuously– Managing the network of **ESA Business Incubation Centres**, Technology Transfer **Broker Network**, **Intellectual Property** as well as managing **ESA’s patent portfolio**.

ESA’s Technology Transfer Programme Office (TTPO) provides space solutions – from space, down to Earth. Since the early 1990s, TTPO has promoted space technology spin-offs for down-to-earth uses across a wide range of activities.