

New consortium in Flanders 'BlueSpace' as a fertile breeding ground to innovate with space technology

Entrepreneurs who want to innovate with space technology find coaching and expertise at 'BlueSpace', the new consortium of imec, Verhaert and VITO.

Space as a source of inspiration to innovate

Many existing technologies and innovations have their origins in space. Examples include telecommunications, meteorology and navigation, which have taken a prominent place in our daily lives. With high-quality technologies, knowledge and applications, space is a bottomless source of inspiration for innovation.

The investments made in space get added value when they are used in new projects on Earth. To encourage the use of space technology, imec, Verhaert and VITO launch the consortium 'BlueSpace' with an incubation program of the same name. Sven De Cleyn, imec.istart program manager: "High-tech spin-offs are the future of Flanders. We see great opportunities in the use of space technologies. With 'BlueSpace' we want to support new initiatives that apply these opportunities."

Technology transfer by ideation

Imec, Verhaert and VITO have a profound experience in supporting entrepreneurs to develop new ideas. Together they are a profitable cross-fertilization between creativity and technology. Therefore the 'BlueSpace' consortium adds a creative component to finding new applications, making a technology transfer more than just a license deal.

Sam Waes, coordinator technology transfer at Verhaert: "The potential of space technology is countless. After 3 years as broker and 1 year as manager in ESA's Technology Transfer Network, we want to build a strong initiative in Flanders as a fertile breeding ground for technological innovations associated with space. As service provider in integrated product innovation we see a collaboration with start-ups as an enrichment for our developed tools and methodologies."

Incubation program 'BlueSpace'

The 'BlueSpace' incubation program offers coaching, technological expertise and facilities to entrepreneurs, both high-tech start-ups as spin-offs. Steven Krekels, Unit Manager VITO Remote Sensing: "Space technologies for earth observation can really enrich and sharpen our industry. As a technological research center, we want to support innovations in the broadest sense. VITO Remote Sensing realizes sustainable social solutions by focusing on innovative technologies that also have an economically self-sufficient story. Europe is investing billions in programs such as Galileo and Copernicus. It is our mission to help those investments valorize for Flanders. Any entrepreneur who takes initiative in that domain, can count on our support to strengthen the Flemish socio-economic web."

BlueSpace offers support at different locations in Flanders, with Antwerp as base. We like to give high-tech start-ups and spin-offs that use space technology a flying start.

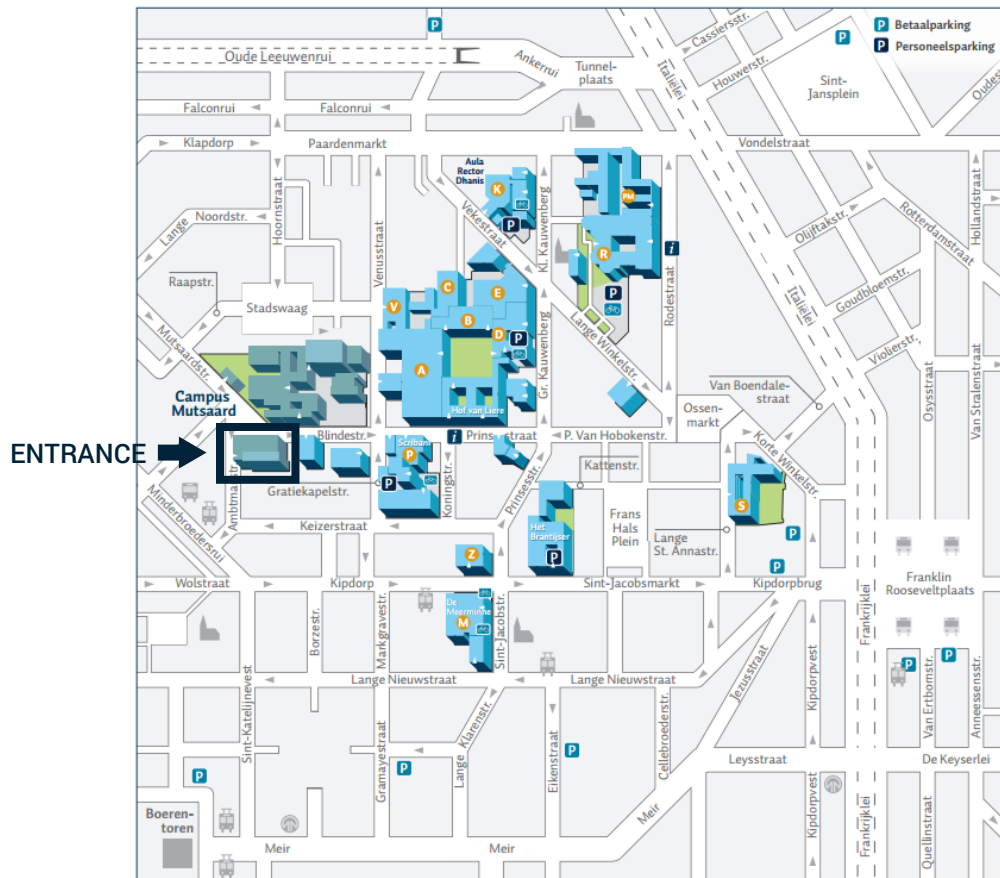


The first initiative is '**Space4Earth Innovation Week**', a collaboration with the University of Antwerp. From 13 till 17 March 2017 master students 'product development' will use space technology to search for new applications. This initiative is supported by Antwerp Space, AUREA (Antwerps Universitair Research centrum voor Evenwicht en Aerospace), Lambda-X, QinetiQ, Space Applications Services, VITO and Voxdale. Next 'BlueSpace' will launch the first open call for new incubation projects in May.

Note for the press:

Representatives of the press are welcome on Friday 17 March 2017 for the closing event of the 'Space4Earth Innovation Week' organized by the faculty Product Development at the University of Antwerp. This closing event will take place at campus Mutsaard, entrance via Ambtmanstraat 1, 2000 Antwerp.

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/nl/campusleven/op-weg-naar-de-campus/stadscampus-campus-mutsaard/>



Stadscampus - Campus Mutsaard



Imec Leading research and innovation hub in nano-electronics and digital technology

<http://www2.imec.be>

Verhaert Leading provider of integrated product innovation, both broker and manager in ESA's Technology Transfer Network

<http://www.verhaert.com>

VITO Flemish research organization in cleantech and sustainable development, including a unit specialized in remote sensing

[www.vito.be - remotesensing.vito.be/](http://www.vito.be-remotesensing.vito.be/)

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