

A&M strikes technology deals

Partnerships with Belgian companies could bring millions to BV

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The Texas A&M University System's Office of Technology Commercialization announced Friday it has reached an agreement with several Belgium-based businesses for partnerships that could bring millions of investment dollars to the Brazos Valley.

One of the deals calls for Belgian high-tech optical company AMOS to locate its first U.S. office in College Station.

The partnerships were struck at the end of two days of meetings with trade delegation representatives from the Wallonia Foreign Trade and Investment Agency (AWEX), an arm of the Walloon government in the southern region of Belgium.

Representatives from 17 Belgian companies participated in the talks.

Officials announced the partnerships during two media events at The Research Valley Partnership offices and Texas A&M Institute for Pre-clinical Studies.

Wallonia has a network of nine universities and 300 research and development centers that focus on research areas similar to those at

Texas A&M, university system officials said, including life sciences, mechanics, aerospace, clean technologies and agro-food. The system's Office of Technology Commercialization (OTC) has developed a strong relationship with the Wallonia investment agency as part of the OTC's "Born Big" economic strategy.

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that focuses on global partnerships, with operations in Texas and in the partner country.

In addition to the deal with AMOS, the A&M System announced the following new partnership agreements:

- A 2-million Euros agreement between the A&M System and the Walloon region's Sofinex economic fund to jointly develop and invest in research and business ventures of interest to both parties.

- The A&M System has joined Lisam Systems SA and its partners in the co-founding of Lisam America, Inc., which is delivering environmental, health and safety software and service solutions for

chemicals management and regulatory compliance.

- The system and PEPITE company signed a letter of intent agreeing to collaborate in the creation and delivery of data mining technologies that officials said will enable factories to operate with more energy efficiency.

Brett Cornwell, associate vice chancellor for technology commercialization for the A&M System, said that seeking commercialization opportunities on the international front is a "new system outlook."

The A&M System, he added, "has been very lucky to find a partner like AWEX that sees the mutual local economic benefits of thinking internationally for commercialization opportunities from our

respective universities."

Todd McDaniel, president and CEO of The Research Valley Partnership, said Belgium has a huge biotechnology industry, and he views the partnership as an international gateway into the industry.

Cornwell said the system, which has funds specifically set aside for coinvesting, puts up "a relatively modest amount" for the partnerships — about \$25,000 for company start-ups.

Cornwell said the benefit to the system is the funding potential for research projects, as well as money earned through licensing.

"The only way we commercialize technology is through companies," Cornwell said. "It's all about investment."