

## SPIN-OFF Business Models

*Nathanaël Ackerman*



THE BRUSSELS  
ENTERPRISE AGENCY

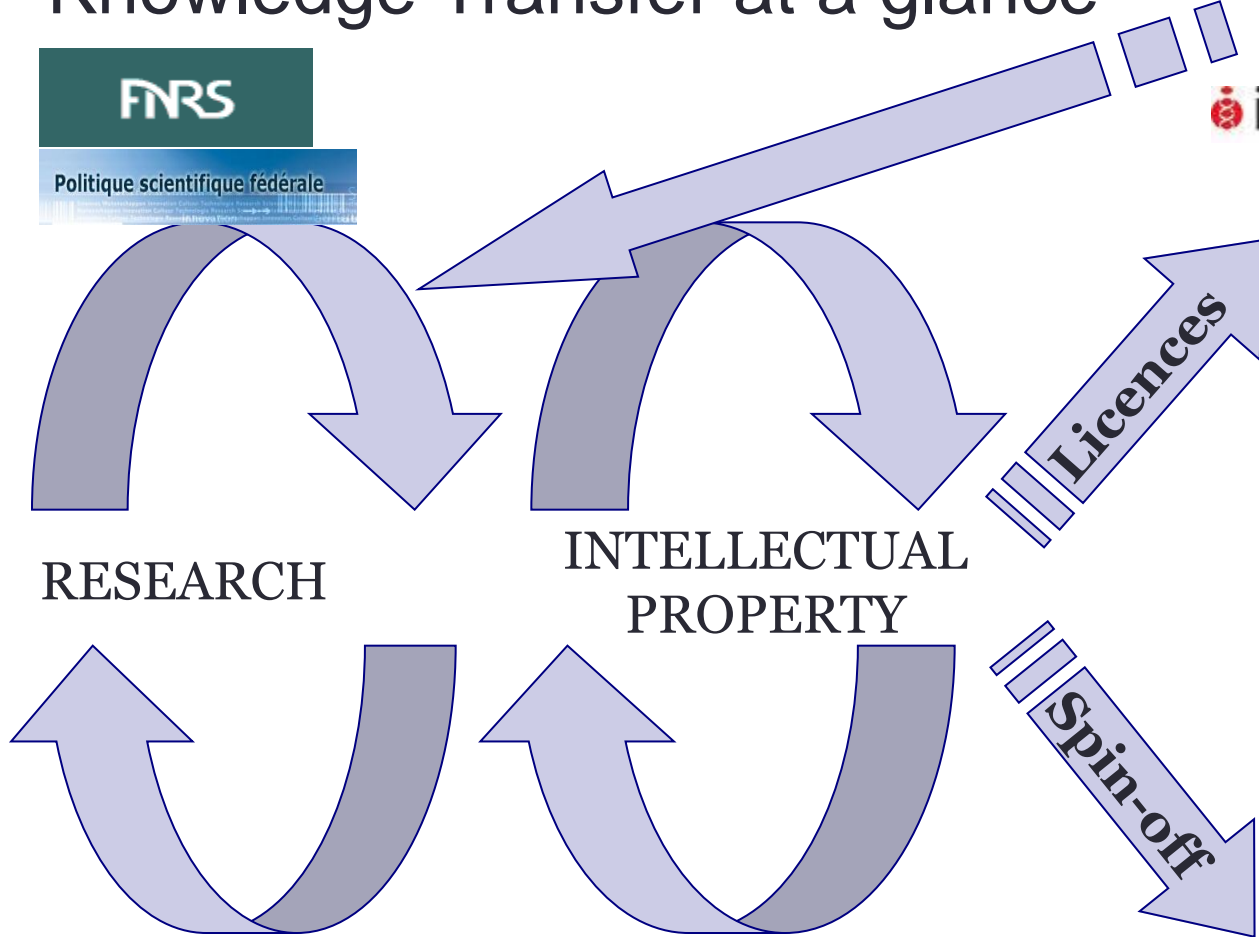
ENVIMPACT Project Training  
7 March 2013, Bucharest (Romania)

## Agenda

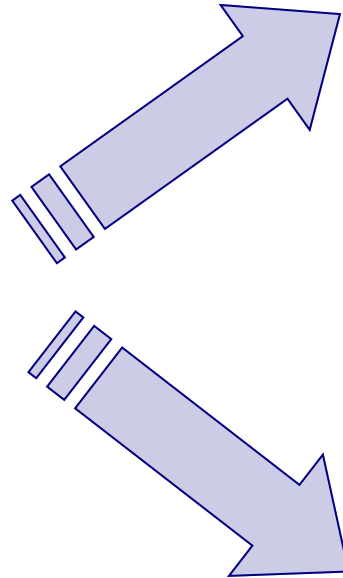
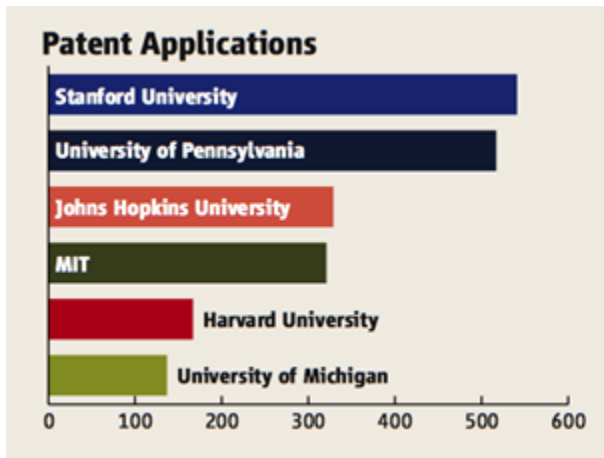
- Knowledge Transfer at a glance
- Spin-off creation
  - Research
  - IP
  - Proof-of-concept
  - Business Plan
  - Licensing
  - Fund Raising
- Innovation Trends

# **An Introduction to Knowledge Transfer**

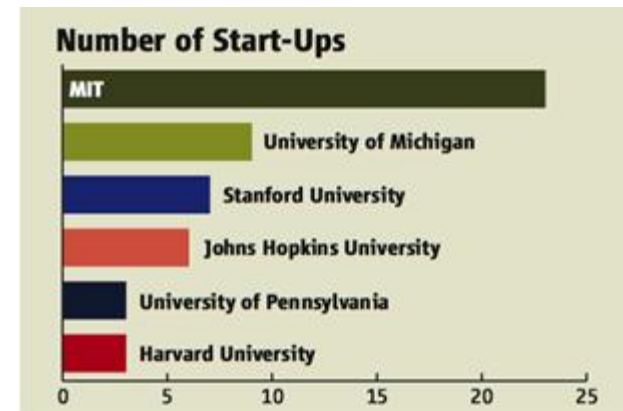
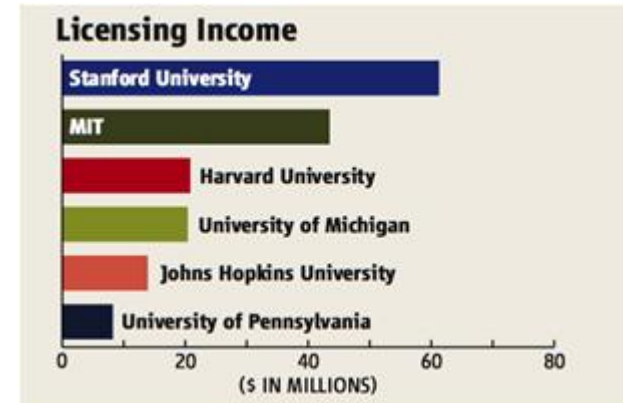
# Knowledge Transfer at a glance



# Top universities are top value creators but their strategies differ



Universities protect  
*Intellectual property* (IP)  
essentially through  
patents

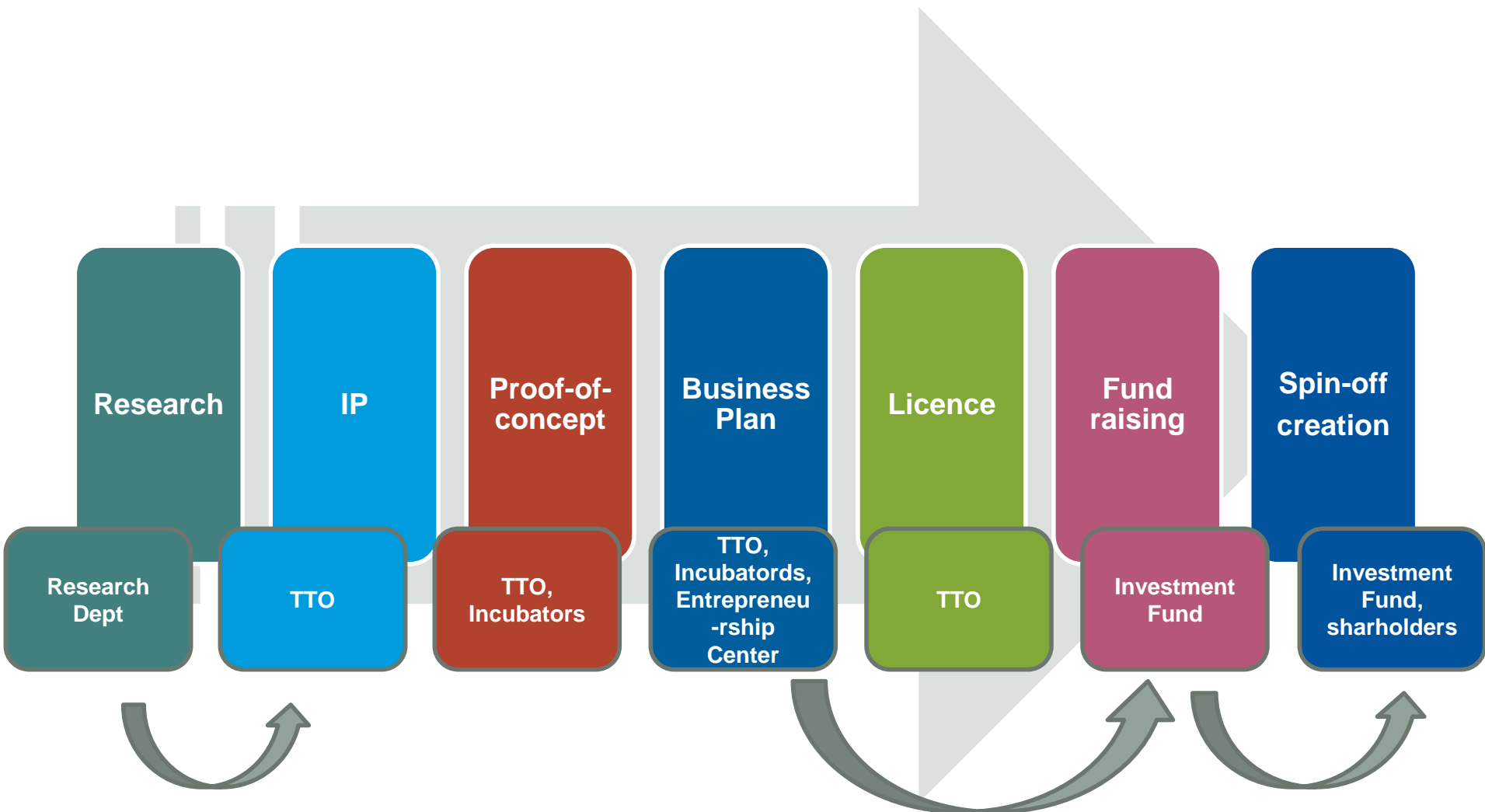


# Spin-off creation

# Various kind of spin-off projects ?



# Process & Main Actors





# Research

- At the beginning, an idea ... whether the research is applied or not

⇒ Evaluate the opportunity (with the TTO)

- Is it a product, a service ? What is the market need ?
- Can you protect your idea ?
- What human resources (& skills) do you need for the project ?
- What are the financial resources you need and you can access ?

# Intellectual Property Protection

- Various types of intellectual property rights : patents, brand, software protection, authorship, ...
- Why apply for a patent ?
- University owns the IP rights, inventors are named
- « Three third » rules
- Getting IP rights is compatible with publication ! One constraint : protect before disclosure

# Patent Procedure

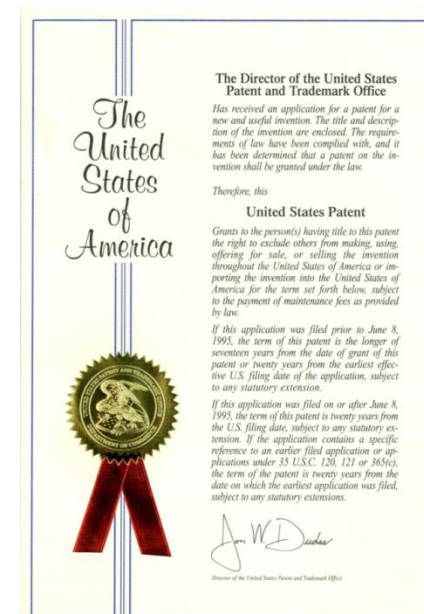


## Patentability :

- novelty
- inventive step
- industrial application

## Prior Art

Freedom to operate



# Proof-of-concept

- There often exists a gap entre beteween an « academic » proof-of-concept and a first « industrial prototype » et une version « industrielle » => lower the industrial risk.
- Collaboration with an existing company
- Financing ...

# Proof-of-concept definitions

- *"An approach used for demonstrating immediate business benefit, proving feasibility and critical aspects of a solution, and to demonstrate value to the business. The proof-of-concept has a well-defined scope and set of objectives."*
- *"A proof of concept is a short and/or incomplete realization of a certain method or idea(s) to demonstrate its feasibility. The proof of concept is usually considered a milestone on the way of a fully functioning prototype."*
- *"The proof-of-concept is defined as evidence that demonstrates that a business model or idea is technically feasible and economically viable."*
- *"The proof of concept allows the development of intellectual property to take place in a way which extends protection of that property; which extends applicability of that property; which improves confidence in its anticipated commercialisation; which underpins the validity of its claims and which demonstrates value. It is still some way from "market" and "job creation" but fills that vital gap between early "blue sky" research and market exploitation."*

# What is the Innovation Gap, and what causes it?

In a perfect world, strong technological concepts would always evolve into commercial reality. But that ideal is relatively rare. Several obstacles make it difficult for valuable emerging research to transition out of the laboratory and into the marketplace:

- **Fear of risk.** Even if a new technology addresses a market need, a level of risk remains around implementation, which can prevent VCs and companies from participating. Today, especially, investors demand relatively low-risk opportunities, and require proof-of-concept -- and sometimes even customers -- before they are willing to sign on.
- **Reduced funding.** Economists generally agree that technological innovation has accounted for more than half of America's economic growth since World War II. But US federal spending on basic and applied research has fallen significantly (by 12% as a share of GDP between 1993 and 1997). Additionally, many companies are responding to the growing pressure for short-term returns to stockholders, rather than investing in long-term research.
- **Financial limitations on small businesses.** According to the Small Business Administration, America's 25 million small businesses account for 55% of America's innovations. But by their very definition, these companies have limited resources for identifying and promoting untested technology.
- **Disconnect between academia and marketplace.** Universities own thousands of pieces of intellectual property, and thousands of companies can trace their roots to Universities-spawned innovation. However, most faculty are necessarily focused on their disciplinary research, rather than commercialization, limiting the likelihood that their innovations will make it to the marketplace.

## Example : Hardware IP based case

Ground breaking technology for secret key generation based on the laws of quantum physics.



Laboratory experiment fully demonstrated

The technology is used to solve emerging problems in cloud computing.

In contrast to software, hardware development requires much more resources.



---

Potential customers are sceptic without a testable industrial version appliance ...



... Potential capital “risk” investors require LOIs before injecting money.

Solution: Ask for proof-of-concept funding



Funding the entire prototype is too costly



Instead, we manage to finance the “core” of the appliance while the team prospects potential customers with an downgraded OEM version based on competitor’s technology.

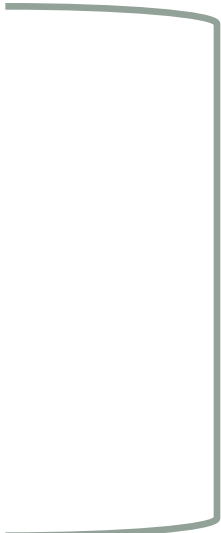
# Negotiate a licence

- License : contract that allows the future spin-off company to exploit commercially the invention
- Transfert de la technologie de l'ULB → spin-off
- Can last several months



# License contract

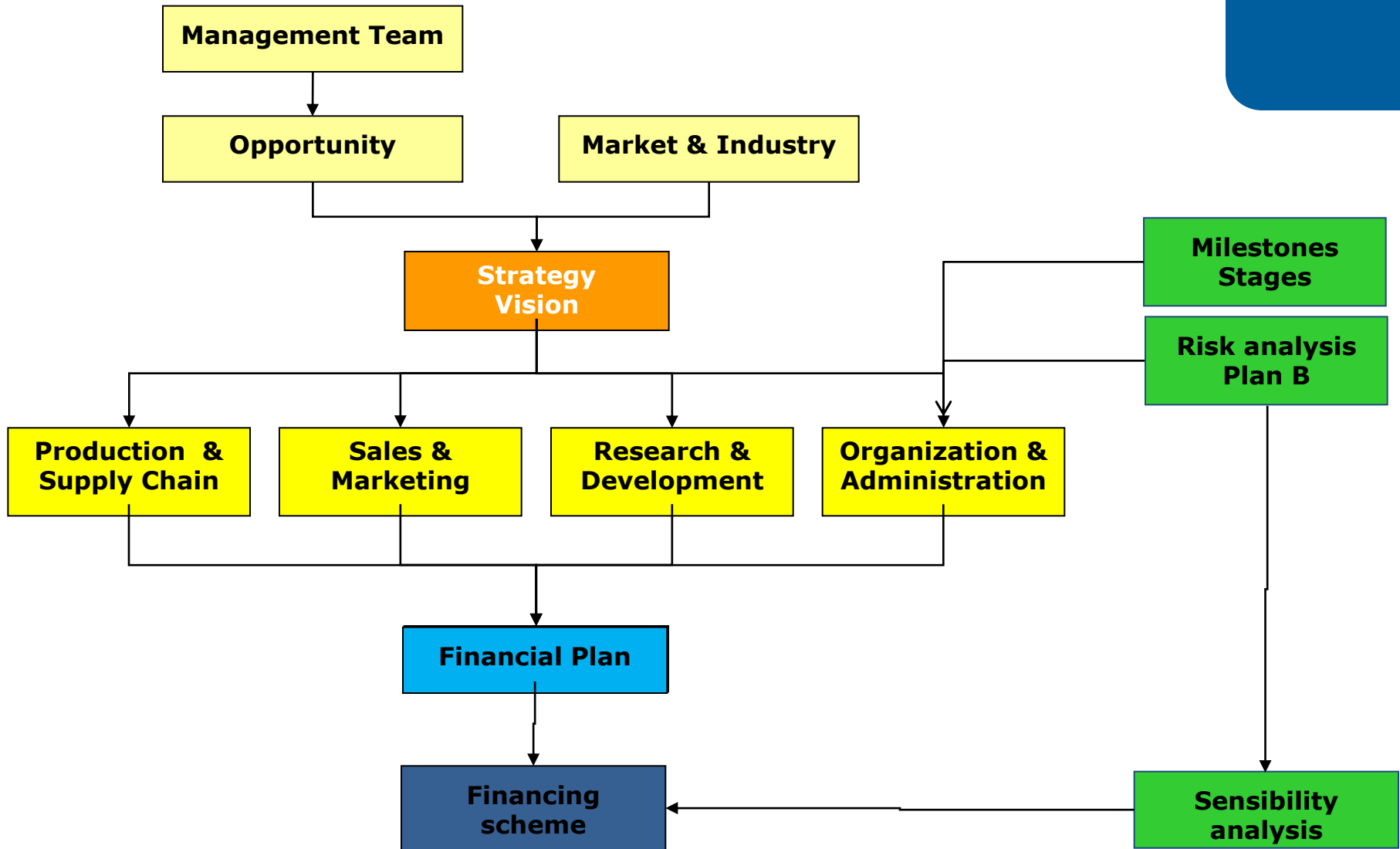
- Non financial terms:
  - Domain
  - Exclusivity or not
  
- Financial terms :
  - Upfront
  - Milestones
  - Royalties
  
- Three third rule



Valorisation comitee  
Decision

# The Business Plan

Business Plan



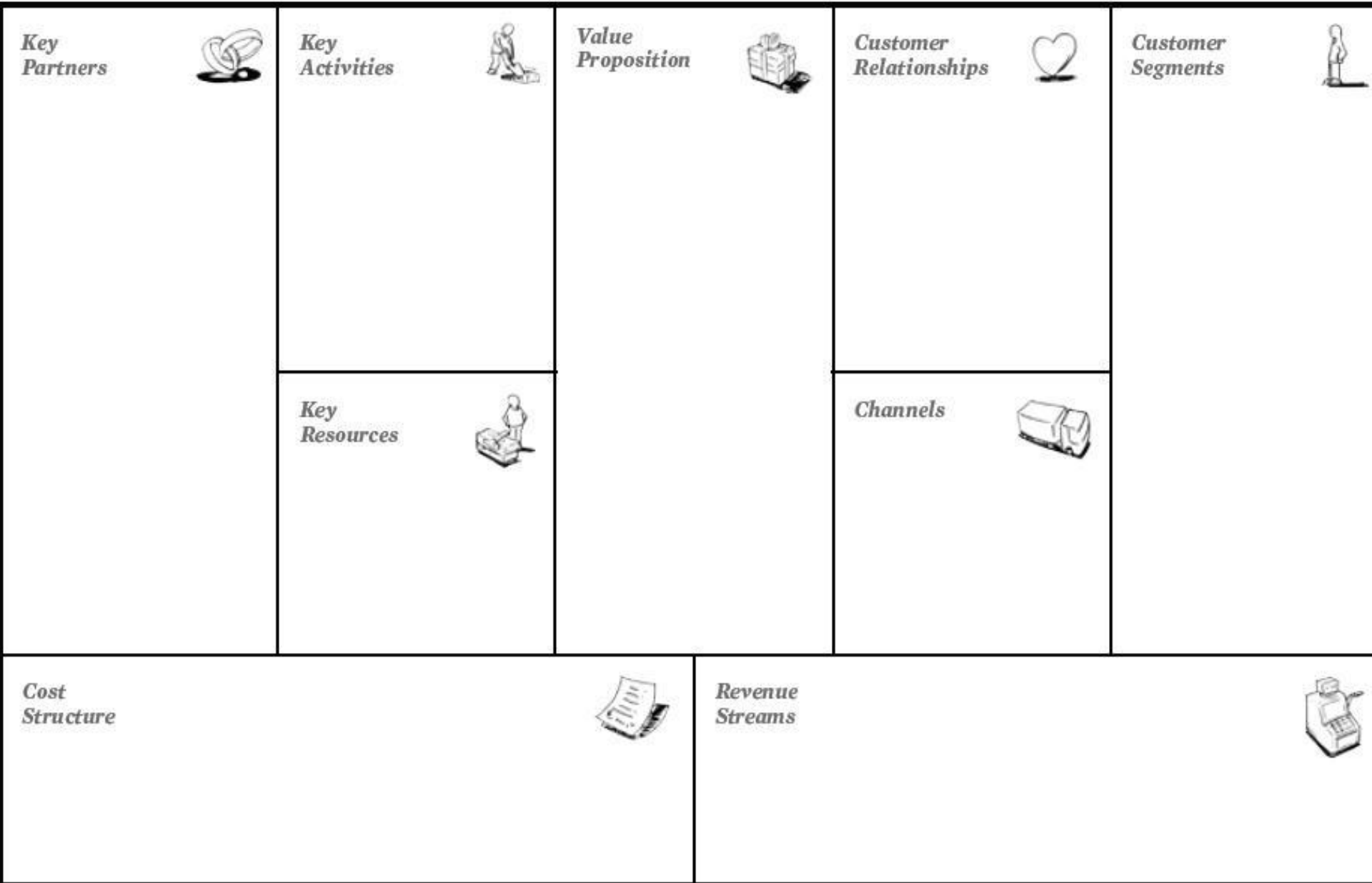
# The Perfect Business Plan?

- A dream team: capable, experienced, committed, adaptable and trustworthy
- A unique offering with a proof of concept
- An in-depth market research section (i.e. incl. demand, industry and competition)
- Focus on one niche market and a strong Sales & Marketing plan
- Focus on the core business
- Ambition and realism
- Clear milestones
- Ready for execution
- Strong governance
- Risks analysis and Plan B included
- Financial plan based on a limited set of benchmarked assumptions
- Keep it simple

Investors will add:

- Fast and scalable business model
- Clear exit strategy

# Business Model Generation



# Raise Money

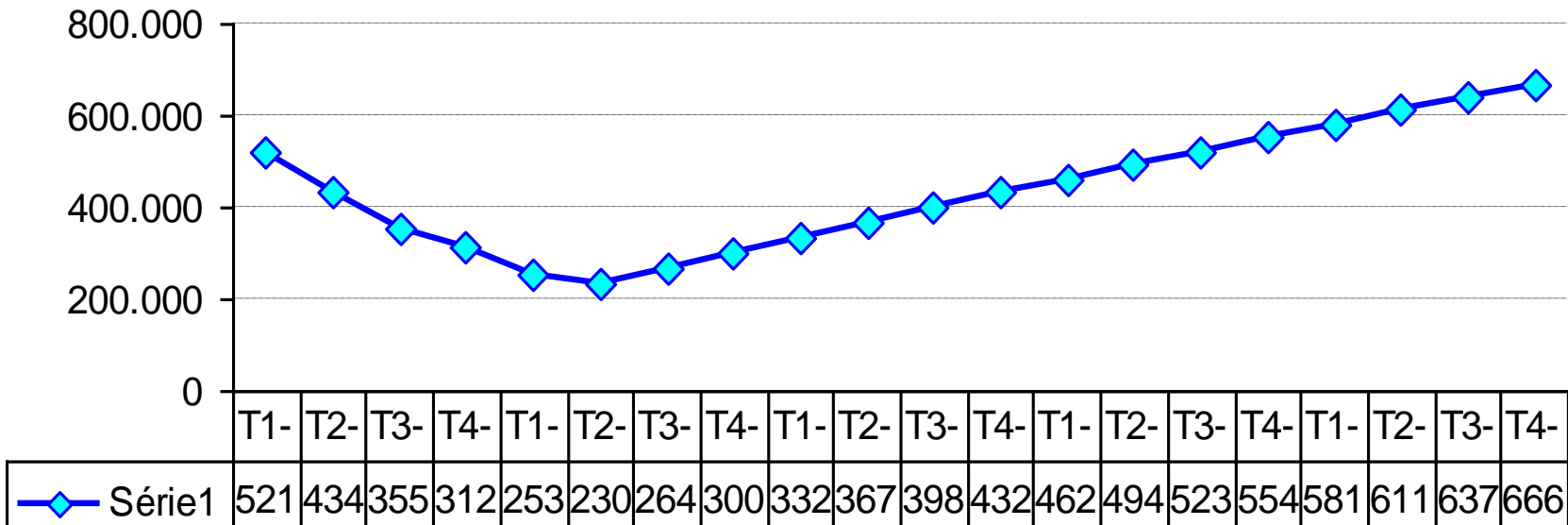
- The financial plan will help you to evaluate (among others) :
  - How much money (& time) you need to reach the break even ?
  - How much do your project worth ?

=> These are the basics to go to Investors

# Typical curve

(Financial Plan)

## Evolution de la trésorerie



Vocabulary :  
**initial investment, cash burning, dead valley,  
time-to-market, break even, return on investment**

## « Elevator Pitch »

- Opening Statement / Context / Market Need
- Product – Solution
- Our Client – Value Proposition
- Competition
- Business Model
- The Team
- Achievements
- Your need
- Exit

Principes :

PI intégrée dans structure de capital; règle des trois tiers sur royalties

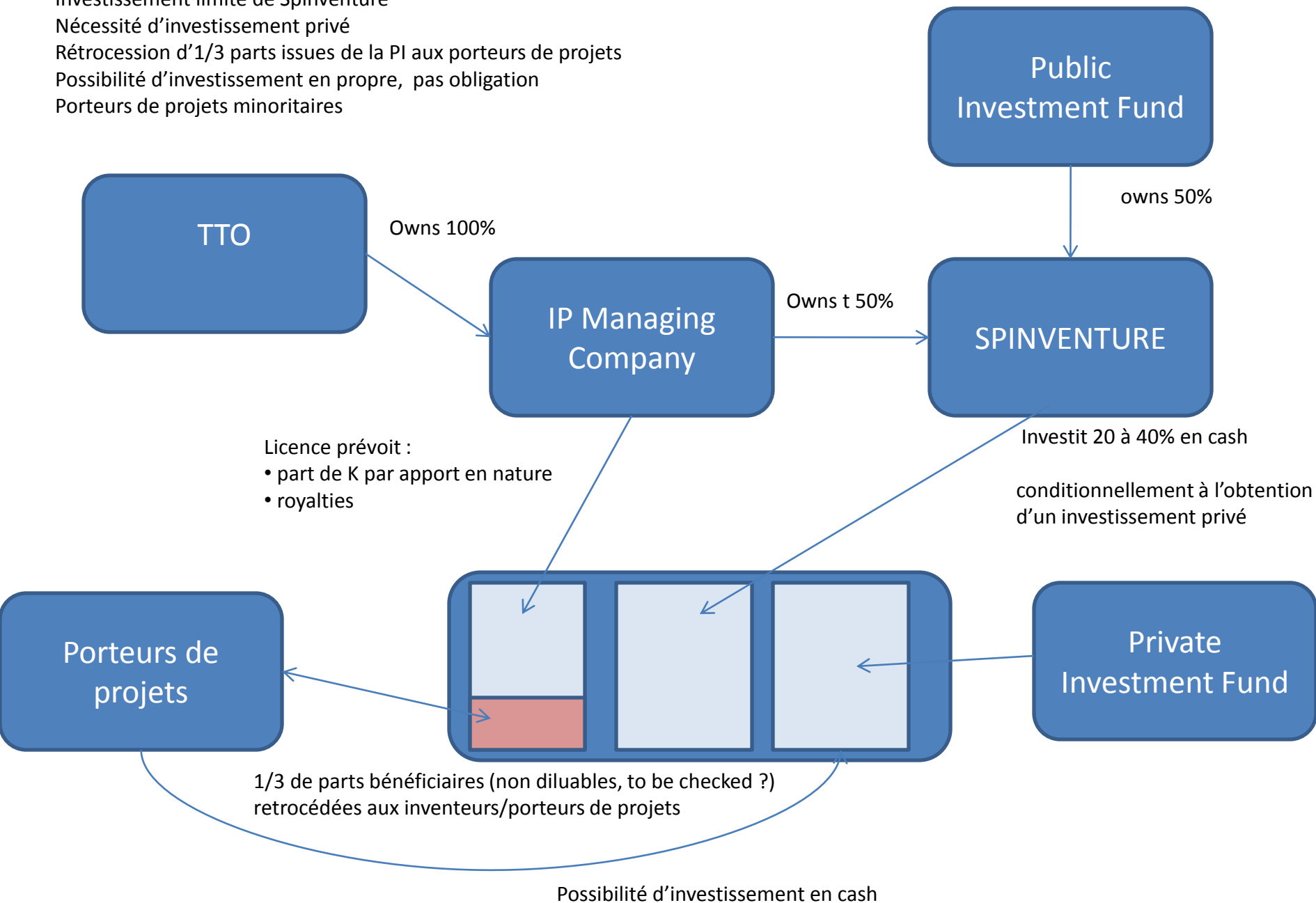
Investissement limité de Spinventure

Nécessité d'investissement privé

Rétrocession d'1/3 parts issues de la PI aux porteurs de projets

Possibilité d'investissement en propre, pas obligation

Porteurs de projets minoritaires





# Spin-off creation

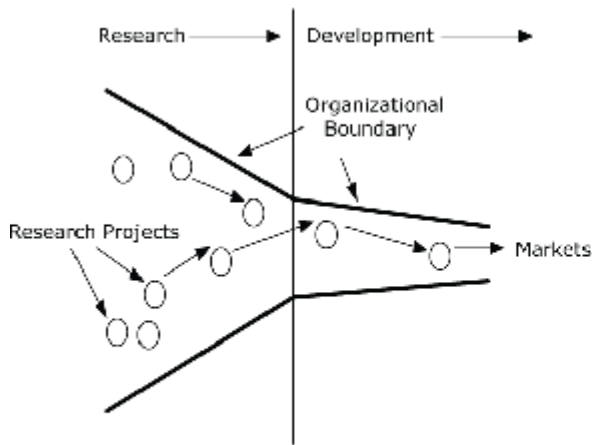
- Shareholder agreement !!!
- This is not the end ...

# Trends

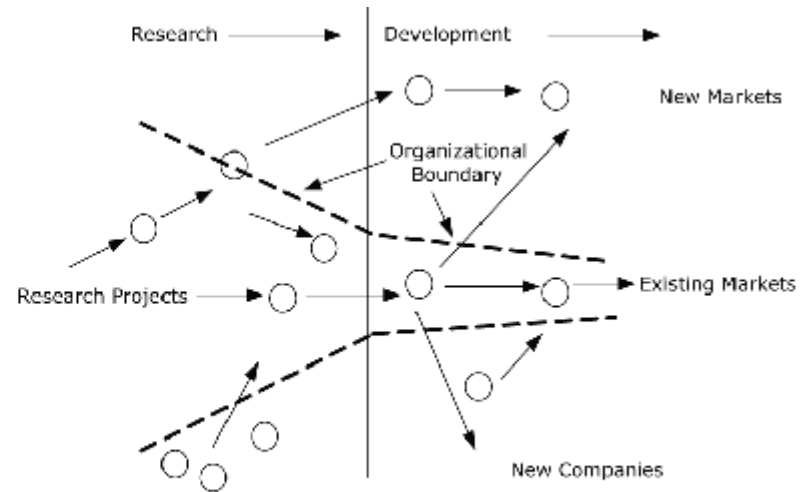
# Innovation

- (Open) Innovation = Invention + Commercialization
  - <http://www.forbes.com/special-features/innovative-companies.html>
  - Interdisciplinarity
  - Narrow collaboration between universities and private companies

# Open Innovation



Closed Innovation



Open Innovation

## Distribution of Knowledge

- Patent award distribution
- Investment in R&D share btw small vs big companies

## Many case studies, among them :

- Xerox PARC
- Merck



# Trends

- Crowdsourcing (a.o. open source forge)
- Crowdfunding
- Products converted into « integrated solution » (a.o. mobility)
- Commodities ( a.o. : through cloud computing)

## Questions & Answers

Many thanks for your attention!

Nathanael Ackerman

[nac@abe.irisnet.be](mailto:nac@abe.irisnet.be)

[www.abe-bao.be](http://www.abe-bao.be)