

Surveying Technology-Based Small Firms A Perspective From Belgium
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This paper details a survey methodology on technology-based small firms (TBSF) in Belgium. The survey's objective is to better understand the factors underlying the creation and development of firms with high growth potentials. In this respect it focuses on the socio-economic factors associated with the entrepreneurs, on the national framework conditions affecting entrepreneurship and on the financial architecture of the firms. The survey data of 103 TBSFs shows that 82 percent of entrepreneurs finance their firms with their own personal savings at seed stage. The debt-financing funds mostly in the form of government subsidies of all kind and commercial bank loans are the secondary source of finance and together constitute the biggest portion of total external finance. 26 percent of these firms had at start-up stage been recipient of venture capital funds and 20 percent of "angel" funds. There is also evidence that as firms get older the proportion of internal finance decreases while external finance first increases at start-up, peaks at early growth, and gradually decreases at later stages of development. Several strengths and weaknesses of the Belgian framework conditions for entrepreneurship are identified. The results also allow to better understand the key socio-cultural determinants of entrepreneurs themselves. 97 percent of technology-based small firm entrepreneurs are male. Over 80 percent of entrepreneurs in the survey have a university degree and 42 percent hold post-graduate degrees. We briefly discuss these findings in light of existing literature.