

Box 8.2: Technological innovation hubs in Brazil: the case of Inova Unicamp

The first patents filed by the University of Campinas (Unicamp) in the State of São Paulo date from 1984 when the university was less than 20 years old. Its innovation agency, Inova Unicamp, started out as a technology transfer office in 1989 before assuming its current structure in 2003.

The university was the co-leader for the number of patents filed in Brazil over the 2013–2018 period (Figure 8.3) and had accumulated 1 087 patents by 2019, second only to Petrobrás, the giant state-controlled oil company. Unicamp has 131 current licenses in place (INOVA, 2020).

Some 717 companies may be considered as spin-offs of the university, having been founded either by alumni or faculty members. Of these spin-offs, over 50 started their development at the university incubator, Incamp. Over a twelve-month period from 2018 to 2019, these companies almost doubled their revenue to US\$ 3.9 billion, by which time they were directly employing more than 31 000 staff.

Two of these start-ups qualify as 'unicorns', namely, start-ups with a market value of over US\$ 1 billion. One had its origins in one of the university's 'junior enterprises', where undergraduate

students develop projects with help from faculty and more experienced students. These projects tend to be small in scope and are developed under a contract with an outside business.

The spin-offs specialize in the following fields, in decreasing order: information technology; consultancy; engineering; health and well-being; and other services.

Patents and licensing cover all areas of knowledge, with a preponderance of specialization in chemistry, engineering and health.

Source: compiled by authors

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