









TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

FOREWORD

04

FACT & FIGURES 2020

05

2020 THEMES

09

INDUSTRIAL CASES

16>18

TOGETHER WE INNOVATE

18>19

2020 FINANCES

20>21

REPRESENTATIVES

MORE ON WWW.SIRRIS.BE/ANNUAL-REPORT-2020

JOINT INNOVATION AS A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS, TO A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY!

2020 brought a worldwide tsunami of changes and at least as many challenges to be faced by our companies. The COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences on civil society has brought about changes in consumer and professional behaviour. Relevant trends such as digitisation and the demand for sustainability have accelerated the creation of challenges for the industry. Apart from during the brief lockdown at the beginning of the first wave, industrial companies were fortunate to be able to continue innovating during the public health crisis. Exceptional crisis periods also result in unique opportunities!

It was an ideal opportunity for companies to seize the moment and change their approach. Now the recovery is underway, more than ever is it the time to invest strategically in the future, by developing new products, considering new technologies – e.g. the increasing importance of data, automation and AI, adopting more

efficient and sustainable production methods, and even exploring new business models. This is how we accelerate a sustainable recovery, for our industry, economy and society.

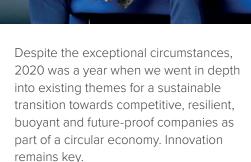
Initiatives as a joint effort

The crisis has also highlighted the limits of individualism, at both the professional and personal levels. The importance of collaboration has been proven once again, between companies, organisations and government bodies, organisations working in different industries, etc. Federations, like Agoria, have also shown their relevance, as they have quickly provided their members with the right information. The same can be said of collaborative centres, which bridge the gap between the world of research and industry. The Innovader platform was launched mid-2020 to support the companies in these exceptional times. Sirris and nine other collaborative centres have joined forces and have strengthened their

joint efforts, each strongly anchored in their own sector and positioned ideally to support their companies in all innovation-related matters.

In 2020, Sirris took their task as a collective centre to heart more than ever. During the pandemic, we focused on various initiatives to support and help companies, first with the crisis itself and later with the recovery of industry.

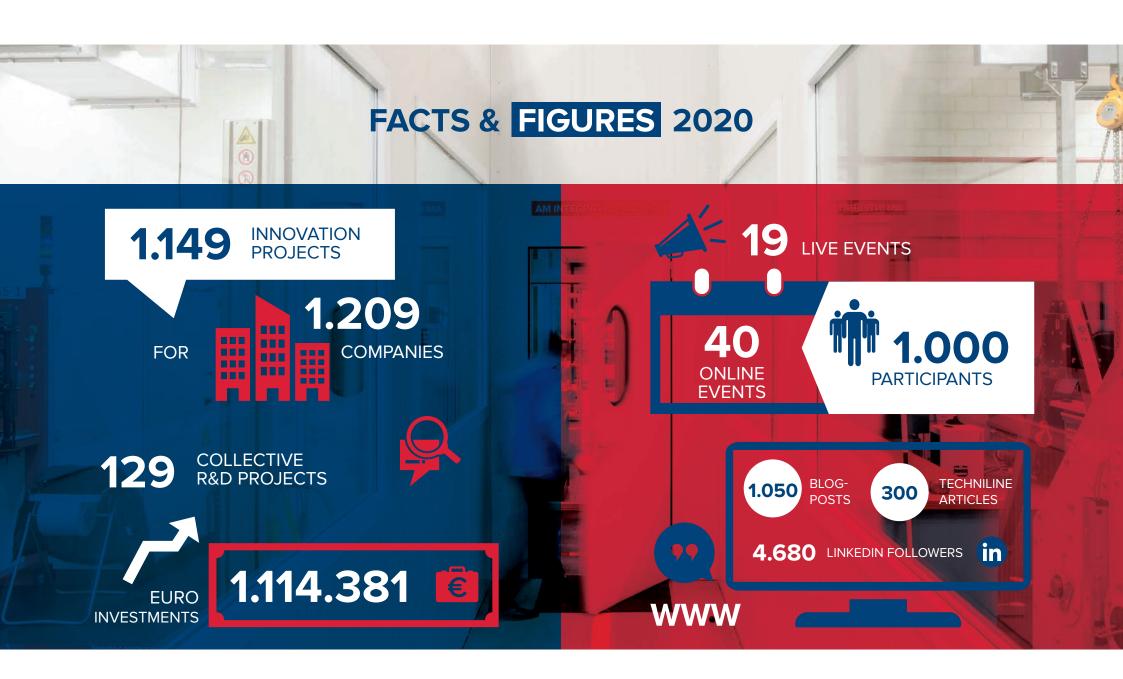
We concentrated even more on the three topics of products, production and business. For example, we brought together a consortium of companies to focus on an invention at the University of Liège for the development and production of rapid tests for COVID-19. We also worked with POM West-Vlaanderen (West Flanders Development Agency) to organise the Crisis Code Cracker, to help companies in West Flanders, followed by everywhere else, to draw up an action plan to emerge from the crisis stronger than ever.



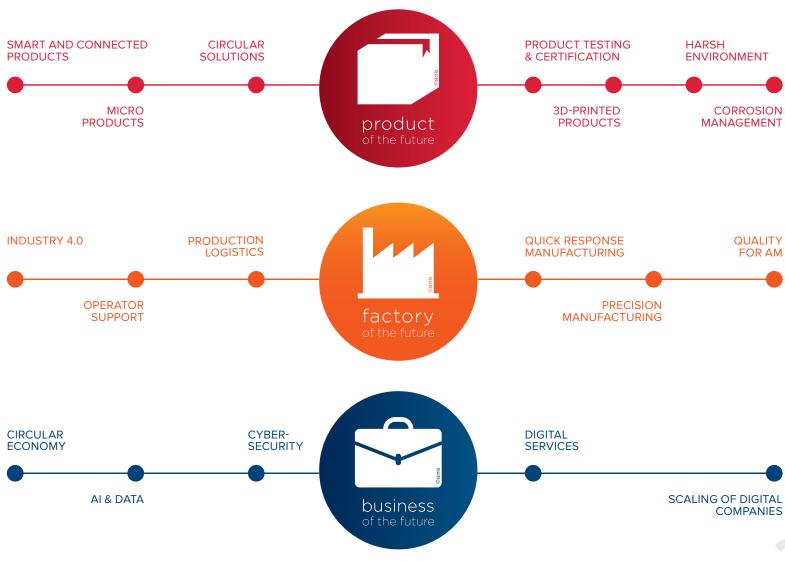
"Together, we innovate", our slogan fits like a glove, now more than ever!



Herman Derache Managing Director Sirris



2020 THEMES



SOME THEMES OF 2020



MICRO PRODUCTS

The products of the future will be more compact, lightweight and smarter than ever. However, their development – based on the use of the latest technologies – entails a wide range of challenges. In 2018, Sirris therefore launched the Product Development Hub, a meeting point for skills, knowledge and the latest technologies to guide the development of innovative physical products. Our experts help companies by supporting them in the rapid development of Industry 4.0-ready proofs of concept. An intensive collaboration between different specialist laboratories forming part of Sirris makes it possible to make smart micro-products from various materials. The options for using plastics and hybrid materials are also being explored.

SMART AND CONNECTED PRODUCTS

When we talk about smart products, we expect to hear about more than the sensors and intelligence inside a product. Other options include connectivity with users and other products, and cloud applications and digitally supported services linked to the product. It is not a given that all these digital technologies are incorporated in the product in the right way. Sirris therefore helps companies in their transition to smart connected products. We have a team of experts to help companies find answers. In 2020, we worked on various research projects to design demonstrators and draw up guidelines to accelerate their product development process.

CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS

The world is in the midst of a transition. The future is sustainable and circular, as are the materials and products we will use. The environment, stricter rules and regulations, decreased availability and high costs of materials are driving our economy in a more circular direction, based on long-term strategies. The way we use and reuse materials will play an essential part in our circular transition.

This transition requires (new) technological knowledge of materials, their performance, processing and impact on the life cycle. It also requires other competencies, such as life cycle thinking, eco-design, new types of partnerships in the value chain, a rethink of revenue models, etc. These varied competencies are available in-house at Sirris, and are deployed in various projects and initiatives to support circular innovations within companies.

SOME THEMES OF 2020



INDUSTRY 4.0

The Industry 4.0 principle was launched in Germany around 2015, as a vision for the future of the manufacturing industry around 2035. The term is now ubiquitous. However, it is not easy for manufacturing companies to navigate the technological jungle. What does Industry 4.0 entail? Which technology or applications can we implement and how do they add value? In response to this and other questions, we have launched various collective initiatives to explain Industry 4.0 and to make it applicable in the manufacturing industry.

OPERATOR SUPPORT

People play a prominent role in nearly all research into Industry 4.0. Human operators will also be at the centre of the manufacturing industry in the future. Various innovative technologies will be implemented to support operators at work, to counteract the increased complexity of production methods, making 'work workable'. The technology can be roughly classified into two broad groups: technology that reduces the physical load (collaborative, cooperative and mobile robots that take over strenuous heavy, boring, dirty or stressful tasks); and technologies that reduce the cognitive load (digital working instructions, AR, VR, etc., by providing the operator with the right information at the right time and place). Sirris has launched various initiatives to inform manufacturing companies on the technology, to facilitate its adoption.

PRODUCTION LOGISTICS

The shift from mass production to the manufacturing of more complex, customised products with high added value in small series and with an increasingly shorter turnaround time is making manufacturing more complex. This complexity must be managed for companies to survive, especially in high-income countries, which means the production systems must be smarter and more agile. The internal product logistics organisation seems to be the bottleneck for more flexibility. Sirris works on solutions together with the industry.

SOME THEMES OF 2020



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Further improvement of business operations remains a challenge, as does the pursuit of stable income, while contributing to a more sustainable world. Converting circular economy concepts into specific actions means taking the increasing complexity of modern business into account. This process is driven by modifying product designs, altering business models, establishing new partnerships, addressing new legal or contractual challenges, stimulating internal commitment, setting up strategic alliances, etc. Sirris helps you overcome these barriers, seize new opportunities, and gradually reduce the risks of developing a circular economy.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & CYBERSECURITY

Data is everywhere. In every domain, companies start to exploit the data they collect and have access to, although it is challenging for them to follow and implement the latest advancements in the field of Al. Sirris helps them in their endeavour by providing data science and Al support. We are involved in several projects in a variety of domains. Belgian companies face these issues on a daily basis. The future is digital and mobile services and applications are gaining importance, but at the same time, cyber risks are lurking around every corner. Cybersecurity enables companies to create a safe digital work environment and protect themselves and their customers against cybercrime. But only provided their web security remains up to date. Sirris has been expanding their cybersecurity expertise over many years, to help companies, SMEs and especially start-ups from all industries, increase their cybersecurity.

DIGITAL SERVICES

There are many ways to package digital services, from a purely software-based service (softwareas-a-service) to the coupling of a digital service to a physical product based on data gathered (digital servitisation). Providing a digital service typically ensures that digitisation reaches every part of an organisation and impacts how companies think, work, deal with their customers and act within their network of values. Providing digital services is about more than just technology. It's about new ways of solving (new) problems, unleashing new potential and building up a new customer base, which in turn leads to new experiences and new challenges to be faced. Sirris experts can boast many years of experience in all areas of digital services. In providing consultation services such as project management consulting, Tech Stack Reviews and various training courses, Sirris can help companies find their way through the labyrinth of digital services.





AMW TESTS ADHESION OF THERMAL SPRAYING LAYERS

AMW wanted to investigate the effect of the condition of steel cylinder surfaces on coating adhesion, and approached Sirris to do so. Thirty-two test samples made of hardened 42CrMo4 and stainless steel sprayed with two types of coating were used to determine the effect of the surface condition on coating adhesion. The sample included various pretreatment combinations, such as grinding, sandblasting and ageing by means of oxidation, and was then subjected to a metallography and three adhesive tests. (...)



ALTACHEM OPTIMISES PRODUCTION LOGISTICS AND STUDIES SUITABILITY OF AUTOMATED GUIDED VEHICLES (AGV)

The production lines at Altachem are high-throughput lines. However, current operations do not allow for smooth scaling for several reasons: first, there is a shortage of free space, plus various manual interventions and dedicated tools (lifting equipment) are required for the handling of boxes and other goods. Altachem wants to avoid having to invest in these dedicated tools for every new production line. With the support of Sirris, Altachem started an evaluation exercise to find the logistics concept best suited to expand production. (...)



3E DEPLOYS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO SUPPORT ASSET CONFIGURATIONS

The SynaptiQ software already includes a very thorough fault-detecting system that permanently records unknown and incorrect indicators at the energy farm. A research project was set up with the Sirris EluciDATALab to find ways to take further advantage of the fault data. The project objective is to shorten the configuration time, and therefore to increase the range of the indicators by means of a data-driven approach that recommends the configuration parameters and the corresponding values for a specific solar farm. (...)



AMOS PRODUCES AND TESTS MECHANICAL AND OPTICAL AEROSPACE PARTS

As part of their aerospace projects, AMOS contacted Sirris regarding the production of aerospace parts, specifically in terms of the thermal treatment of aluminium components and their 3D printing. AMOS also required various procedures to be characterised, with the aim of qualifying these parts for aerospace use. (...)





CATERPILLAR TESTS MOTOR BLOCKS IN STORAGE AND FOR SEA FREIGHT

The Caterpillar motor blocks were tested in the Sirris large climatic test chamber, according to the IEC 60068-2-30 international standard for the environmental testing of electrotechnical products. This test determines the adequacy of components, equipment or other products for use, transport and storage in high humidity conditions, combined with cyclic temperature changes, which cause condensation on the surface. (...)



THALES HALVES PRODUCTION LEAD TIME OF AEROSPACE COMPONENTS

A few years ago, the Walloon company Thales Alenia Space Belgium and Sirris initiated the ThermAM project, as assigned by the ESA, to redesign and produce using additive manufacturing, electronic component mounting brackets for the aerospace industry and other fields where strict heat management is required. This production procedure proved not to be optimal and the production lead time was too long. The high production costs of the mounting bracket made it unattractive compared to standard solutions, despite higher thermal performance. A follow-up project was set up to improve the overall design and production process, and to reduce production costs. (...)



QRM PROJECTS PAY OFF AT ETAP

For the application of QRM in production, ETAP started with the emergency lighting department, to reduce delivery lead time. After several interventions, the time was reduced from 15 to 5 working days. The production of standard pictograms was also tackled. In this case, the lead time has already been brought down to three working days. (...)



EUROSIGN DEVELOPS DIGITAL TRAFFIC SIGNS

For over 30 years, EuroSign has been producing both standard and custom-made traffic signs in Fernelmont near Namur, with extremely short delivery lead times. The company is currently working on a smart traffic control system that could revolutionise the market. (...)





TECH STACK REVIEW REASSURES GLOOH OVER THEIR APPROACH

The start-up has grown significantly in a relatively short time and therefore wanted to know whether it was on the right path and whether its business was future-proof. The company required the perspective of an experienced outsider, so it reached out to Sirris. (...)



GODDEERIS GAINS KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHTS ON TOOL VIBRATION DAMPING

Goddeeris reached out to Sirris to find a vibration-free way to process large castings. A joint VLAIO (Flemish Agency for Innovation and Entrepreneurship) SME development project led by Goddeeris and Sirris was set up to collect information on the performance, phenomena and options to address vibrations during machining processes. This knowledge gives Goddeeris improved control on the production process in future. (...)



LGTB INVESTS IN DIGITISATION OF PRODUCTION PROCESS

Sirris guided LGTB through the digitisation of its production. The finishing of workpieces is played out over several steps. After this stage, the workpieces are returned to the operators, who subject them to thorough quality control. Until recently, the operators took note of all the quality data required on paper, making further processing cumbersome and time-consuming. Digitisation of these steps was an obvious choice. The aim was to achieve the digital input of quality data, directly at the production lines. (...)



LIFELINE, A LIFE-SAVING WEARABLE

LifeLine is preparing for the commercial release of the first wearable with a satellite transmitter, capable of relaying an SOS message in areas with a poor mobile phone signal. Designed, together with Sirris, for athletes and adventurers who pursue their passions in remote areas, it offers a range of services focused on personal safety and security. (...)





QINETIQ SPACE EXPLORES ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING AND LASER WELDING FOR CAPTURE ARM

As the Belgian leading provider of small space systems with 30 years of experience, QinetiQ Space is a key partner in space and low orbit exploration and development, building, launching and operating complex space infrastructures to ensure future advantage for its customers. In 2020 the company finished the CABAM project, together with Sirris and Raytech, on behalf of ESA. In this project the possibilities of additive manufacturing and laser welding for the production of capture arms on satellites were investigated. (...)



Q-LITE ROBUSTNESS AND RESILIENCE, BASED ON A CIRCULAR APPROACH

Q-lite designs, produces and delivers LED and LCD displays, used as information screens, scoreboards, traffic signs, etc. Its customer base includes both local authorities and companies, and pharmacies and the liberal professions. Q-lite invests in the circular economy and sells not only products but also maintenance, repair, resales, upgrading, remanufacturing and display-as-a-service activities. The company joined the 'Learning Network Circular Economy Connect', organised by Sirris and Agoria. (...)



SONACA TESTS AIRCRAFT COMPONENTS FOR THERMAL FATIGUE AT EXTREME TEMPERATURES

Structural aircraft components are exposed to harsh weather conditions and fluctuations in temperature. Sonaca needed to know about their impact on the materials they use. Samples from the flaps that part of the aircraft wings were exposed to extreme heat and cold (as low as -55 °C) during a number of temperature cycles in the large climatic test chamber, part of the Sirris site at the Port of Antwerp. (...)



SPIROMATIC DEVELOPS A BREADCRUMB ANALYSIS TOOL

To better support its customers and so they could see the effects of the various technologies on the end product for themselves, Spiromatic started an on-site test – a bakery with a corresponding laboratory – for the production of pre-ferment, sourdough and other breads. The bakery expert scientifically analyses the product and production process at the test bakery, so they can advise on the options for optimisation. The company developed a software tool for breadcrumb analysis for this purpose. (...)







ACCREDITED WELDING TESTS FOR TECHNOCAMPUS

TechnoCampus is the main training centre for future professionals in Hainaut and Namur provinces. The training centre is aiming at becoming the point of reference for all training courses and awareness-raising activities for the technical professions. TechnoCampus has been asking Sirris to certify high-density polyethylene (HDPE) welders for many years. Sirris assesses the quality of the polyethylene welds as required to achieve accreditation to weld gas pipes. (...)



COLD START VALIDATION OF 6-MW TURBINE COMPONENT FOR SIEMENS GAMESA RENEWABLE ENERGY

Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy (SGRE) is a world leader in the development and production of multi-megawatt wind turbines for use on land and at sea. The company aims to guarantee reliable and robust machines, capable of fulfilling customer expectations worldwide, even in the harshest weather conditions. To set up and perform a series of extensive cold start tests on a gearbox, a critical component of a wind turbine, the company relied on Sirris expertise and the large climatic test chamber infrastructure set up as part of the OWI-Lab project. (...)



REPLACEMENT PARTS SPECIALIST TVH ASSURES QUALITY, PROVIDING TESTS AND ADVICE

TVH and Sirris recently joined forces for a technological innovation project. TVH drew on Sirris's wide range of materials tests and specialist analyses. The test report provided TVH with extensive advice, a strong foundation for further decisions on the purchasing of goods. It constitutes an additional advantage that TVH is not required to invest constantly in proprietary test set-ups or additional specifically trained profiles. (...)



V&V ENGINEERING INCREASES PRODUCTION CAPACITY THROUGH AUTOMATION

The company and Sirris experts examined where they could optimise processes within the framework of the Factory 4.0 project. Currently, all material from the injection moulding machine is collected in a single receptacle. After the production process has been running for a few hours, the receptacle is overflowing and needs to be manually replaced and processed. (...)







THOUSANDS OF COVID-19 TESTS ENABLED BY WALLOON COMPETENCIES AND COOPERATION

The polymer containers were required to scale up testing, but these were no longer available on the market due to increased demand. Research was conducted into an alternative solution for restocking with containers of sufficient quality, to meet the demand caused by the shortage. The University of Liège immediately contacted the MécaTech Cluster, an association of 250 industrial and academic entities involved in joint innovative projects in Wallonia. Their cluster and financial partner Sowalfin decided to turn to the Sirris in Liège. (...)



VERIMPEX MAKES MONEY WITH UNBREAKABLE PRODUCT

Sirris guided Verimpex through the process to combine the optimal mix of product features and design, customer segment and service/ revenue model. This resulted in the development of a feasible circular product-service combination, which was launched and validated. Additionally, lessons have been learned through customer interaction, which allowed Verimpex to refine its services in the field of maintenance and upgradeability, resulting in the provision of 'matting-as-a-service'. (...)



ZF WIND POWER SUBJECTS 6-MW WIND TURBINE COMPONENTS TO COLD START TESTING

Despite not all wind turbines being intended for polar or inaccessible areas, ZF Wind Power believes that it is essential that all components and assemblies are tested under harsh weather conditions, to ensure high reliability under all potential weather conditions worldwide. However, the ever-increasing dimensions are making it difficult to find appropriate test environments. The company therefore relies on Sirris expertise for the testing of the nacelle drive train of a 6-MW turbine in the large environmental test chamber at the Sirris test site at the Port of Antwerp. (...)



VANDEMOORTELE USES COBOT TO LOAD FILLING LINE

Vandemoortele wanted to check whether a cobot could load the machine with empty tubs at the beginning of the two margarine filling lines. This task is currently performed by an operator, who is responsible for a variety of tasks. Sirris set up a testing protocol at its application laboratory. Although it is not yet completely flawless, the tests showed that potential of using a cobot for the application Vandemoortele wished to automate. (...)

TOGETHER WE INNOVATE



JOINT INNOVATION

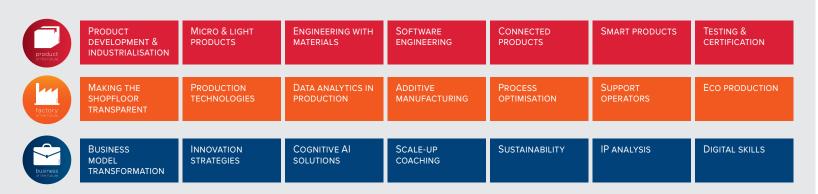
Customers' expectations are higher than ever. Customers expect that high quality from your products and services, they expect competitive prices and impeccable customer service. And that is only the tip of the iceberg. Innovation is a strategy to meet these expectations. Although many companies are aware of the need to renew, the implementation of technological innovation is an obstacle point because of the corresponding risks and investments in terms of time, money, effort and knowledge acquisition. We work in this field, acting as

a research and innovation centre for the Belgian technology industry. How do we do so? By lowering the risk and the threshold, by assisting companies in making the best technological decisions and implementing them.

We have been making this happen for **70 years**: Sirris works with around **1,500 companies** per year, SMEs in particular.

OUR EXPERTISE

As innovation is often defined as an umbrella term, we focus on three clearly delineated themes. For example, we offer expertise to strengthen your company, your products and services, and your production system, by implementing technological innovation



Our great expertise within these fields is at your service to help you get started.

OUR KEY ADVANTAGES: 150 EXPERTS, HIGH-TECH INFRASTRUCTURE AND AN EXTENSIVE NETWORK

Sirris has **150 motivated experts** who work in multidisciplinary teams, on a wide range of innovation projects for Belgian companies, large and small alike. These projects range from selecting the right technological innovation to their actual implementation. Our high-tech facilities offer the option of carrying out feasibility studies, producing prototypes and running a battery of tests, thereby significantly increasing the chances of successful implementation. An extensive network of research centres, government bodies, knowledge institutions, clusters and other partners also increases your chances of success.

For example, Sirris is involved in around **200 national and international joint R&D projects**, across our various fields of expertise.







LOCAL EMBEDDING

Our network reaches out to many countries, mainly by working on European projects, but the domestic industry is our absolute priority. How do we focus on proximity in practice? We provide companies with access to our multidisciplinary teams and high-tech laboratories at **the eight Sirris sites**.



SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

We are here to help you future-proof your business, product or factory. We operate as a non-profit organisation. The intellectual property rights to the innovative application or solutions we work on together belong to you. We use the knowledge we acquire to assist and support other companies, constituting one of our tasks as a collaborative centre for the technological industry. Sirris currently has 2,500 member companies. The drive towards the continual improvement of our operations is also emphasised by our ISO 9001-2015 quality management certification. Our objective is to support sustainable economic growth in Belgium.



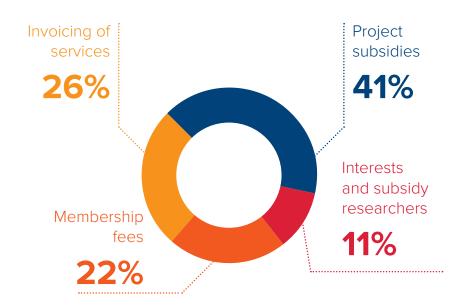




IN COMPANY

FINANCES

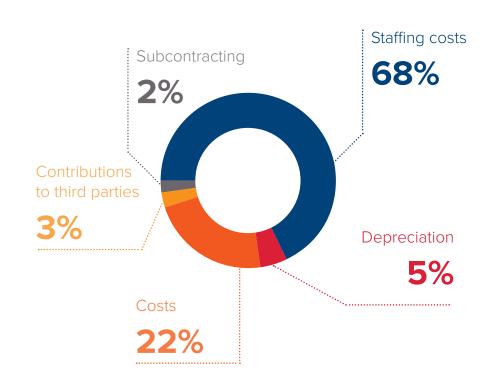
#BREAKDOWN OF INCOME (OPERATING PROFIT)



	% 2020	euro 2020
Membership fees	22%	€ 5 013 615,44
Invoicing of services	26%	€ 5 894 997,91
Project subsidies	41%	€ 9 319 631,44
Interests and subsidy researchers	11%	€ 2 331 862,26
Total INCOME	100%	€ 22 560 107,05

FINANCES

#COST BREAKDOWN(OPERATING PROFIT)



	% 2020	euro 2020
Staffing costs	68%	€ 15 551 815,74
Subcontracting	2%	€ 501 191,05
Contributions to third parties	3%	€ 751 226,76
Costs	22%	€ 5 031 673,62
Depreciation	5%	€ 1 144 457,44
TOTAL COST	100%	€ 22 980 364,61

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Managing Director, Agoria, Brussels

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Bart De Wit

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William Van Erdeghem

Chairman, ACV-CSC Metea, Brussels

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Professor at UGent, Ghent

Laurent Francis

Professor at l'UCL, Leuven-la-Neuve

Anne Marie Habraken

Professor at l'Ulg, Liège

Bert Lauwers

Professor at KU Leuven, Heverlee, Leuven

MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE PUBLIC AUTHORIT

Bart Candaele

Department head, VLAIO, Brussel

Rose Detaille

(end of the mandate 31/05/2020) Inspector General, Ministry of the Walloon Region, Jambes, Namur

Katrien Mondt

Director-General, Innoviris, Brussels

Leo Van de Loock

Transition manager Industrie 4.0 VLAIO, Brussels

Diederik Van Vaerenbergh

General Advisor, FPS Economy, SMEs, Selfemployed and Energy, Brussels

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Director R&D, FN Herstal SA, Herstal

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Chairman, ACV-CSC Metea, Brussels

Diederik Van Vaerenbergh

General Advisor, FPS Economy, SMEs, Selfemployed and Energy, Brussels

#MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE

Marnix Botte

Senior Director Transformation Programs, Nokia, Antwerp

René Branders

CEO, FIB Belgium SA, Tubize

Patrick Candry

Director Technology and Innovation, Barco NV, Kortrijk

Philippe Collette

Director R&D FN Herstal SA, Herstal

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Peter Demuvnck

Director-General, Agoria Vlaanderen, Brussels

Rose Detaille

(end of the mandate 31/05/2020) Inspector General, Ministry of the Walloon Region, Jambes, Namur

Piet D'Haeyer

Managing Director, Pedeo NV, Oudenaarde

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Nicolas Poulet

Deputy Managing Director, JTEKT Torsen Europe SA, Strepy-Bracquegnies

Kristof Roelstraete

R&D Manager, Picanol NV, Ieper

Leo Van de Loock

Transition manager Industrie 4.0 VLAIO, Brussels

William Van Erdeghem

Chairman, ACV-CSC Metea, Brussels

Diederik Van Vaerenbergh

General Advisor, FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy, Brussels

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Director Strategy & Corporate Development

Herman Derache

Managing Director

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