



Belgian companies made major investments in innovation in 2020

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2020 was a year full of challenges. Many Belgian companies have made major investments in innovation despite the crisis, as shown by the figures in our annual report, presented on 22 June 2021.

2020 brought about a tsunami of change worldwide and many companies, including in Belgium, had to face unseen challenges: the pandemic itself, of course, but also accelerated digitisation and an increased focus on sustainability, to name but two trends. In 2020, Sirris was ready to support companies and face their challenges together.

Strategic investment in the future

This last year clearly shows that periods of exceptional crisis result in unique opportunities. Luckily, Belgian companies realise this. This could be why the growth of the Belgian economy is greater than the estimate by the Belgian Nationale Bank (<https://trends.knack.be>). Investing in innovation always benefits the economy.

The figures in the [Sirris annual report](#) show that companies have made major investments in innovation. In 2020, Sirris started no less than 1,149 innovation projects and worked with 1,209

Belgian companies. Despite the crisis, Sirris invested a total of € 1,114,381 in new high-tech infrastructure to provide services to their customers.

Promoting innovation

The [Innovaders platform](#), launched by Sirris and nine other collaborative centres in mid-2020, is but one example of how Sirris promotes and facilitates innovation. With this joint effort, the 10 partners are aiming to build bridges between the worlds of research and development and corporate, across various industries.

By developing new products and discovering new technologies, Sirris and the companies it supports contribute to the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. By implementing more efficient and sustainable production methods and by exploring new business models, we ensure our companies and the industry as a whole are future-proof.

Smart, connected products

In 2020, Sirris supported **EuroSign**, a traffic sign manufacturer in Fernelmont near Namur, who develops connected traffic signs. Their project on smart traffic signs could revolutionise the market. [Read more about our project at EuroSign](#)

Sirris and **LifeLine** joined forces to design the first wearable with a satellite transmitter, capable of relaying an SOS message in areas with a poor mobile signal. Commercialisation is in development for this life-saving smart wearable for sportspeople and the adventurous, driven by their passion for faraway places.

[Read more about our project at LifeLine](#)

Circular, future-proof business

Technological start-up **Glooh** has grown significantly in a very short period of time. They were considering whether they were on the right path and whether their operations were future-proof. The company required the perspective of an experienced outsider, so it reached out to Sirris.

3E helps industrial companies to optimise the production and use of (renewable) energy. 3E has developed an online monitoring platform for the latter. Accurate asset configuration is required to connect wind turbine and solar panel farms to the platform. This is a time-consuming, manual and error-sensitive process. A thorough error detection system was already in place, but to find ways to take further advantage of the error data, they set up a research project in conjunction with Sirris. The objective was to provide recommendations to farms where errors were observed in the import of data. The study showed that the most effective approach is one based on artificial intelligence.

[Read more about our project at 3E](#)

Q-lite designs, manufactures and delivers LED and LCD displays, used as information screens, scoreboards, traffic signs, etc. This company is implementing the circular economy approach. They participated in the Circular Economy Connect learning network organised by Sirris and Agoria. It clearly inspired them, as Q-lite is now working with Sirris to rethink their current packaging. Q-lite reduced their residual waste by no less than 30% in 2020.

[Read more about our project at Q-lite](#)

Factory of the future

Food manufacturer **Vandemoortele** wanted to optimise their production using cobots. The company did not possess the experience required. Sirris set up a testing protocol at its application laboratory. The tests showed there was sufficient potential for the application Vandemoortele wanted to automate using cobots. The test set-up ensured that Vandemoortele could work on the next stage of cobot implementation with confidence and with limited risk.

[Read more about our project at Vandemoortele](#)

Altachem is a market leader in the development and manufacturing of aerosol valves and foam applicators. This company was looking at boosting its growth by installing an additional production line. The current working method and the space available were thought of as an obstacle. Altachem and Sirris worked together to find the logistics concept best suited to the expansion of production. This concept was then evaluated in the Sirris application lab. Although some details still remain to be finalised, the results of this study are enabling Altachem to make a well-informed strategic decision on the next steps in this process.

[Read more about our project at Altachem](#)

These are a few examples of the many projects we worked on in 2020 at our members' and customers' sites.

[Read our Annual Report 2020 online.](#)

Authors