

Six new Factories of the Future for Belgium

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Stas Waregem, Terumo, P&V Panels, ZF Windpower, Vinventions and Takeda Belgium may as of today bear the title of Factory of the Future. With this award, the initiators want to crown the most future-oriented manufacturing companies in Belgium. The 48 Belgian title holders have achieved more growth in productivity, turnover and jobs between 2015 and 2020 than the rest of the manufacturing industry.

The Factory of the Future Awards have been initiated by Sirris and Agoria in 2015, in cooperation with the various sector and industry federations Fevia (food), Fedustria (textiles, wood and furniture), essenscia (chemistry and life sciences), Centexbel (textile technology), Catalisti (chemistry and plastics), Wood.be (wood and furniture), Flanders' FOOD (agro-food) and Digital Wallonia. In eight years, the select leading group of the most future-oriented manufacturing companies in Belgium has become a club of 48 companies, which together have invested more than 1.9 billion euros in our country over the past six years. The winners receive the title for a period of three years. At the end of that period, a new audit must reveal whether the title can be renewed. A survey has shown that the 48 title holders achieved more growth in productivity, turnover and jobs than the rest of the manufacturing industry between 2015 and 2020.



Six new awards, five extended titles

Six companies received their award for the first time on Thursday. In Flanders: construction company Stas in Waregem (West Flanders), the Terumo medical products production site in Haasrode, panel builder P&V Panels in Heusden-Zolder (Limburg) and wind turbine manufacturer ZF Windpower in Lommel (Limburg). In Wallonia, the winners are wine cork company Vinventions from Thimister-Clermont (Liège) and pharmaceutical company Takeda Belgium. The winners received their awards from Flemish and Walloon Vice-Minister-Presidents Hilde Crevits and Willy Borsus.

Five other manufacturing companies were able to extend their previously won title: Lavetan and Ed&a in Turnhout, BMT Aerospace and TE Connectivity in Oostkamp, Duracell in Aarschot, Van Hoesche in Sint-Niklaas, Stas in Tournai and AISIN Europe SA (formerly AW Europe) in Braine-l'Alleud.



Added value of Factories of the Future

Factories of the Future are companies that invest in digitisation, personnel, smart processes and products, as well as in world-class manufacturing. They use energy and materials thoughtfully and stimulate employee involvement, creativity and autonomy. In order to earn the coveted title, companies must score at least four out of five on a maturity scale in each of the seven transformation areas during a critical audit by independent experts.

The winners were chosen from around 20 companies that applied for the final assessment, but according to Sirris Managing Director Herman Derache, many more companies in Belgium are taking steps to achieve greater maturity in one or more of the seven transformation areas, leading to improved productivity and sustainable integration.

"More than 600 companies are currently working on the transformation axes that make them stronger as manufacturing companies. The ambition is therefore to expand the Factories of the

Future group in the coming years, while encouraging all the other companies to grow step by step in maturity. The Factories of the Future transformation does not only concern large companies; every SME can get involved. In fact, the track record reveals that no less than 24 of the 48 current Factories of the Future are SMEs with fewer than 250 employees," says Herman Derache.

Jolyce Demely, General Manager of Agoria Vlaanderen: "Competing for an award helps companies give concrete direction and timing to their transformations, but of course it is not an end goal. Each award can be a starting point for the next challenge. It is this mindset that keeps our top companies ahead in the Industry 4.0 race and allows us to anchor our manufacturing industry in Flanders while keeping it on the international map."

For local branches of international companies, the award can make all the difference, says Ann Wurman, Director of essenscia Vlaanderen, the chemical industry federation. "For such companies, the issue is always which site the next major investment will go to. The award gives Factories of the Future extra leverage."



Authors



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