



Five new Factories of the Future in Flanders

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On 7 February 2023, the Factory of the Future Awards event took place at Technopolis Mechelen. On that occasion, VCST Industrial Products, Sanofi, Barry Callebaut, Alchem and Pomuni Frozen were awarded the title of 'Factory of the Future'.

The Factory of the Future Awards were initiated by Sirris and Agoria in 2015, in cooperation with the various sector and industry federations Fevia, Fedustria and essenscia, and with innovation clusters Centexbel, Wood.be and the spearhead clusters Flanders' FOOD and Catilisti. With the awards, the initiators aim to honour the most advanced and forward-looking manufacturing companies in Belgium - 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. The winners are awarded the title for a period of three years. After that, a new audit is conducted to assess whether the title can be renewed.

53 Belgian Factories of the Future

Five companies received the award for the first time this year: VCST Industrial Products (Sint-Truiden), pharmaceutical company Sanofi (Geel), chocolate manufacturer Barry Callebaut (Wieze,

Lebbeke), metal company Altachem (Harelbeke) and potato speciality manufacturer Pomuni Frozen (Ranst). The awards were presented to the winners by Jo Brouns, Flemish minister of Economy, Innovation, Employment, Social Economy and Agriculture.

Four other manufacturing companies succeeded in extending their previously granted titles: Audi Brussels (Forest), TotalEnergies (Ertvelde), Vandemoortele (Izegem) and Daikin (Ostend). This last one for the third time in a row. In nine years, the select leading group of most forward-looking manufacturing companies in Belgium has grown to 53 companies.

“More than 600 companies are currently working on the transformation axes that make them stronger as manufacturing companies. Therefore, the ambition is to expand the Factory of the Future group in the coming years, while encouraging all the other companies to grow, step by step, in maturity. The seven transformation axes of our method are certainly not only relevant for larger companies, any manufacturing SME can use them,” says Herman Derache, Managing Director of Sirris.

“Today, we would also like to emphatically congratulate the four manufacturing companies renewing their titles for their sustained efforts. Not only the destination is important for Factories of the Future, in fact, the journey is too,” said Jolyce Demely, General Manager of Agoria Flanders. “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. This is the mindset that keeps our leading 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.”

During the Factories of the Future Awards in Wallonia on 13 February 2023, the award-winning companies were SPA Monopole, Puratos, Alstom (for the 2nd time), Valeo Vision Belgique en JTEKT Torsen Europe (for the 3rd time). Wallonia now has twelve Factories of the Future. You can read a report on the ceremony (in French) [here](#).

[Read the press release here](#)

Authors