Belgian tech companies divided: barely half commit to extra quality tests

15 June 2021, 09:00

Marie-France Rousseau

Sirris, the collective centre for the technological industry in Belgium, investigated the quality habits of Belgian tech companies at the end of 2020. The survey shows that quality control is highly valued by many, but also that some others can still make great strides. For example, almost half of the companies surveyed do not make use of the potential of additional quality tests.

Positive trend

Over the years, quality control has become a priority for Belgian tech companies. Today, this mainly involves certificates. For example, about 7 out of 10 entrepreneurs always check whether their materials and components have the necessary certificates. Even better: more than half carry out additional quality tests. But that also means that almost half of them do not (yet) organise this and rely solely on certificates - or even leave out this form of quality control.

"Quality control is on the rise among our members and customers. Now we want to keep up this trend and support even more tech companies with our test labs and advice." - Hilde krikor, Business Development and Innovation - Testlabs, Sirris

Preference for internal and external testing

The quality tests of tech companies focus mainly on end products. And both internal and external testing capacity is used. No less than 40% is using both. There is also much to be said for this. Entrepreneurs state, for example, that internal tests generate a faster turnaround time, promote internal knowledge building, allow better reporting and reduce costs. External testing, on the other hand, provides independent proof from an (accredited) partner and can compensate for a lack of in-house resources or expertise.

From quality reputation to risk managemen

The reasons cited by Belgian tech companies for conducting additional tests are positive. It is first and foremost an additional proof of quality for customers. Sometimes as an additional argument to promote the durability of products or as a guarantee of optimal functioning. There are also other, more defensive reasons. For example, previous quality complaints and the mitigation of risks, such as financial claims and image damage. In short: with additional quality testing, tech companies are able to exploit a wide range of benefits.

The (alleged) costs put a brake on additional quality control

However, not all tech companies are won over by additional quality tests. They slow down the go-to-market process and require a significant investment - a concern shared by those that do. What the costs exactly entail is less clear. More than 4 out of 10 companies that do not carry out quality tests think that labour costs are the main factor. Companies that have been using internal and/or external quality tests for some time are emphasising the price of the tests themselves. But whatever the cost, the question is: does the investment pay off?

ROI not to be underestimated

"A direct return on investment seems unlikely," says Hilde Krikor at Sirris. "Only 5% of the Belgian tech companies surveyed see 'increased sales' as a positive consequence of additional quality testing. But the indirect profits mentioned paint a very different picture. Additional quality control is an effective way to position yourself as a quality player and increase customer satisfaction, while it can protect you from sky-high damage claims or lasting image damage. It is difficult to put a price on that. But one thing is for sure: to see testing only as a cost factor is shooting yourself in the foot. The potential added value speaks for itself."

"To see additional quality tests only as a cost factor is shooting yourself in the foot. The potential added value speaks for itself." - Hilde krikor, Business Development and Innovation - Testlabs, Sirris

---

Looking for an accredited partner for quality tests?

With 70 experts, 35 years of experience and 1,100 test reports annually, our Testlabs guarantee high quality testing of adhesives, composites, plastics, 3D prints, metals and coatings, among others.

More info via testlabs.sirris.be

About Sirris

Sirris is the collective centre for the technological industry. For Belgian companies looking to innovate, Sirris offers three major assets: years of experience and comprehensive expertise in a wide range of industries; high-tech testing infrastructure spread across the country; and an extensive partner network. Sirris' mission is to help large and small players make the right technological choices for sustainable economic growth.

Sirris in figures

- Every year, 3,000 industrial interventions in 1,500 companies, 75% of which are SMEs.
- Almost 5,000 customers and more than 2,500 member companies.
- More than 165 in-house experts, spread over 8 sites in Belgium.
- Founded in 1949 by Agoria, the Federation of the technological industry.

More info: www.sirris.be

About the survey

At the end of 2020, Sirris and [Agoria](#) organised a survey among customers and members, as well as via social media. The aim: to find out how many companies in the Belgian technology industry use quality control through testing and how. 144 companies participated in the relative and comparative study.

Authors

Marie-France Rousseau