

Sirris to be the first resident at Genk high-tech campus FacThory

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Move of industrial test environment to brand-new ecosystem will boost the competitive edge of the innovation centre of the Belgian manufacturing industry

Sirris, the innovation centre for the technology industry in Belgium, is moving its state-of-the-art lab from Diepenbeek to Thor Park in Genk, making it the very first resident of the FacThory ecosystem. The new location will enable Sirris to boost investments in their industrial test environment in the coming years, expanding it to some 1,300 m2. This should increase the number of projects carried out at the innovation centre in the field of production processes by about 15% each year. This is how Sirris will equally help increase the competitiveness of Belgian companies by further automating, digitising and robotising their manufacturing processes.

Sirris will be leaving the familiar site at Diepenbeek Science Park after 23 years. In 2024 they are set to officially become the very first occupants of FacThory at Genk's Thor Park, the campus for innovative energy and smart manufacturing industries. In this context, the organisation signed a partnership contract in the presence of Joris Merckx, CEO of Thor Park, Tom Vanham, CEO of the Limburg investment company LRM, Michaël De Blauwe, Business Development Manager

KULeuven Leuven Research & Development, Noël Slangen, General Director POM Limburg, Tom Vandeput, Provincial Commissioner of the Province of Limburg and Wim Dries, Mayor City of Genk. This cooperation is an important milestone for all technology companies in Limburg and by extension in Belgium.

Herman Derache, Managing Director at Sirris: ‘Becoming the first resident of FacThory is a great opportunity for Sirris. We are eager to collaborate with other like-minded organisations and companies that will join this ecosystem after us and make use of the collective expertise that becomes available in this new modern facility. This partnership will promote knowledge exchange, provide access to high-tech facilities and facilitate cooperation in the manufacturing ecosystem. Together, we will work to redefine production processes, boost innovation and create a sustainable future for the manufacturing industry in Limburg and, by extension, Belgium.’

Precision parts and pilot lines for new production systems

With years of experience in advanced manufacturing technologies under its belt, Sirris will work closely with companies of all sizes to improve competitiveness and foster sustainable growth. More specifically, companies will be able to visit the new Sirris site to produce precision parts, set up pilot lines for new production systems and a permanent '4.0 Made Real' demonstrator, which intends to teach companies about digitised and energy-efficient production systems.

Joris Merckx, CEO of Thor Park: ‘We are delighted to welcome Sirris as our first resident at FacThory. Their extensive experience and expertise will be invaluable in shaping the future of manufacturing in Genk and beyond. We believe that their focus on high-quality component manufacturing, digitisation of production and energy-efficient production fits perfectly with our vision of innovation and sustainability. The aim is to jointly attract some 50 manufacturing companies to the campus and create jobs for some 400 people.’

Tom Vanham, chairman of Thor Park nv and general manager of LRM: ‘With its rich experience as a leading innovation centre for the technology industry, the presence of this strong pillar of knowledge means that FacThory is getting off to a flying start. Together with companies, Sirris realises some 1,300 innovation projects a year. Indeed, a very important player and definitely an enrichment for the manufacturing industry here on this Genk campus. Moreover, with their practical support, keen expertise, state-of-the-art infrastructure and fresh innovative ideas, Sirris fits perfectly with Thor Park nv's ambition to lead the way in innovation, creativity and sustainable projects. We wish Sirris every success at our FacThory and are already looking forward to the next exciting companies settling here on our multifunctional campus focused on smart manufacturing. FacThory will absolutely play a crucial role in the transition to a sustainable economy and strong Flemish manufacturing industry.’

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