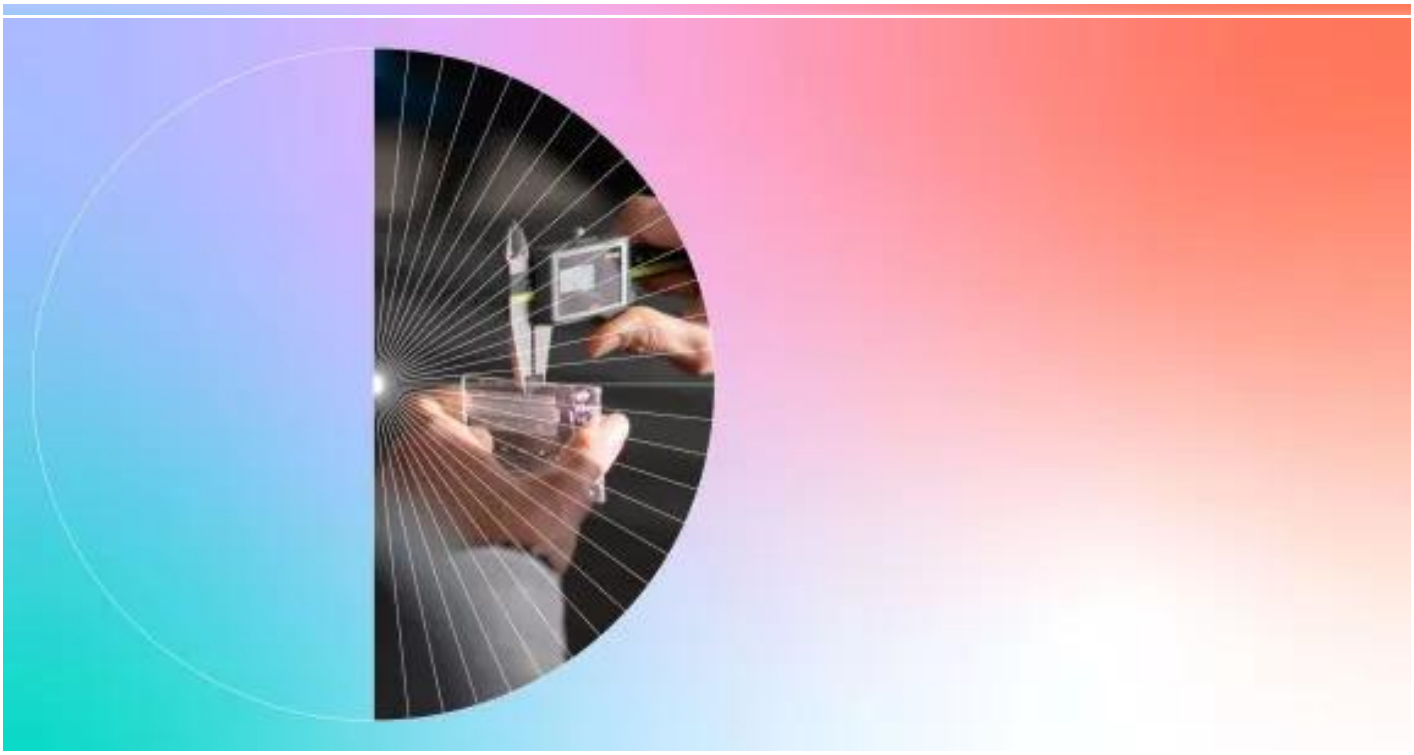


Annual report 2023, the year of the big shift

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Sirris fully adopts role of 'architect of innovation'

Following a challenging period, 2023 marked the beginning of a significant era of innovative growth for our industry, focusing on energy transition and enhancing competitiveness through various innovation projects. To better support businesses than ever before, Sirris implemented crucial structural changes, investing in extensive collaborations and state-of-the-art infrastructure. This progress led to numerous successful projects across Belgian companies. Read all about it in our annual report and be inspired.

After some tumultuous years, in 2023 we saw a shift when it comes to innovation: we witnessed a 6% increase in the volume of innovation services to companies and a 5% growth in the number of research projects. Particularly noteworthy is the enhanced emphasis on innovation projects related to energy transition (+ 10%) and projects aimed at boosting competitiveness (+ 5%). It is not a coincidence that Sirris has focused on those two themes in recent years.

More than ever, Sirris has effectively fulfilled its role as the 'architect of innovation'. This progress was made possible by several significant, structural measures we implemented in 2023. Significantly, we relaunched the Strategic Committee, an advisory body that includes a number of

leading industrial representatives from the sector. In its role as the collective innovation centre for the technology sector in our country, Sirris stays attuned to the latest developments and challenges related to innovation within companies across Flanders, Brussels, and Wallonia.

Investing, in people and more

Besides the growth in innovation projects, 2023 was also the year in which we strengthened collaborations in various ecosystems and deployed new and more modern infrastructures serving the manufacturing industry.

We moved our Diepenbeek industrial lab space to the state-of-the-art FacThory at Thor Park in Genk. This not only gave us the space to expand further and invest in new infrastructure, it was also the perfect opportunity to be closer to the organisations and companies in our ecosystem,

We laid the cornerstone for the House of Manufacturing in Kortrijk, located at the heart of a crucial ecosystem for Sirris. It will be a cutting-edge construction project that will serve as the primary gathering spot for the manufacturing industry in West Flanders.

Ultimately, we progressed with constructing our 4.0 demonstrator in Charleroi to assist companies in enhancing the flexibility of their production lines. Where previously a machine was dedicated to producing a single product, it will soon be capable of manufacturing multiple products from the same production floor without additional costs

GenAI

Finally, a major investment plan for Generative Artificial Intelligence was launched at the end of 2023. AI - and especially generative AI - is evolving at an unseen speed. That is why we are accelerating our efforts at Sirris to support tech companies in strengthening their market leadership - and even expanding it where possible.

The smart implementation of AI will be an essential catalyst of productivity and thus growth everywhere in the coming years. The advantage gained by companies and organisations that are first to embrace new technologies can be incredibly valuable. It is Sirris' role to support them in this endeavour and help them benefit from these new innovations. By doing so, Sirris will increase the number of companies that employ the latest technologies on a daily basis within our sector. And all of that with one aim: to keep companies competitive.

How did we embrace 2023 as the year of the big shift in more detail? You can read all about it in our annual report.
The 2023 annual report also contains a selection of inspiring examples of technological innovation in the industry. Let companies like Bao Living, Solhyd with its hydrogen panels with its sustainable, modular bathrooms and Macq with its AI-controlled road safety cameras inspire you and guide your company to introduce and implement new technologies.

In 2023, Sirris supervised 1,180 innovation projects and 140 R&D projects for 935 companies - more than 75 per cent of which are SMEs. Sirris delivered 75 webinars, training and master classes to 2050 participants, and received 71,300 website visits on www.sirris.be, dedicated to some 20 technologies in five areas of expertise: product innovation, advanced manufacturing, innovation management, digital transformation and the green transition.

Sirris' experts are ready - together with our extensive network of partners - to support Belgian technology companies in adopting new technologies and managing the associated risks.

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