ROI calculator: what is the cost of doing nothing?

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A tool from the VIRAL project to evaluate investments in robotics and machine vision

Automation is a major investment. However, against a backdrop of labour shortages and increasing quality demands, not investing can cost even more. So the real question is not just: "*how much does automation cost?*" But also: "*how much is not investing costing you?*"

As part of the VIRAL project, Sirris has developed a Robotics ROI calculator. This Excel tool will help you to estimate the profitability of a robotics project that incorporates a machine vision system.

Download the Robotics ROI Calculator

Use it today to create a framework for your investment decision. Get free access to this tool which has been developed by Sirris as part of the VIRAL project.

Download the ROI calculator

The cost of inaction is often invisible

When you are considering an automation project, you often think about the potential savings first. But what will happen if you don't invest? Choosing not to act can lead to a number of risks for your company:

- Production delays
- Unfulfilled orders
- Increased variability in quality
- Extra pressure on your teams

In some cases, inaction can end up costing more than the investment itself. Automation, however, ensures continuity of production, increases reliability for your customers and prepares your company for the future.

An ROI calculator to create a framework for your decision

The ROI calculator, which was developed as part of the VIRAL project, answers three key questions:

- What is the total cost of your investment?
- What tangible benefits can you expect?
- How quickly will you earn back your investment?

The Excel tool follows four steps: assumptions, estimated benefits, estimated costs and a summary of results. It automatically calculates several key financial indicators:

- Repayment period
- ROI and annualised ROI
- NPV (Net Present Value)
- IRR (Internal Rate of Return)

This gives you a solid financial foundation to support your strategic decisions.

Intangible value: a decisive factor

Some of the benefits of a robotics project cannot be measured directly in euros. They can, however, have a decisive role in the investment decision. Here are a few examples of benefits that

are real but difficult to quantify:

- More consistent quality and a stronger brand image
- Improved safety and ergonomics
- Greater production flexibility
- Better data traceability
- A sustainable competitive advantage
- Enhancing the skills of the team
- Greater attractiveness for talent
- Easier regulatory compliance

These benefits are not always taken into account in a standard financial calculation. However, they may justify an investment, even when the figures used seem conservative.

A project that pays for itself in less than two years

Let's take the example of a medium-sized manufacturer facing two recurring problems: difficulty recruiting people for repetitive tasks and quality problems linked to fatigue and manual work.

Item	Cost (€)
6-axis industrial robot	60,000
Vision system	10,000
Safety equipment	7,500
Tools and fixing	15,000
Installation and integration	14,000
Operator training	3,500
Total Initial Investment	**110,000**
Annual operating costs (maintenance, energy, software, consumables)	**14,000**

Benefit type	Value (€)
Labour savings	60,000 (1.5 FTEs)
Reduction in waste	3,000
Reduction in accident-related costs	5,000
Other benefits	2,000
Annual total	**70,000**

Financial result

- Net annual return: €56,000

- Repayment period: +/- 2 years
- ROI (1st year): 51%
- NPV over 5 years (10% interest rate): €102,284
- IRR rate: +/- 42%

In this example, the project pays for itself in less than two years. The IRR of 42% is well above the 20% threshold that is often considered attractive. Without a structural tool like this ROI calculator, these elements would remain difficult to take into account objectively when making an investment decision.

The limits of the model

The calculator is a starting-point that can provide a structured initial estimate, but it does not replace an in-depth analysis. It does not cover certain elements such as accounting depreciation, salary indexation, transitional costs or upgrade costs.

Another point to bear in mind is that a complete robotics unit often costs up to three times the price of the robot itself.

That is precisely why Sirris offers support to complement this tool. Our experts can help you to refine your assumptions, validate your business case and adapt the model to your reality on the ground..

Sirris, your partner as you move forward

As part of the VIRAL project, Sirris supports industrial companies from the initial assessment to building a structured and robust business case.

We analyse your industrial context, validate your assumptions and adapt the model to your real production situation.

Making an informed investment decision

Investing in automation is not just about cutting costs. It is also about securing your production, boosting your competitiveness and preparing your company for the future.

The Robotics ROI Calculator developed by Sirris provides a structured initial framework that can be used to assess the profitability of an automation project and make your decision on an objective basis.

Let's talk about your project

Are you interested in validating your hypotheses or refining your business case?

Contact our expert Brecht De Cock

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