



## House of Manufacturing becomes meeting point for innovation in West Flanders manufacturing industry

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*On 22 March, Sirris, Agoria, POM West-Flanders and PTI Kortrijk used virtual reality to present the new House of Manufacturing and Technicum buildings in Kortrijk. House of Manufacturing will stimulate sustainable technological innovation by acting as a meeting place for manufacturing industry.*

When it opens, companies can go to House of Manufacturing for inspiration, support, advice, networking and talent development tailored to their Industry 4.0 challenges. The adjoining Technicum will accommodate 600 students from technical and vocational secondary education to prepare them for work in manufacturing. This brings together the range of training and research infrastructure and network and meeting facilities available for companies, knowledge institutions and training partners. The founders plan to develop House of Manufacturing into an open centre of expertise for technological innovation in the manufacturing industry.

### Expertise & advice

Sirris and Agoria decided in mid-2021 to further expand their activities in West Flanders from a base in Kortrijk. “We deliberately chose this location for our service extension to East and West

Flanders. Companies and organisations can rely on this for advice and support”, says Jolyce Demely, Managing Director of Agoria Vlaanderen. “All the actors involved are present on the West campus. From here we can easily cover the entire Bruges-Kortrijk axis, which is the centre of gravity for the machine building and mechatronics sector.”

Sirris site in West Flanders: "Distance matters"

In 2016, Sirris set up a branch in West Flanders, where the manufacturing industry has always had a strong presence. This was done not only to assist the highly innovative companies of the province - which had already found their way to Sirris - but also to be physically closer to the many smaller SMEs.

Herman Derache, Managing Director of Sirris: “Having a local presence has let us work much more closely in business projects with the actors located here. These include Howest, Ghent University, the University of Leuven, Flanders Make and POM West Flanders and has involved more than 50 projects since 2016. In the same period, we have held more than 90 workshops, laboratory visits and networking events, drawing in more than 2,500 visitors from more than 400 companies”.

## **Research & Development**

Sirris found temporary accommodation at Howest in Kortrijk but is now coming home to the House of Manufacturing, together with Agoria. More than ever before, companies can turn to both of our organisations for expertise & advice, research & development & innovation, training & education and meetings & events. The new building also lets us move on to the next version of our 'Industry 4.0 Made Real Experience Centre', with a focus on the theme of 'smart assembly', specifically aimed at manufacturing. In this lab, companies can gain hands-on experience with the latest smart assembly technologies. The research infrastructure is open to companies to test new ideas and to engage in co-creation with the expertise and guidance of the partner network. The Factories of the Future partnership (“Fabrieken voor de Toekomst”) also works on Industry 4.0 in close cooperation with other research labs.

Herman Derache: “For the companies, the thing that is essential here is the combination of expertise, know-how and suitable testing infrastructure. This allows companies to realise a proof-of-concept in a limited timeframe before making their final investment decisions. Covering risks - that's what it's all about, because innovation is both essential and risky.”

The opening of House of Manufacturing is scheduled for April 2024.

[Read the Dutch press release about House of Manufacturing](#)



*Jean de Bethune (POM West-Vlaanderen), Jolyce Demely (Agoria), Herman Derache (Sirris) and Tim Claeys (PTI Kortrijk), reveal the building of House of Manufacturing and Technicum in virtual reality*

## **Authors**



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