



PRESS RELEASE

FRANZ FAYOT AND SASHA BAILLIE PRESENT THE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF LUXINNOVATION (22.04.2021)

On Thursday 22 April, Minister of the Economy Franz Fayot and Sasha Baillie, CEO of Luxinnovation, presented the 2020 annual report of Luxinnovation. A pivotal year for the national innovation agency that not only worked to provide the tools necessary for companies to meet the new challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to better identify opportunities that new market trends bring to our economy. Its ultimate objective is to help companies innovate successfully and thus remain competitive and sustainable.

Luxinnovation has been supporting companies in their research, development and innovation efforts for more than 35 years. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national innovation agency made its activity more customer-oriented than ever. Benefiting from its multidisciplinary teams and complementary services, it continues to offer holistic support tailored to the expectations and needs of each business. Such personalised support is of even greater importance in this time of crisis.

The work of the agency is supported by its close and efficient cooperation with the government, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Skilled Trades, FEDIL and the Fédération des artisans, as well as with the University of Luxembourg and the public research organisations.

COVID-19 crisis

COVID-19 obviously had a strong impact on the activities of Luxinnovation. With the support of the Ministry of the Economy, the agency implemented measures to help companies face the crisis, overcome its challenges and initiate their recovery process. They include, for instance:

- ▶ the launch of the Fit 4 Resilience strategic relaunch programme: 16 companies finalised their participation in 2020, representing a cumulative turnover of €930 million and nearly 4,000 employees;
- ▶ the development and implementation of the EPI-Covid19.lu platform, which matched supply and demand for personal protective equipment: over 21,000 visitors, 1,800 user accounts created and 140 offers posted during the first three months of operation;
- ▶ the StartupVsCovid19 competition: more than 300 start-ups applied, and 15 of them were selected to receive public funding of €150,000 each.

In his speech, Minister of the Economy Franz Fayot recalled the key role that the agency plays in the research and innovation ecosystem in Luxembourg, which has been further strengthened by the outbreak of the pandemic. Luxembourg aims to become the most progressive and attractive digital technology and data economy environment in the European Union as well as a forerunner in the ecologically sustainable transition. In order to achieve this, the Ministry of the Economy is implementing a data-driven innovation strategy which includes the launch of major digitalisation projects such as the Luxembourg Digital Innovation Hub (L-DIH), whose coordination has been entrusted to Luxinnovation, and the European GAIA-X project aimed at creating a federated European data cloud. Luxembourg's regional GAIA-X hub is also coordinated by Luxinnovation.

414 companies were supported by the clusters managed by Luxinnovation in 2020, and the agency's multidisciplinary team facilitated the approval of 257 aid applications by the Ministry of the Economy (compared to 120 in 2020). In addition to the aid schemes already in place before the pandemic, the figure for 2020 also include applications submitted to several specific aid measures ([Covid R&D & Invest](#) and [Neistart](#)) introduced by the Ministry of the Economy.

"The combination of our in-depth knowledge of key economic sectors and our expertise in start-up acceleration, SME performance and funding mechanisms makes it possible for us to offer comprehensive and personalised support to companies and to support the sustainable development of the economy," says Sasha Baillie, CEO of Luxinnovation.



Digital transformation

Stimulating and supporting the digital transformation of the economy and individual companies is also one of Luxinnovation's main objectives. The agency works closely with partners such as the House of Entrepreneurship and the Chamber of Skilled Trades.

The Fit 4 Digital programme had a level of success similar to that of the previous year (107 participants, compared to 110 a year earlier), while the new Fit 4 Digital Packages programme, launched at the end of 2019, attracted over 180 participants. "We have also ourselves adopted digital solutions for supporting companies, for example by organising digital information events and preparing the E-DIH conference which took place in January 2021 and attracted 2,600 participants from 40 countries," says Ms Baillie. This international event marked the launch of the network of European Digital Innovation Hubs, which the Luxembourg Digital Innovation Hub, that is managed by Luxinnovation, will join.

International cooperation

Helping companies and research centres find partners and innovation opportunities outside Luxembourg is another central part of Luxinnovation's activity. "Even without being able to travel outside the country, we continue to contribute to the international promotion of the Luxembourg economy and the start-up ecosystem, as well as to the prospecting of international companies that can bring added value to our economy," Ms Baillie underlines. These "digital" prospection activities led to the incorporation of 10 foreign companies in 2020 (compared to 19 in 2019, but in a context where foreign direct investment generally decreased by 50% in 2020). In addition, 62 new start-ups were incorporated with the support of Luxinnovation.

As the national contact point for the European Horizon 2020 framework programme, Luxinnovation also continued facilitating international and European partnerships in the field of research and innovation. "The success rate of our Horizon 2020 project places us in third place among the countries of the European Union," says Ms Baillie. A total of 127 projects (+24.5% compared to the year before) were co-funded with a total amount of €45 million (+40%).

Luxembourg key strengths

"The year 2020 has been exceptional in more ways than one, and all Luxinnovation employees have done an excellent job to support our companies and the Luxembourg economy in the best possible way. We know there are still a lot of challenges to overcome, but also opportunities, in particular in the data economy. I am convinced that Luxembourg has assets that would allow companies to successfully launch into this new economy. We will be at their side to support them and help them achieve their full potential," concludes Ms Baillie.

The Minister of the Economy adds: "In this very special and complex year 2020, the agency has been a key partner both for the Ministry of the Economy and for companies. We are in the middle of a real transition of our economy, in which innovation is a driver. As our national innovation agency for more than 35 years, Luxinnovation provides support that is particularly valuable to facilitate the transition to a digital and sustainable economy. Through its support to major flagship projects such as L-DIH and [GAIA-X](#), the agency actively contributes to the implementation of the data-driven innovation strategy and will continue to be a key partner in the future."

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Luxinnovation, the national innovation agency, contributes to the economic development of Luxembourg by fostering innovation, fuelling international growth and attracting foreign direct investment. Set up as an Economic Interest Group, Luxinnovation is supported by the Ministry of the Economy, the Ministry for Higher Education and Research, the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce, the Luxembourg Chamber of Skilled Crafts and FEDIL – The Voice of Luxembourg's Industry. www.luxinnovation.lu