

Interview with the Managing Director of VINCI Energies Belgium

Marc Lemaire

The acquisitions of Hooyberghs HVAC in 2014 and Kyndt-Neyts, TranzCom and Radar Automation in 2015. For several years now, VINCI Energies Belgium is strengthening its position by acquisitions. Will this remain your strategy for growth?

We want to continue our growth in Belgium. For several years now, VINCI and VINCI Energies have a strategy to continue growing outside of France: in Europe and the rest of the world. Belgium is a country at the heart of Europe, where our group has a strong historical presence and where we have shown the ability to realize sustainable results.

External growth through a selective acquisition approach is an important part of this strategy to further develop our activities in Belgium. I emphasize that it is a selective approach, because we are looking at companies active in one of the 4 business lines of VINCI Energies and with potential synergies with our existing Business Units. This can be in Belgium or abroad through our Brands network. Within VINCI Energies we have chosen a number of fields of expertise on which we want to focus and we are not present in all of these in Belgium. Developing these areas through acquisitions is also an objective.



Does today's challenging energy context have an impact on your business activities?

For our customers in all of our Business Perimeters, Energy Efficiency is a major objective and is therefore included in nearly all our offers. For the new NATO HQ nearly 100,000 lighting fixtures are linked to a Lighting Management System to optimize energy consumption. We provide energy audits through quick-scans or deep-scans and we can assist our customers for ISO 50001 certification. We help our customers measure energy consumption, from installing the measuring equipment to the supervision software. We engineer and implement solutions to efficiently reduce energy consumption and finally, we maintain and operate the installations to assure that they keep performing in an optimal way. The Renault Belgique Luxembourg project of [VINCI Facilities](#) is a perfect example. After our audit of the technical installations, Renault Belgique Luxembourg decided to sign an Energy Performance Contract. Thanks to an efficient maintenance and energy management through the use of a monitoring software VINCI Facilities is far above the energy saving objectives offering our customer reduced energy costs and CO₂ emissions.

How do you support your customers in their digital transformation? What differentiates VINCI Energies Belgium?

Within VINCI Energies we have a lot of competences regarding the digital transformation. Through our network brands we share this knowledge and all countries have access to the know-how and the experience of our teams of specialists. Factories operating according to the Industry 4.0 principles, connected factories, IoT that enables us to offer unique opportunities to improve and perfect predictive maintenance. Our teams from [Actemium](#) and [Axians](#) are really into Smart Industry and we have already several references in Belgium. We have f.e. a specific focus on Eco Production, more specifically 'Smart Waste Heat Recovery' where we transform waste heat into process heat. Axians is also working together with [Cegelec](#) and [VINCI Facilities](#) to offer solutions for Smart Buildings and Smart Cities. With [TranzCom](#) we deliver innovative Emergency full digital dispatching for the fire brigades, SMUR, Police, ... [Omexom](#) is actively involved in the development of Smart Grid initiatives and our experts work closely with our customers and partners to help them successfully make the energy shift.

Safety is an important indicator of operational excellence and the health of an organization. The engagement of the employees is therefore crucial. How does VINCI Energies Belgium improve the level of workforce engagement?

We have long passed the time that we look at safety performance only by applying a certain safety management system and measuring KPI's. This remains necessary and we follow-up our safety indicators very closely, but "lagging" safety indicators only involve accidents and because these are luckily rare, they don't concern all our employees. That's why we are focusing much more on the awareness of risks in our daily jobs and how to avoid them, than

just on the analysis of past accidents. This is what we call “leading” safety indicators such as LRMA (Last Minute Risk Analysis) before starting a job, reporting of dangerous situations on site etc. We motivate all our employees to live by the look-warn-share principle regarding safety. It is each employee’s responsibility to watch-out for risks, warn others about it and share experiences to avoid risks in the future. We not only want to reach zero accidents, but also safety excellence.

Do you, in a constantly evolving world, have a specific focus on innovation?

Innovation is a key value for VINCI. The bi-annual VINCI Innovation Award stimulates our employees to think innovative in several fields: Safety, Sustainable Development, Processes and Techniques, Marketing and Services, Equipment and Tools, etc. Within VINCI Energies, we focus on the themes which are at the center of our fields of activity: digitalization, the energy transition, smart industry, buildings and cities, the “New Way of Working” in offices.... We have several initiatives (smart glasses, wearables, mobile devices) in Belgium of what we call “Co-Creation” where we develop innovative solutions together with our customers. In the yearly strategic plan, every Business Unit is challenged to include an innovation part to make sure they stay at the forefront of technological evolution in each of their targeted business segments, like for instance in the hospital sector, where Cegelec Fire Solutions installs a watermist fire extinguishing system in the ZNA Middelheim hospital in Antwerp, a first on the Belgian market.

Since June 2016, VINCI Energies also introduced its managerial and financial investment fund Inerbiz to support and finance innovative startups in its business sectors. Inerbiz is VINCI Energies’ way of speeding up its expansion into new technologies. It will support projects revolving around the future of cities, buildings, industry and energy, and around smart grids.

Young graduates are bringing new requirements like creativity, entrepreneurship and accelerated career growth. Do you have with VINCI Energies Belgium a specific approach?

It is a real challenge to give young graduates the opportunity to develop themselves when entering a big group. In VINCI Energies we are indeed looking for young graduates which are creative and have an entrepreneurial spirit. It is thus important that when you hire these profiles you don’t start the first day by only telling them what to do and how to do it. Nevertheless, we offer trainings during the onboarding period to explain our “VINCI Energies Way of Life”, to understand the values of our corporate culture and to further develop technical skills specific for our fields of activity. During “summer school” sessions for example young graduates get a serious technological update of what they have learned at school in real-life implementations. The pace of change is accelerating and young graduates expect to work for a company able to cope with this. Our strength is our network structure and the VINCI Energies’ Way of Life, which enables us to be an agile organization that can easily adapt and respond to market & technological changes. Moreover, we respond proactively so that we can be an added value for and work in real partnership with our customers.

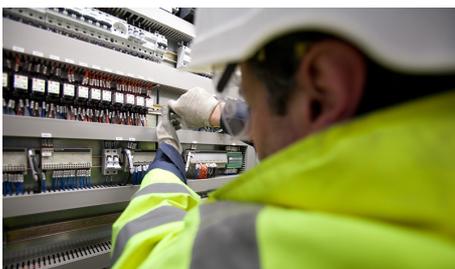
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