

Best Practice in Innovation Support



This case study outlines how a voucher scheme, an established innovation support mechanism in Wallonia, served as the catalyst for the creation of a novel start-up business using secondary resources to produce innovative bricks.

RATIONALE

- ◆ Technological vouchers support innovation of start-up and established SMEs
- ◆ 75% of research undertaken is financed by an accredited Walloon research centre
- ◆ Financing supports process optimisation and upscaling
- ◆ This mechanism is known to be quick and flexible

COMPANY REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ Reduce the environmental impact of construction material
- ◆ Create a healthy, resistant and stable unbaked clay brick
- ◆ Validate a formula/method established at a kitchen level and upscale the process
- ◆ Produce waterproof, crude building blocks which are profitable at an industrial level

INNOVATIVE RESULTS - for the company

- ◆ €30 000 investment into research undertaken by the Centre Terre et Pierre (CTP), allowing for quantitative and qualitative technological advances
- ◆ Validation of a mix and a process to stabilize the material through physical and chemical reactions
- ◆ CTP knowledge about secondary resources helped the company to find by-products to build the bricks. As a result, lime is the only product the company sources externally
- ◆ Access to expert knowledge including laboratories and testing facilities
- ◆ After a 3-year research phase, the company was created and started producing bricks in June 2013
- ◆ Four full-time equivalents are working on the production process, 4 are working as self-employed. The staff increased by 3 people at project management level in 2014
- ◆ Access to financing

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

- ◆ Creating a sustainable business model
- ◆ Producing a top-quality product from secondary raw material without baking the clay
- ◆ Negotiating the complexities of Walloon innovation support procedures



THE PRODUCT

- ◆ Mix based on secondary raw material allowing for physical and chemical reactions to produce the desired hardening effect:
 - the finest fraction of limestone from heap, sand, clay used to cover sandstone mines, lime and water.
- ◆ Appropriate compression
- ◆ Drying and stabilization
- ◆ The whole process is not highly dependent on energy

CONTACT

Gregory de Jacquier
ARGIO S.A.
info@argio.be
+32.2.355.02.54
109, rue de Bruxelles
1480 Tubize

ABOUT ARGIO



Argio is a dynamic innovative SME which has based its business model on sustainable use of resources and energy. Its main product is a clever unbaked clay brick.

Further Information be obtained at www.argio.com

TECHNOLOGICAL VOUCHERS

- ◆ Technological voucher support allowed the company to benefit from internationally recognised networks and expertise and to test the process on an industrial scale. Administrative support from CTP meant that the company simply registered online and commenced their research in a matter of days.
- ◆ Technological vouchers can be accessed by any Walloon SMEs seeking support for research undertaken by an accredited research centre. More info: <http://www.ct.innovons.be>

LESSONS LEARNED

- ◆ Interesting to use appropriate innovation support organisms such as Innovatech and incubators to understand where to look for financial support
- ◆ The strength of the technological voucher lies in the flexibility and simplicity of the scheme
- ◆ Such vouchers should exist at European level

Case study produced by the ReNEW Project under Action 5 (Best Practice for Innovation Support) which seeks to improve support mechanisms for innovation in waste processing and resource recovery.

For further information: www.renew-network.eu