

BeCOVER

S.R.I.W., S.F.P.I and Safran Aero Boosters join forces to create a state-of-the-art center to test compressors for aviation of the future

S.R.I.W. (Société Régionale d'Investissement de Wallonie), S.F.P.I. (Société Fédérale de Participations et d'Investissement) and Safran Aero Boosters are creating BeCOVER¹ and investing €50 million to build and operate an aerodynamic test center that is unique in Europe. It will be capable of testing all types of compressors for new generations of civil and military aircraft engines.

Located in Liège, Belgium, these new facilities of more than 3,000 sq.m., will be able to validate breakthrough innovations to meet the major environmental challenges of the aviation sector. Operational from 2023, they will be a real laboratory serving the industrial world but also universities and research centers.

BeCOVER will offer a unique test facility in Europe, with its outstanding technical capabilities, in particular a closed-loop system, which will enable turbomachinery to be tested at altitude conditions.

The test center will strengthen and develop know-how in Liege, and more broadly in Wallonia and Belgium, which is essential to maintaining Belgian expertise in the compressor aerodynamics sector. These testing capabilities, initially developed for aircraft engines applications, could be used more widely by other sectors, including the energy.

Reducing the environmental impact of air traffic (reduction of CO₂ emissions, NO_x, noise, etc.) is a major challenge for the aeronautical sector, which has set a target of reducing CO₂ emissions by 50% by 2050 (compared to 2005 levels). The technological innovation of the major aviation contractors will help fill the order books of the many SMEs that have devoted significant resources to achieve the level of thoroughness necessary for this cutting-edge sector. Let's recall that in 2020, the Minister of Economy had also established an important Technological Innovation Partnership (T.I.P."Wings") aimed at supporting the innovation capacity of the entire Walloon value chain and maintaining talent in this technological revolution of greener aviation.

BeCOVER will operate the test center autonomously and will entrust its design and construction to the "test cells" entity of Safran Aero Boosters, the world leader in this field. The

¹Banc d'Essais de COmpresseurs Valorisant l'Environnement et la Recherche (Test Cell for Compressors Enhancing the Environment and Research)

best techniques for optimizing resource consumption (energy, water, etc.) will be used. Special attention will also be paid to reducing noise emissions and integrating the site into the landscape, with a semi-buried building.

"The investment in BeCOVER must of course generate revenue, says Olivier Vanderijst, Chairman of the S.R.I.W. Management Committee, but also enable our industries and research centers to maintain a competitive advantage in the upcoming aeronautics revolution, with the goal of achieving carbon neutrality. The partnership with Safran brings an industrial skill useful to several sectors, and also consolidates a company located in Wallonia that irrigates an ecosystem of advanced subcontractors."

"Participating in BeCOVER is another example of the SFPI's investment strategy: support sustainable projects, with a long-term industrial vision, while perpetuating technological activities and expertise in Belgium, explains Koen Van Loo, CEO of the S.F.P.I. With BeCover, SFPI is excited to support the development of tomorrow's aircraft engines: lighter, cleaner and more environmentally friendly."

"Thanks to BeCOVER, Belgium has a unique testing facility to develop next-generation compressors," comments François Lepot, CEO of Safran Aero Boosters. The sustainability of our industry depends on new environmental friendly technologies, and we are preparing for this. That's why we decided to invest in this project, despite the temporarily difficult situation the sector is experiencing."

The S.R.I.W. (Société Régionale d'Investissement de Wallonie) contributes to the development of the economy by intervening financially in the development projects of Walloon companies or companies established in Wallonia. It participates in their growth, alongside private investors, via equity investments but also loans.

S.F.P.I (Société Fédérale de Participations et d'Investissement) is the sovereign wealth fund of the Belgian federal government. With more than €14 billion of assets under management, SFPI supports sustainable and growth-oriented investment projects. The SFPI also seeks to strengthen the long-term stability of the Belgian economy by helping to anchor strategic assets and by investing in both promising and established companies.

Safran is an international high-technology group, operating in the aviation (propulsion, equipment and interiors), defense and space markets. Its core purpose is to contribute to a safer, more sustainable world, where air transport is more environmentally friendly, comfortable and accessible. Safran has a global presence, with 79,000 employees and sales of 16.5 billion euros in 2020 and holds, alone or in partnership, world or regional leadership positions in its core markets. Safran is listed on the Euronext Paris stock exchange and is part of the CAC 40 and Euro Stoxx 50 indices.

Safran Aero Boosters designs, develops and produces low-pressure compressors (a subassembly of the aircraft engine), oil equipment and test cells for aerospace propulsion. The company equips most of the civil aircraft in service as well as the European launcher Ariane.

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