



## PRESS RELEASE

### LUXINNOVATION CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTS COMPANIES AFFECTED BY THE CRISIS

**Esch-sur-Alzette, 28 May 2020** – In addition to the various actions and funding plans put in place by the government to combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Luxinnovation, the national innovation agency, is deploying its resources and skills to meet the needs and expectations of companies affected by the consequences of the crisis in the best way possible.

#### **Personal protective equipment platform**

Already in April, Luxinnovation initiated the creation of the EPI-Covid19.lu platform in order to link the supply of and demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) produced by Luxembourg companies.

*“Many companies in Luxembourg told us of their wish to put their know-how and skills at the service of the national effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences,”* explains Johnny Brebels, Director Company Relations and Support at Luxinnovation. *“We quickly saw the need for coordinating, on one hand these proposals, and on the other the needs, and make an adapted and flexible tool available for all players concerned.”*

The EPI-Covid19.lu platform was created in just a few days by Luxinnovation in cooperation with the wedo.lu team of the Fédération des Artisans. FEDIL, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Skilled Trades and CLC also supported the initiative. Since its launch in mid-April, the site has attracted around 700 users per day on average. More than 1,600 accounts are active and nearly 200 offers are available online.

The platform complements the financial support measures introduced in April by the Ministry of the Economy for companies carrying out research projects or investing in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Support is available for research projects on vaccines, drugs and treatments, medical devices and hospital and medical equipment or on process innovations enabling the efficient manufacturing of necessary products. The ministry also offers support to companies engaged in the production of products used in the fight against COVID-19 (vaccines, drugs and treatments, medical devices and hospital and medical equipment, protective clothing and equipment, diagnostic tools, disinfectants, data collection and processing tools, etc.).

#### **Start-up support...**

The national innovation agency, together with the Ministry of the Economy, has also had the lead on the implementation of a specific action plan for start-ups. Webinars providing young Luxembourg companies with clear and relevant information on available support instruments were organised. The call for projects “StartupVsCovid19” was also launched, with 15 start-ups (out of more than 300 applicants) selected on 15 May.

Selected companies will receive financial support of up to €150,000 from the Ministry of the Economy for the development of innovative technological products and services intended to limit or even overcome the economic, health or societal effects of the coronavirus crisis.

*“The start-ups that were not selected can still benefit from the support and personalised advice provided by our teams,”* said Sasha Baillie, CEO of Luxinnovation.

#### **... and to the Research Luxembourg COVID-19 Task Force**

In the context of the COVID-19 Task Force set up by the Research Luxembourg initiative, Luxinnovation was entrusted with the management of the working group in charge of interaction with the private section. In this role, the agency identified and invited companies to submit ideas and proposals for relevant and innovative products and services to scientific working groups.

All these actions complement the support that Luxinnovation provides to help the Ministry of the Economy deal with the very large number of applications for support offered to the self-employed and small businesses directly impacted by the crisis. *“We have had to both listen to companies and to guide them towards the most appropriate support mechanisms,”* explains Ms Baillie. *“Our Company Relations & Support and R&D and Innovation Support departments, in particular, who are constantly in direct contact with companies, have been able to effectively identify their needs and expectations.”*

Following the same logic, the Fit 4 Resilience programme has been launched to allow companies to manage their way out of the crisis, as well as to consider a longer-term development strategy that will make them more resilient while ideally integrating a more digital, circular and regional approach. *“All the feedback that we receive from the field will allow us to develop good practices that can be shared with all the stakeholders in the ecosystem. The feedback will also help in the economic development of each sector over time, by emphasising what will have worked well and what will have worked less well,”* concludes Ms Baillie.

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