

General

Preface January 2017

Each month our CEO reflects on the events in his (professional) life and discusses some of the articles featured in this month's magazine issue.

Making the impossible possible – together

“Fantastic growth figures, significant technological breakthroughs in numerous areas, the merger with digital research center iMinds: 2016 was an incredible year for imec. Still, more than ever, we are looking to the future; a future driven by radical innovation; a future where, together with our customers and partners, we strive to make the impossible possible...” – Luc Van den hove, General Director and CEO of imec.

2016 – an incredible year for imec

When I look back at 2016, I can draw only one conclusion: 2016 was an incredible year for imec. To begin with, we were once again able to present fantastic growth figures, and that applies to all the segments in which we are active. What's more, these growth figures resulted in an increase of roughly 35 million euros in turnover (an increase of 7 to 8 per cent per annum). That is huge – and moreover it is a trend we have been able to record for several years running.

Secondly, we have initiated and successfully completed countless innovation projects with you – our loyal partners and customers – thereby achieving various technological breakthroughs in a vast range of fields. You will find a short overview of these further on in this annual report. These, too, are achievements we can be proud of!

Another significant achievement in 2016 was the opening of the new cleanroom. Thanks to this ultramodern lab covering more than 4,000 m² (as a result of which we expand our cleanroom infrastructure to more than 12,000m²) we can continue to conduct research into new technologies that make microchips even smaller, more powerful and more energy efficient, using the most advanced chip production equipment.

And finally, of course, there was the merger with the Flemish digital research center iMinds. It was a merger dictated by opportunities; moreover, it was a merger that has been completed at a speed nobody would have believed possible at the beginning of the year. It is a marriage between chip and systems technology on the one hand, and digital technology on the other – equipping us to create even greater local and international impact.

That is also the message we aim to convey through the double interviews in this edition of imec Magazine. In each article, a hardware expert and a software expert discuss the most important achievements in their domain in the past year. At the same time, they look at what the future holds for us.

Our mission: to make the impossible possible – together

Of course, it is always nice to look back on a successful year. But at imec, what really counts is the future. And there as well, the merger with iMinds will generate significant value.

After all, our rapidly-evolving society is in great need of disruptive solutions in areas such as smart cities, health (care), industry 4.0, mobility and energy: solutions that require hardware and software to be inextricably linked. It is exactly that multidimensional R&D environment that we are currently creating at imec – by combining our nanoelectronics expertise with iMinds' knowledge in research domains such as data science, cryptography and smart network technology.

At the same time, we realize that this knowledge cannot come from within imec alone. Hence, we want to continue extending our collaboration with local university research groups, and international universities. After all, our worldwide ecosystem is fundamental to confirm and expand our international leadership and to address the growing need for innovation capability in our industry.

Collaborating closely with Flemish (industry) partners obviously remains a key focus area as well, providing them with expert guidance throughout their disruptive innovation trajectories. As the world's pioneering research center for nanoelectronics and digital technology, we are in an excellent position to stimulate and realize high-tech innovation at a local, European and global level. As such, we can really lay a solid foundation for solutions that contribute to a better life for everyone.

On top, we will continue to support venture initiatives that put high-tech solutions on the market, through programs such as imec.istart and imec.xpand; programs that are currently being reinforced.

We commit wholeheartedly to all these points in 2017. They will enable us to continue to respond flexibly to the rapidly changing needs of our society and make the impossible possible – together with you; with imec, your strategic innovation partner par excellence, at your side!

Luc Van den hove,
General Director and CEO of imec