



The Northern Netherlands Innovation Monitor



• Stimulates • Facilitates • Connects



university of
 groningen

Strategic partners:



The Northern Netherlands Innovation Monitor

In 2015, the Northern Netherlands Alliance (SNN) and the University of Groningen (RUG) started an ambitious project together: to develop a regional Innovation Monitor for the Northern Netherlands.

The ambition was to build a system that draws upon the participation of a large amount of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as the adoption and support of key stakeholders from the entire 'Helix'. Both founders agreed upon a multi-annual collaboration, which would enable them to gain deep insight into the innovation characteristics and innovative behavior of SMEs in the region over a longer period of time.

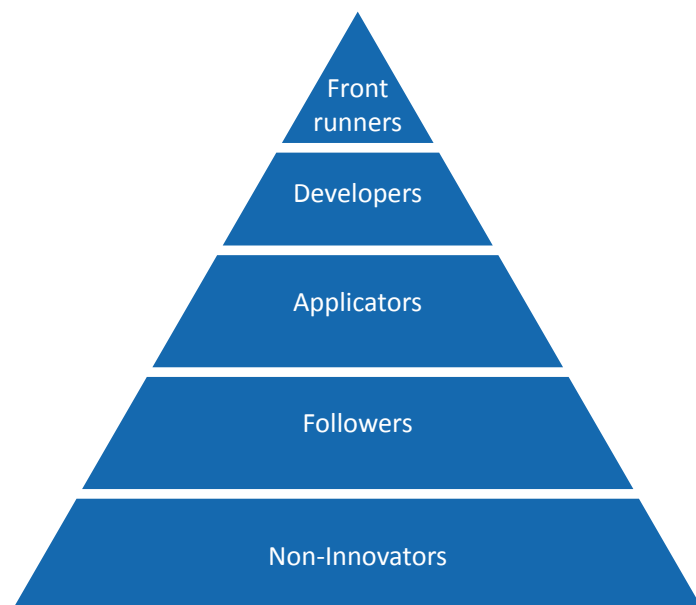
Rationale

As the responsible authority for the Regional Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) for the Northern-Netherlands, one of the reasons for the SNN to initiate the monitor was to gain insights in emerging activities, or discoveries, that have the potential to grow into new strengths of the regional economy.

The aim was to be able to be much more specific and up-to-date than most existing Statistics Bureaus could offer. In addition, the monitor enabled the SNN, being a managing authority for the regional Operational Programme European Regional Development Fund (OP ERDF), to build a result indicator that is powered by data from the survey.

In effect, the monitor became a composite of several detailed monitors. The monitor includes, for example, the concept of the Innovation Pyramid, which classifies SMEs

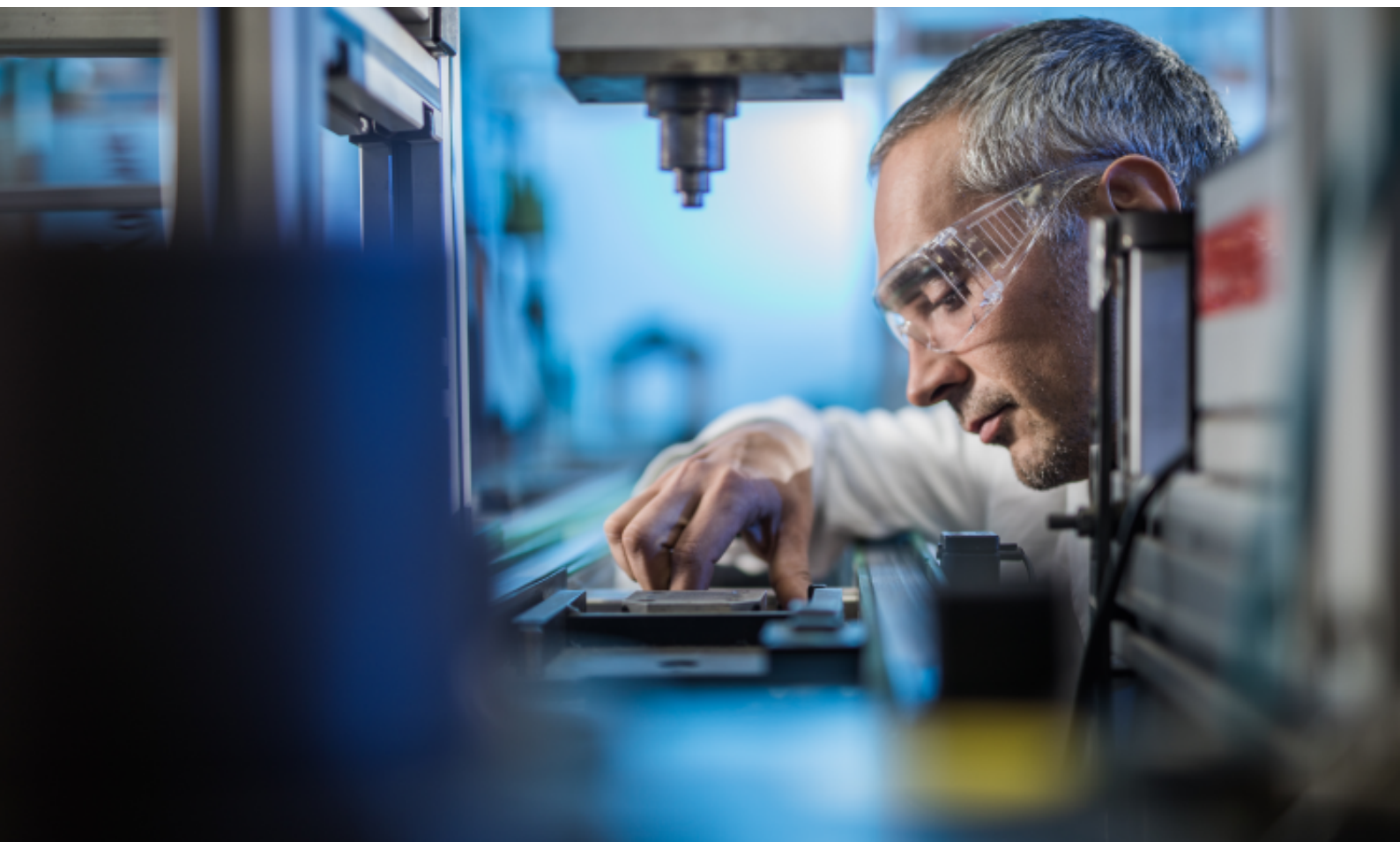
Innovation pyramid - innovation profiles



according to their degree of innovativeness. It ranks companies from non-innovators to followers, applicators, developers and front runners.

Survey

The engine of the Innovation Monitor is a large-scale survey that is carried out every year. This survey involves thousands of regional SMEs. The questionnaire is concise and understandable – that is crucial with regard to the response rate. The size of the survey is limited to fifty, mostly closed-ended questions. The majority of these questions is fixed. They are at the heart of the monitor and return each year. The remainder of the questions varies.



This is related to the specific themes addressed in a particular year. To keep the total number of questions fixed, a new question can only be added by replacing an existing one.

The Innovation Monitor and the underlying survey operate in a fully digital way. This makes it an affordable system. The main costs of the system are related to a postgraduate researcher, who performs most of the analyses and research. This PhD position was created specifically for the Innovation Monitor, and its costs are shared equally by the University and the SNN.

Results

It's been three years since the Innovation Monitor was launched. In the meantime, it has established itself as the source for innovation data and innovation research in the region. Four research reports are being published on a yearly basis: one overall report and three reports dealing with a specific theme. Various themes have been addressed so far, for example external orientation, creativity and intellectual property. From the point of view of Smart Specialisation, the theme of collaboration is very important: collaboration with other companies, with knowledge institutes and with society.

The monitor contains elements of reciprocity: in return for their participation, the companies receive a so-called innovation passport. This is a benchmark report in which a specific company's innovation performance is compared to several benchmarks, for instance to companies operating in similar sectors or similar technologies.

The tables and graphs on this page show some of the results of the Innovation Monitor survey of 2017.

Stakeholder participation

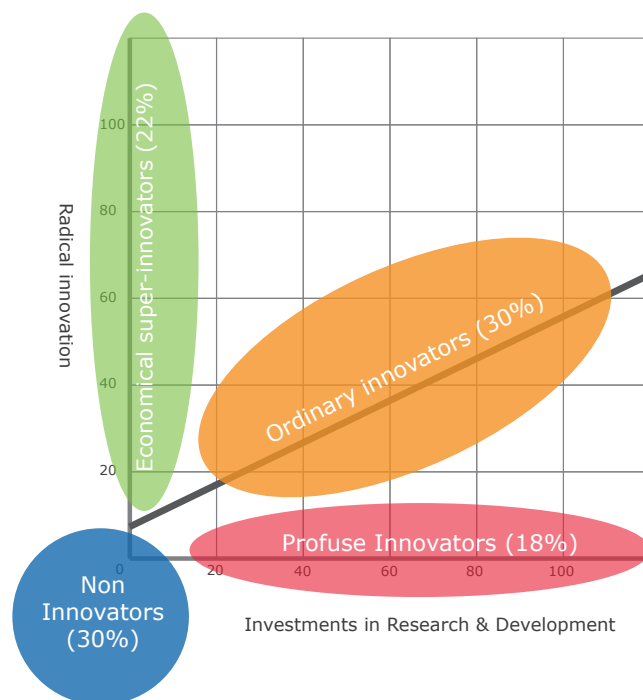
Participating companies have the possibility to become involved on a deeper level as well. They can join the Innovation Monitor expert panel and policy review group. This panel facilitates them to not only meet their peers, but maintain direct influence over the design and implementation of the Innovation Monitor and SNN's corresponding policy instruments too.

Although the project is a joint initiative of the SNN and the University of Groningen, the Innovation Monitor doesn't

limit itself to those two founding fathers. Several stakeholders are involved as strategic partners. These partners include the regional branch of the employer's federation, the regional SMEs association and the regional development agency. By connecting themselves to the monitor, these organizations have the possibility to include specific topics into the survey and to receive detailed and topic-specific reports that are beneficial for their work.

Not the least because of the partnerships it has created, the monitor has become broadly embedded in the Northern Netherlands Innovation eco-system.

Distribution of the different types of innovators



Percentage of respondents participating in new forms of collaboration per innovation profile

Profile	Innovation networks	Test facilities	Incubators & accelerators
Front runners	38%	26%	9%
Developers	20%	21%	13%
Applicators	50%	25%	0%
Followers	15%	13%	7%
Non-innovators	17%	17%	8%

Relevance of Key Enabling Technologies (KET's) in production processes of SMEs

	Considered non-relevant	Relevant, but not actively involved	Relevant & actively involved
Micro- and nanoelectronics	77%	13%	10%
Nanotechnology	85%	10%	5%
Industrial biotechnology	87%	8%	5%
Advanced materials	73%	17%	10%
Photonics	89%	6%	5%
Advanced production technology	55%	20%	25%