

Flanders at the forefront of digital manufacturing: CNH completes Accelerator Project with Flanders Make and five partner companies at the Zedelgem plant

Zedelgem, November 4, 2025

CNH and Flanders Make today mark a significant milestone in the transformation of its Harvesting Center of Excellence in Zedelgem, Belgium. The site, one of CNH's most strategic global manufacturing and R&D centers, is celebrating the successful completion of the three-year **'Accelerator' project (2022–2025)**. With this project Flanders Make, VLAIO – the Flemish Government's arm that supports innovation and entrepreneurship, and CNH, alongside other partners are positioning Flanders as one of Europe's most advanced regions for digital and sustainable manufacturing.

€150 million investment boosting digitalization

The core objective of the 'Accelerator Project' is to introduce **advanced digital manufacturing methods** and build a powerful and disruptive innovation partnership with Flemish public authorities and regional R&D players. A significant part of these investments targets advanced production technology beyond current state-of-the-art Industry 4.0 solutions. This will push the boundaries of automation, AI-supported quality control, and flexible manufacturing.

At the Zedelgem facility this resulted in a new flexible assembly line that benefits from an improved flow of material within the production process. A further benefit has been the introduction of Advanced Planning Systems and algorithms that ensure optimal material ordering, based on both historical data and process information.

CNH co-created the accelerator framework together with Flanders Make, an organization which supports production innovation within the Flemish manufacturing industry, and five other leading companies with manufacturing in Belgium (Picanol, Atlas Copco, Vandewiele, Sabca and Crop's). This ecosystem, which has been designed for both scalability and international expansion, is supporting Flanders' industrial renaissance. Early results already show how these innovative solutions enable CNH and the local industry to be both globally competitive and flexible.

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Driving Digital Transformation and CR11 Combine Harvester Production

The Accelerator project supported the redesign of the plant's logistics and operations, paving the way for the launch of CNH's new **NextGen Pilot Line**. This dedicated space has already seen six R&D projects deployed into manufacturing, enhancing both production efficiency and flexibility.

This investment was also key to the production of the New Holland CR11, the brand's next-generation flagship combine-harvester and winner of the only gold innovation medal at Agritechnica 2023. The CR11's launch significantly increased production complexity at Zedelgem, challenging the plant to manage a 30% rise in active parts while maintaining efficiency, quality, and operational agility — a feat made possible by embedding digital innovation and resilience into every layer of the production systems.

Public-private cooperation driving impact and innovation

To support this transformation, CNH received **€1.85 million in financial support from the Flemish government**, with €1 million allocated directly to R&D suppliers. This funding helped modernize operations, shorten innovation cycles, secure new high-tech employment, and create a more sustainable and responsive manufacturing foundation in Flanders.

"The long-term transformation of our **Zedelgem Centre of Excellence** is the result of a **strategic industrial vision** and effective **collaboration with our innovation partners**. This synergy is fundamental to driving performance, innovation, and sustainability," said Tom Verbaeten, CNH Chief Supply Chain Officer. "Thanks to our commitment and the support of partners such as **Flanders Make**, Zedelgem is now a **benchmark for digitalized, high-tech manufacturing** in Europe."

"With Accelerator, we didn't just innovate in the lab — we **redefined how industrial R&D translates into practice**," adds Grisja Lobbestael, CEO of Flanders Make. "It's about creating reusable, scalable technologies that strengthen Flanders' position in the global manufacturing chain. It really is a catalyst for sustainable industrial growth."

"The Accelerator exemplifies how **strategic public-private cooperation** can strengthen our region's technological leadership and industrial resilience," said Matthias Diependaele, Minister-President of Flanders. "By investing in digitalization and high-tech employment, Flanders is reinforcing this manufacturing base and is shaping the future of European industry. The success in Zedelgem proves that

when Flemish expertise and entrepreneurship come together, we can set new standards for global competitiveness.”

CNH Industrial (NYSE: CNH) is a world-class equipment, technology and services company. Driven by its purpose of Breaking New Ground, which centers on Innovation, Sustainability and Productivity, the Company provides the strategic direction, R&D capabilities, and investments that enable the success of its global and regional Brands. Globally, **Case IH** and **New Holland** supply 360° agriculture applications from machines to implements and the digital technologies that enhance them; and **CASE** and **New Holland Construction Equipment** deliver a full lineup of construction products that make the industry more productive. The Company’s regionally focused Brands include: **STEYR**, for agricultural tractors; **Raven**, a leader in digital agriculture, precision technology and the development of autonomous systems; **Hemisphere**, a leading designer and manufacturer of high-precision satellite based positioning, and heading technologies; **Flexi-Coil**, specializing in tillage and seeding systems; **Miller**, manufacturing application equipment; and **Eurocomach**, producing a wide range of mini and midi excavators for the construction sector, including electric solutions.

Across a history spanning over two centuries, CNH has always been a pioneer in its sectors and continues to passionately innovate and drive customer efficiency and success. As a truly global company, CNH’s 35,000+ employees form part of a diverse and inclusive workplace, focused on empowering customers to grow, and build, a better world.

For more information and the latest financial and sustainability reports visit: cnh.com

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Flanders Make is the strategic research centre for the manufacturing industry. From our locations throughout Flanders, we stimulate open innovation through high-quality research. In addition, companies can collaborate with us on tailor-made innovations. Finally, we also offer an extensive range of testing and validation infrastructure for testing and validating your products and production. The goal of Flanders Make is to contribute to the technological development of the vehicles, machines and factories of the future. In this way, Flanders Make creates added value for the manufacturing industry. Flanders Make helps companies to innovate better and faster. In addition, we are strongly committed to international innovation cooperation and participation in European research projects. Flanders Make is an initiative supported by the Flemish Government, the Limburg Fund and the ERDF.

Flanders Make currently has 1,000 researchers who work full-time as a unique community on a common industrial research agenda.

For more information visit: flandersmake.be

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