

# A history of competitive success

VAT has been designing and manufacturing vacuum valves since its founding in 1965 in Flawil, Switzerland. In the pre-digital era, vacuum valves were used primarily in scientific research. However, as the benefits of high-vacuum environments in precision manufacturing became evident, the need for valves expanded into new areas, such as thin-film industrial coatings and optics.

The 1980s saw the development of integrated circuits containing millions of transistors on a single silicon chip, a technology that allowed a quantum leap in information processing. Manufacturing such chips also required a near-pure vacuum environment to prevent microscopic levels of contamination. This opened an entirely new and fast-growing market for VAT's high-end vacuum valves.

As the use of semiconductors spread into other industries, VAT broadened its product range to serve markets with similar high-vacuum production processes, such as flat-panel displays and solar panels. The company expanded beyond Europe, into the US and Asia, and added to its product portfolio with small acquisitions in 2008 and 2012.

In 2012, VAT made the key decision to build a new manufacturing facility in Penang, Malaysia, to better serve its rapidly growing Asia market. The facility was completed in 2018 and annual output in 2021 amounted to about CHF 170 million. In early 2022, VAT announced a CHF 70 million expansion of its Malaysia facilities to support its long-term strategy for profitable growth.

VAT has steadily increased its technology and market leadership over the years and currently holds an overall market share more than seven times larger than its closest competitor.

In early 2016, VAT Group was taken public on the SIX Swiss Exchange. In 2017, the company paid its first dividend as a public company of CHF 4.00 per share. The dividend remained steady until the 2020 fiscal year, when it was increased to CHF 4.50 per share. The Board of Directors has proposed a dividend for 2021 of CHF 5.50 per share.

## Milestones

