# SBE Sustainability Report 2025

## VSME-standard

SBE experts at play

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# Foreword

As we present our second SBE Sustainability Report, we reflect **on a year marked by progress**. We recognize that sustainability is not a destination but an ongoing journey. Over the past year, we have continued to refine our approach, strengthen our governance and taken important steps to improve transparency.

A highlight of this year’s report is the **expansion of our carbon footprint scope 3 emissions** beyond business travel. This means that our footprint now also accounts for the impact of the projects we design. By including emissions across our value chain (both upstream and downstream) we are building a more accurate picture of our environmental footprint.

We have also included testimonials from business partners in our report. Their perspectives provide meaningful insight into **how our collaborations are driving positive change across our value chain**. Collaboration remains central to our strategy. We believe that sustainable transformation can only be achieved through strong partnerships, shared accountability and open dialogue.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to continuous improvement, innovation and transparency. **This report** reflects our dedication to these principles and **serves as both a record of progress and a roadmap for the future**.

We thank all our employees, business partners and stakeholders for their continued trust and collaboration on this journey.

Koen & Jan Thomas
co-CEO’s

# 01 Introduction

Sustainability is more than ever at the heart of how we shape our living environment. Climate change, biodiversity loss, increasing spatial pressure and resource scarcity call for thoughtful decisions, ones that go beyond purely technical solutions. At SBE, we take our responsibility seriously: not only to respond to these challenges, but to actively contribute to a future-proof society.

We are convinced that engineers today are more than problem-solvers. They are bridge-builders between disciplines, generations and interests. SBE believes in co-creation, transparency and continuous learning to deliver solutions that are technically robust, environmentally responsible and socially inclusive.

We see the report as an opportunity to transparently communicate with all our stakeholders about what drives us: our corporate strategy, our key activities over the past year and the developments that have shaped our work.

Most importantly, it reflects our deep and growing commitment to sustainability. ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) has become a core element of how we operate and make decisions. By publishing this report, we want to show how these principles are not only embedded in our projects, but in our mindset, culture and future ambitions.

On behalf of the entire SBE team, we thank everyone who continues to build sustainable progress with us.

*This report is prepared in accordance with the **VSME standard** option B (basic module and comprehensive module). The report is prepared on an individual basis for all SBE offices.*

Check our website for more information about our sustainable initiatives →

# 02 SBE at a glance

This paragraph relates to VSME C1.

SBE is a multidisciplinary engineering consultancy company specialized in the design of complex infrastructure projects.

Our core services include **structural and civil engineering for bridges, tunnels, roads, waterways, ports and flood protection systems**, as well as **public space design and electromechanical engineering**. We support public and private B2B clients throughout all project phases, from feasibility studies and preliminary design to detailed engineering and site supervision. With a strong focus on technical excellence, sustainability and innovation, SBE operates mainly in Belgium, the Netherlands and France, with a growing presence in other European markets.

Over the past years, SBE has shown consistent growth, reflected in a steadily increasing turnover and project portfolio.

← Pont Capitte, La Louviere [BE]

## 2.1. Milestones that matter

**1987** Establishment SBE by first generation

**2000** Relocation office Slachthuisstraat

**2008** Koen Thomas at SBE

**2015** Jan Thomas at SBE

**2017**
- Opening renovated office Sint-Niklaas
- Start teambuilders
- Embarking on sustainable entrepreneurship aligned with the SDGs: first VCDO participation

**2018** New office Namur

**2019** SBE-FIT was born

**2020**
- New office Rotterdam
- New office Valencia

**2021** First Great Place To Work certification

**2022**
- 200 Experts at Play
- Launch SPIRIT Tool

**2023**
- New office Mechelen
- New office Oostkamp
- Appointment Innovation Manager Sustainability

**2024** Opening SBE Café

**2025**
- First SBE Get Inspired Sustainability
- 300 Experts at Play (both temporary & permanent)
- First Sustainability Report
- SBE becomes SDG Ambassador

## 2.2. Key figures 2025

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Turnover<br>**€40.867k**<br>€35.634 k in 2024 | SBE GHG Intensity scope 1 + 2 + 3*<br>**13,2**<br>tons $CO_2$ per million euro of revenue<br>13,3 in 2024 | Total permanent employees<br>**285**<br>248 in 2024<br>New employees<br>**46**<br>35 in 2024 |
| International character workforce<br>**geographic roots in 28 countries**<br>19 in 2024 | Women in the enterprise<br>**28%**<br>27% in 2024 | $CO_2$ per FTE*<br>**1,96 tons of $CO_2$**<br>1,92 tons in 2024 |

*For 2025 we considered a different scope, which makes the referral to 2024 less relevant (see paragraph "5.1 Energy and greenhouse gas emissions")

SBE Student Challenge

Bepasin Lenteschoonmaak in March

Sport Vlaanderen Award 24-25

Voka Charter for Sustainable Entrepreneurship (VCDO)

Binnendijle Mechelen (BE)

# 2.3. Investment structure

SBE is an independent Belgian engineering firm with a long-term vision, supported by a stable shareholder structure.

Since 2021, Vectis Private Equity has joined as a minority shareholder. Vectis is a Flemish investment company focused on the sustainable growth of mid-sized enterprises and shares SBE's values regarding responsible entrepreneurship, future-oriented investment and local anchoring.

This partnership strengthens SBE's capital base and strategic capacity, while fully preserving the company's operational autonomy and identity.

Vlas bridge, Wielsbeke (BE)

# 03 Strategy and business model

## 3.1. Value chain

This paragraph relates to VSME C1.

### UNDERSTANDING SBE'S VALUE CHAIN AND STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

SBE operates within a broad value chain that spans from design to project execution, involving a diverse set of stakeholders with varying degrees of influence and impact. Internally, our multidisciplinary team, ranging from (BIM) engineers and site supervisors to supporting services such as HR, IT and quality management, collaborate closely to deliver high-quality infrastructure designs across our five core activity areas.

Upstream, we work with a limited number of partners (e.g. fleet), consultants and **subcontractors**, as well as suppliers and service providers like IT- and office supplies. The influence in this **upstream** segment is relatively small compared to other parts of the value chain.

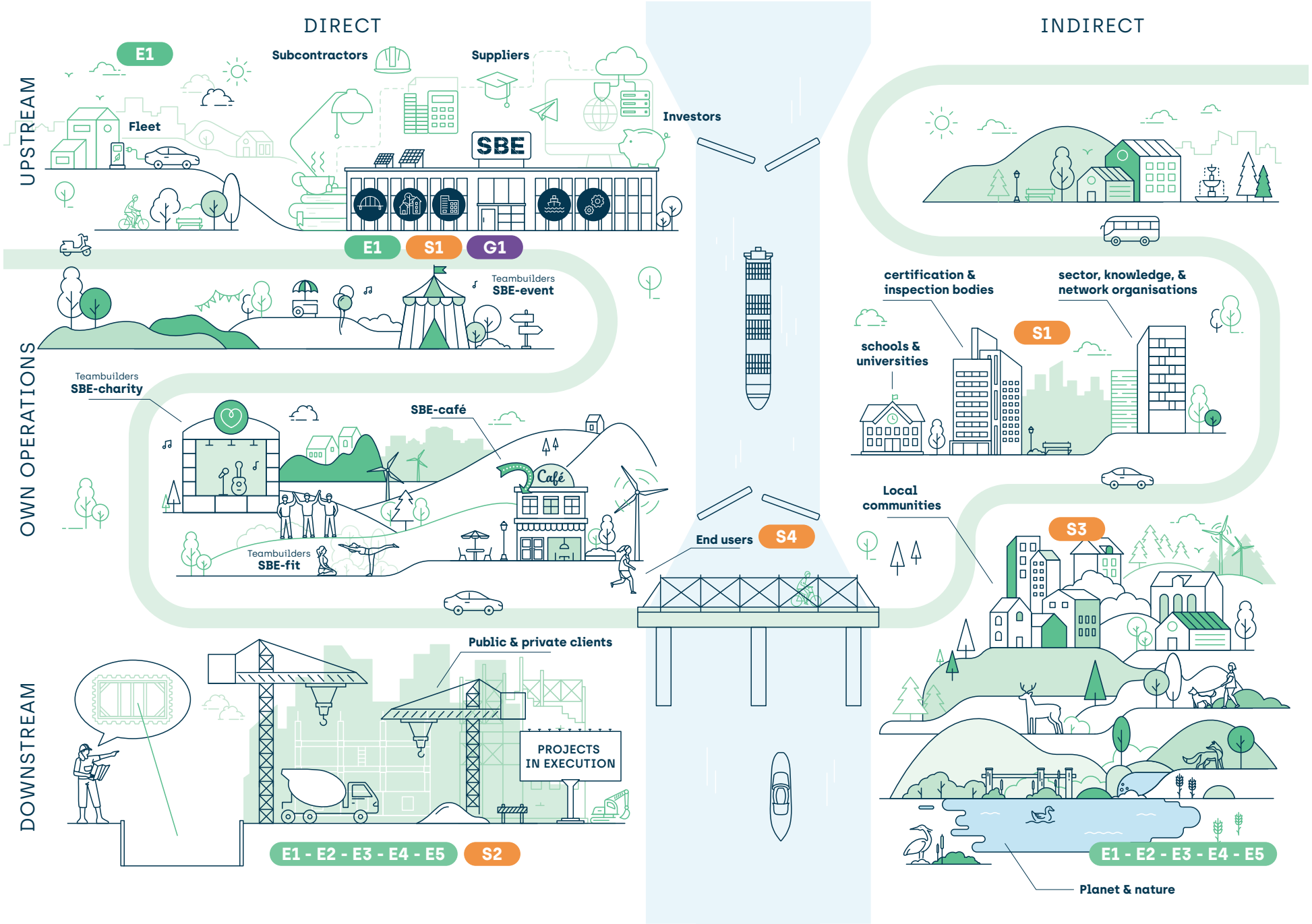
Within our **own operations**, our greatest impact lies in the social sphere, where we directly engage with our **own workers, management board and investors**.

We foster a strong internal culture through initiatives like SBE-FIT, teambuilding events and the SBE Café, which support well-being, inclusion and ethical governance.

Downstream, our collaboration with **public and private clients** shapes the environmental impact of the infrastructure projects we help realize. Through thoughtful design choices, we contribute to creating more sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive environments.

Beyond these direct relationships, our impact extends indirectly to a broader ecosystem of stakeholders including **end-users, local communities, schools & universities, sector peers, knowledge & network organizations and certification & inspection bodies**. While these actors are influenced in a more secondary way, they are essential partners in strengthening the societal and environmental value of our projects.

The waterway in the accompanying figure symbolizes the boundary between stakeholders we influence directly and those affected more indirectly, illustrating the flow and reach of our ESG impact throughout the value chain.


DIRECT
INDIRECT
UPSTREAM
OWN OPERATIONS
DOWNSTREAM
E1
Subcontractors
Suppliers
Fleet
SBE
Investors
E1
S1
G1
Teambuilders
SBE-event
Teambuilders
SBE-charity
SBE-café
Café
Teambuilders
SBE-fit
End users
S4
Public & private clients
PROJECTS
IN EXECUTION
E1 - E2 - E3 - E4 - E5
S2
certification &
inspection bodies
sector, knowledge, &
network organisations
S1
schools &
universities
Local
communities
S3
E1 - E2 - E3 - E4 - E5
Planet & nature

# 3.2. Our strategy towards 2030

This paragraph relates to VSME C1.

SBE's corporate strategy is built around a clear ambition: to remain a leading multidisciplinary engineering and design firm for infrastructure, while **growing sustainably and responsibly**. Our long-term vision focuses on creating **value for clients, empowering our people** and delivering solutions that contribute to a more **resilient and sustainable world**.

To realize this ambition, we are guided by the principles of **client centricity, innovation, sustainability and collaboration**. These values shape both our internal development and our external project delivery. We strive to offer tailored, forward-thinking solutions through strong partnerships, the application of emerging technologies and an integrated sustainability approach across all projects.

This ambition is further articulated in the **Corporate Strategy Plan 2025 (CSP25)**, which outlines a future scenario in which **sustainability and societal impact** are structurally embedded in SBE's core activity: the design and engineering of infrastructure. CSP25 describes a strategic transformation of SBE from a traditional engineering office into a **knowledge-driven, multidisciplinary partner for sustainable, climate-resilient infrastructure**.

The strategy focuses not only on technical excellence, but also on generating added value for people, society and the environment. From the CSP25, we can distill the following **key domains** that are also relevant and connected to sustainability:

### + Impact

Through its projects, SBE actively contributes to major societal challenges such as climate adaptation, biodiversity, water safety and sustainable mobility. Projects are expected to meet not only technical standards but also respond to future environmental and societal needs.

### + Client relations

By positioning itself as a strategic partner, SBE builds long-term relationships with clients who value integrated, future-oriented solutions, ranging from public authorities to utilities and private developers.

### + Operational excellence and innovation

Digitalisation, modelling and data analysis are key enablers to translate sustainability into practice. Sustainability is not a stand-alone discipline, but fully integrated into the company's processes and services.

In parallel, SBE's growth strategy focuses on **deepening its expertise in core sectors**, particularly Mobility and Infrastructure, while **exploring new opportunities** in Industry and Energy. We aim to consolidate our presence in current markets and assess the potential of new regions, with **agility and adaptability** as core strengths.

Internally, this strategy is supported by a strong organizational framework that prioritises **employee well-being, talent development, digital transformation** and **cross-functional collaboration**. Our long-term vision is translated into concrete progress through **annual action plans**, ensuring strategic consistency across daily operations.

In summary: CSP25 is more than a business strategy, it is a deliberate and transformative shift toward creating **long term value through sustainable design and engineering**. It positions SBE as a partner in shaping a liveable future, where infrastructure is designed not only to function, but to contribute meaningfully to the world around us.

Viewpoint Jambon at Vresse-sur-Semois (BE) →

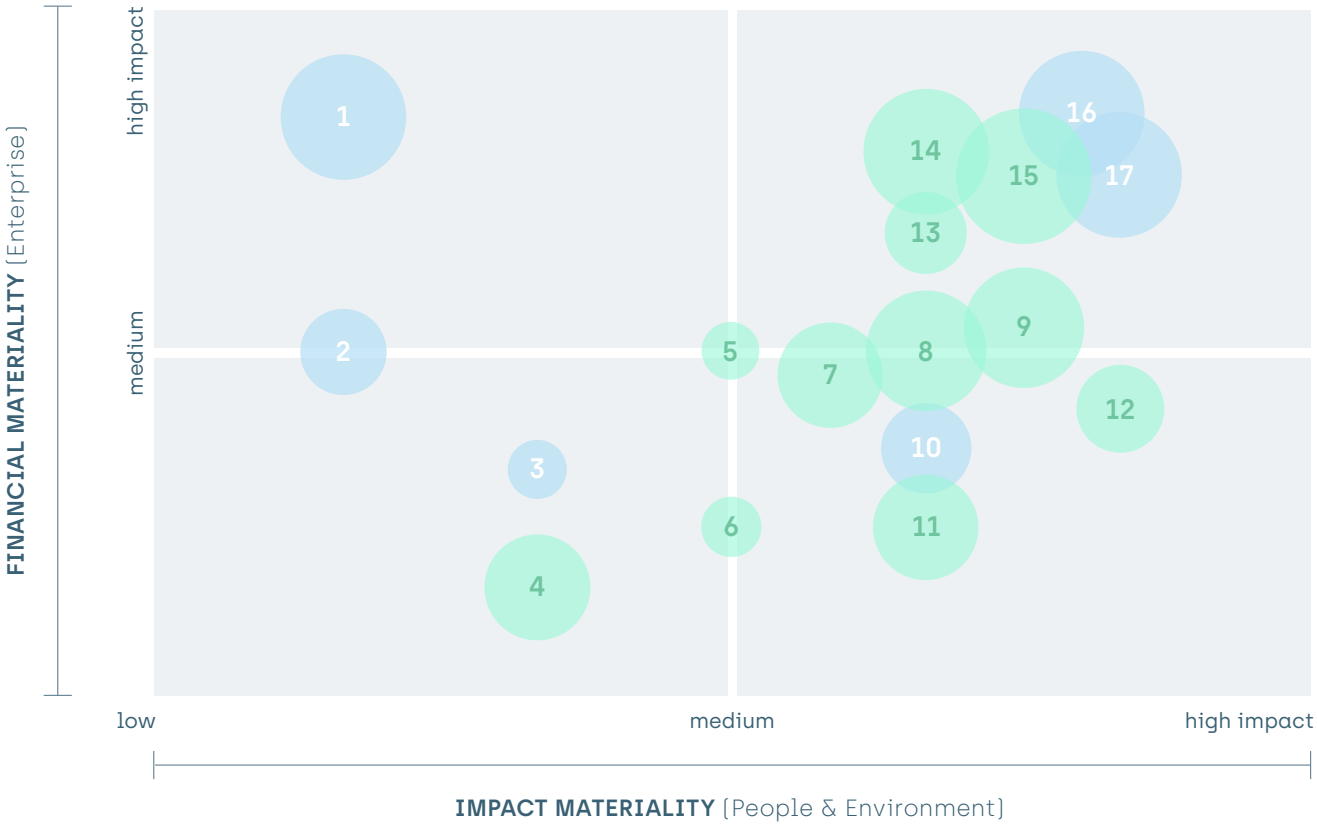
# 3.3. Double Materiality Analysis

This paragraph relates to VSME B2-C2.

SBE conducted a **double materiality assessment** to identify the sustainability topics that are most relevant to both our business and our stakeholders. This assessment evaluates materiality from two perspectives: the **impact of SBE's activities on society and the environment (impact materiality)** and the **potential financial implications of sustainability-related risks and opportunities for SBE (financial materiality)**.

The DMA chart visualises the relative importance of each ESG topic. The position of each topic reflects its materiality score across both dimensions: the horizontal axis represents **impact materiality** (impact on people and the environment), while the vertical axis represents **financial materiality** (impact on SBE as an enterprise). Topics positioned in the upper-right quadrant are considered most material. In addition, each topic is assessed through an RO lens (Risk & Opportunity). The colour of each circle indicates whether the topic is primarily perceived as a strategic opportunity (light green colour) or a potential risk (light blue colour), while the size of the circle reflects the relative strength of this RO assessment.

For example: For SBE, topics such as Privacy & Cybersecurity, War for Talent and Health, Safety & Well-being are identified as key risks requiring active management (large blue circle). At the same time, themes such as Climate Adaptation, Water and Resource Use & Circular Economy represent significant strategic opportunities, allowing SBE to further strengthen its expertise and expand its services in future-oriented infrastructure markets (large green circle).




STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

- 7 **E1** (Renewable) Energy & electrification
- 8 **E1** Climate mitigation & $CO_2$ emissions
- 9 **E1** Climate adaptation
- 6 **E2** Pollution
- 15 **E3** Water
- 11 **E4** Biodiversity
- 14 **E5** Resource use & circular economy
- 13 **S1** Own workers - knowledge & innovation
- 4 **S2** Workers in the value chain
- 12 **S4** Consumers & end-users
- 5 **G1** Business conduct - corporate culture

POTENTIAL RISK

Own workers

- 1 **S1** War-for-talent
- 3 **S1** Inclusion & diversity
- 17 **S1** Health, safety & well-being

Business conduct

- 2 **G1** Due diligence
- 16 **G1** Privacy & cybersecurity
- 10 **S3** Affected communities

As a service-based engineering consultancy focused on infrastructure design, many ESRS topics are not material at the level of SBE 's own operations. Nonetheless, the fact that certain ESRS topics are not material at the level of our own operations does not diminish their importance to SBE. We acknowledge their wider significance and strive to address them proactively through our role as a design partner, where we can influence outcomes with high societal and environmental value. This distinction is also indicated in the table below:

## Environment (E)

| ESRS TOPIC | IRO* | SCOPE* | IMPACT* | MATERIAL TOPIC? | NARRATIVE DISCLOSURE | RELATED SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES | RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Climate Mitigation & $CO_2$ emissions (E1) | R+O | Up/Own/ Down | A-/P+ | Yes | SBE's main climate impact stems from fleet emissions, office energy use and business travel, while at project level we mitigate climate impact through reuse, low-impact materials and LCA/LCC assessments. | "SPIRIT-tool" [§4.3]<br>"LCA/LCC calculations" [§4.4]<br>"Building catalogue for sustainable infrastructure" [§4.5]<br>"Carbon footprint 2025" [§5.1] | Up: Fleet, suppliers, ...<br>Own: SBE (fleet, office, ...)<br>Down: Public & private clients, planet & nature |
| Climate adaptation (E1) | O | Down | P+ | No | Climate change drives demand for more resilient infrastructure. Through our project designs, SBE contributes to future-proofing cities via flood protection, heat adaptation and nature-based solutions. | "Climate-resilient infrastructure projects" [§4.2]<br>"SPIRIT-tool" [§4.3]<br>"Carbon footprint 2025" [§5.1] | Down: Public & private clients, planet & nature |
| Renewable Energy & electrification (E1) | O | Up/Own/ Down | P+ | Yes | Through project work in renewable infrastructure and advice on electrification strategies, SBE supports the transition to cleaner energy systems. | "Carbon footprint 2025" [§5.1] | Up: Fleet, suppliers, ...<br>Own: SBE (fleet, office,...)<br>Down: Public & private clients, planet & nature |
| Pollution (E2) | O | Down | P+ | No | SBE has no significant direct pollution impact, but contributes indirectly through design choices that promote cleaner air, water and soil in infrastructure projects. | "Climate-resilient infrastructure projects" [§4.2]<br>"SPIRIT-tool" [§4.3] | Down: Public & private clients, planet & nature |
| Water and Marine Resources (E3) | O | Down | P+ | No | SBE has minimal direct water impact but supports sustainable water management in projects through rainwater harvesting, infiltration, buffering, flood prevention and responsible dewatering. | "Climate-resilient infrastructure projects" [§4.2]<br>"SPIRIT-tool" [§4.3] | Down: Public & private clients, planet & nature |
| Biodiversity and Ecosystems (E4) | O | Down | P+ | No | SBE has minimal direct impact on biodiversity but contributes at project level through green infrastructure, ecological assessments and the integration of native plant species to support local ecosystems. | "Climate-resilient infrastructure projects" [§4.2]<br>"SPIRIT-tool" [§4.3] | Down: Public & private clients, planet & nature |
| Resource Use and Circular Economy (E5) | O | Down | P+ | No | SBE has minimal direct resource use but promotes circularity in projects through reuse of materials, low-impact design and strategies that support sustainable resource management. | "Climate-resilient infrastructure projects" [§4.2]<br>"SPIRIT-tool" [§4.3]<br>"Building catalogue for sustainable infrastructure" [§4.5] | Down: Public & private clients, planet & nature |

*Key issues such as climate change, pollution, water management, biodiversity and the circular economy have a significant impact on global infrastructure. These challenges demand structural adaptations, driving investments from both public authorities and private clients into innovative infrastructure projects. This creates opportunities for SBE to contribute positively by reducing the carbon footprint of downstream projects and delivering climate-resilient, future-proof urban environments.
The growing relevance of circular design, renovation projects and water quality also opens up emerging or evolving markets in which SBE is well positioned to play a meaningful role. As SBE has already been actively investing in these themes through its expertise, project portfolio and strategic focus, we consider this cluster a significant strategic opportunity, reflected by its strong opportunity score in the DMA. This proactive positioning strengthens our competitive advantage and enables us to respond effectively to evolving market demands.

R: risk | O: opportunity | A: actual | P: potential | +: positive | -: negative

## Social (S)

| ESRS TOPIC | IRO* | SCOPE* | IMPACT* | MATERIAL TOPIC? | NARRATIVE DISCLOSURE | RELATED SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES | RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Own workers – Health, Safety & Well-being (S1) | R | Own | A+/- | Yes | Health, safety and well-being are key priorities for SBE as a consultancy firm. Mental health issues such as burnout have a rising societal impact. A proactive focus on work-life balance helps reduce long-term absenteeism. | "General characteristics" (§5.2.1) "Well-being" (§5.2.2) "Safe Work, Strong Foundations" (§5.2.3) "Great work deserves great reward" (§5.2.4) | Own: own workers |
| Own workers – War-for-talent (S1) | R | Own | A+ | Yes | The war for talent poses a major risk for the engineering sector. To continue delivering high-quality work, SBE must attract skilled professionals. We address this through competitive salaries, personal development and a strong employer branding. | "Well-being" (§5.2.2) "Safe Work, Strong Foundations" (§5.2.3) "Great work deserves great reward" (§5.2.4) "Building Experts at Play" (§5.2.5) | Own: own workers, schools & universities, |
| Own workers – Inclusion & diversity (S1) | O | Own | A+ | Yes | SBE has evolved into a diverse and inclusive workplace. We see this as a key opportunity, as diversity fosters richer perspectives and better, more resilient design solutions. | "General characteristics" (§5.2.1) "Well-being" (§5.2.2) | Own: own workers |
| Own workers – Knowledge innovation (S1) | O/(R) | Own | A+ | Yes | Knowledge and innovation are essential to deliver high-quality designs and maintain an attractive workplace. Our SBE Academy is a cornerstone in building internal expertise, though continuous investment remains vital. | "Building Experts at Play" (§5.2.5) "Innovation" (§4.9) | Own: own workers, schools & universities, sector/ knowledge & network organisations |
| Workers in the Value Chain (S2) | O | Down | P+ | No | While SBE has limited direct influence over labor conditions in its value chain, we are committed to promoting responsible business practices. We assessed our procurement activities for potential human rights risks and introduced a Human Rights Policy and Supplier Code of Conduct to communicate our expectations regarding human rights, labor standards and ethical conduct. We also encourage improved working conditions through design specifications and prefabrication, which enhance safety and reduce physical workload on-site. | "SPIRIT-tool" (§4.3) "Responsible Business Conduct" (§5.3) | Down: Public & private clients |
| Affected Communities (S3) | O | Down | P+ | No | SBE's operations have limited direct community impact, but at project level we contribute positively through inclusive design that promotes safety, accessibility and minimal disruption to local areas. | "Climate-resilient infrastructure projects" (§4.2) "SPIRIT-tool" (§4.3) "Participation in projects" (§4.8) | Down: Local communities |
| Consumers and End-users (S4) | O | Down | P+ | No | SBE has no direct impact on consumers but influences end-user experience through infrastructure designs that prioritize safety, accessibility and usability. | "SPIRIT-tool" (§4.3) "Participation in projects" (§4.8) | Down: End users |

* As a knowledge-driven engineering firm, SBE's success is fundamentally built on the expertise, engagement and well-being of its employees. Attracting, developing and retaining talent is therefore critical to our long-term growth and competitiveness. In an increasingly competitive labour market, talent attraction and retention remain key challenges within the engineering and infrastructure sector. SBE has so far been successful in creating a working environment that is highly valued by employees, reflected in strong engagement and successful recruitment efforts. However, we recognise that this position cannot be taken for granted. Shifts in labour market dynamics, evolving employee expectations and increasing competition for specialised profiles could quickly affect our ability to attract and retain talent. For this reason, we consider talent-related topics, including employee well-being, health & safety and inclusion, as significant risks requiring continuous attention and proactive management. From a broader societal perspective, SBE's infrastructure projects generally aim to improve quality of life for end users by delivering safer, more accessible and future-proof infrastructure. At the same time, affected communities are becoming increasingly important stakeholders throughout project development and execution. Public support and stakeholder acceptance often play a decisive role in enabling project progress, securing permits and ensuring successful implementation. Engaging proactively with these communities is therefore essential to creating long-term value and reducing project-related risks.

R: risk | O: opportunity | A: actual | P: potential | +: positive | -: negative

## Governance (G)

| ESRS TOPIC | IRO* | SCOPE* | IMPACT* | MATERIAL TOPIC? | NARRATIVE DISCLOSURE | RELATED SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES | RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Business Conduct – Corporate culture **(G1)** | O | Own | A+ | Yes | SBE's family-driven culture and flat structure create a supportive and collaborative work environment that distinguishes us from competitors and helps attract new talent. | "Well-being" (§5.2.2) | Own: Own workers, investors |
| Business Conduct – Due diligence **(G1)** | R | Own | P- | Yes | SBE upholds ethical business conduct through a strong Code of Conduct and due diligence processes that promote integrity, fairness and accountability across all levels of our organization and value chain. To reinforce this, we provide confidential support channels and a formal whistleblowing system (Whistle Willow) that enables internal and external stakeholders to safely report concerns without fear of retaliation. | "Responsible Business Conduct" (§5.3)<br>"Human rights" (§5.3)<br>"Integrity line: Whistle Willow" (§5.3) | Own: Own workers, investors |
| Business Conduct – Privacy & cybersecurity **(G1)** | R | Own | P- | Yes | At SBE, privacy and cybersecurity are critical due to the sensitive nature of our work. Despite strong IT protections, we recognize that every employee can be a potential entry point, which is why we organize phishing trainings and awareness events, acknowledging cybersecurity as one of our highest risk areas. | "The Importance of Privacy and Cybersecurity at SBE" (§5.3) | Own: Own workers, investors |

*SBE considers its organisational structure, company culture and governance framework to be important strengths. They form the foundation for trust, integrity and responsible decision-making.

At the same time, cybersecurity, data privacy and business conduct remain critical risk areas. Even a single incident could significantly damage operations, client trust and SBE's reputation. Strong governance and continuous vigilance therefore remain essential.

R: risk | O: opportunity | A: actual | P: potential | +: positive | -: negative

# 3.4. Sustainability certifications and achievements

This paragraph relates to VSME B1.

At SBE, sustainability is embedded in both our operations and project work. Therefore, our commitment to quality, environmental responsibility and safety is externally audited and certified. We actively pursue recognized standards to reduce our environmental impact and promote responsible business practices. While the certificate is not the ultimate goal but a means to it, these recognitions demonstrate our commitment to sustainable development and continuous improvement across all levels of our organization.

### $CO_2$-PERFORMANCE LADDER – LEVEL 3

Since 2022, SBE has been certified at Level 3 of the $CO_2$ Performance Ladder (version 3.1), a widely recognized framework that helps organizations structurally monitor and **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**. Through this certification, we actively manage emissions related to our offices, mobility and project activities. In 2026, we aim to take further steps towards a higher certification level in line with the newly released Handbook 4.0. This will expand the focus beyond direct emissions to include value chain emissions, with increased attention to scope 3 emissions. More information on the expansions of scope 3 emissions can be found under "4.1. Emissions in projects" on page 22 and "5.1. Energy & greenhouse gas emissions" on page 32.

### ISO 14001 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

SBE is ISO 14001:2015 certified in Rotterdam, Sint-Niklaas and Namur, reflecting our commitment to structured environmental management and continuous improvement. We focus on **reducing environmental impact across our operations**, including sustainable project design, lower-emission commuting and office energy efficiency. Our actions are guided by clear objectives, compliance obligations and a lifecycle approach.

## ISO 9001 QUALITY MANAGEMENT

We believe that delivering quality and performance in civil and electromechanical engineering goes hand in hand with reliable service. Strong, confidential relationships with clients, suppliers and subcontractors are essential to this approach.

We continuously invest in the technical development of our employees, challenging our operations to meet the highest standards every day. Our internal quality system (supported by in-house audits, annual external reviews and practical feedback) ensures we stay sharp and deliver excellence.

## SAFETY CULTURE LADDER

Although SBE operates as an engineering consultancy firm, where day-to-day activities generally involve lower operational risks, we place great importance on workplace safety and actively **foster a strong safety culture** throughout our organisation with attention to both physical and psychological safety for employees, as well as safety in design through a "Safety by Design" approach.

As part of this commitment, SBE achieved an indicative Level 3 statement on the SCL Light standard in 2024. The Safety Culture Ladder (SCL) is an internationally recognised framework that evaluates how organisations embed safety awareness, behaviour and continuous improvement throughout their operations and decision-making processes.

More information on SBE's approach to safety can be found in section 5.2.3 "Safe Work, Strong Foundations".

## VOKA CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP (VCDO)

We annually participate in the VCDO-program, aligning our sustainability actions with the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. Our focus SDGs include decent work (SDG 8), innovation & infrastructure (SDG 9), responsible consumption (SDG 12) and partnerships (SDG 17). Certified action plans are audited during an evaluation audit and reviewed by an external committee each year.

## SDG AMBASSADOR

In addition to its annual participation in the VCDO programme, SBE also advances the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at an international level through a dedicated trajectory organised by **UNITAR**, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and its local hub, **CIFAL Flanders**.

This international programme recognises companies that systematically embed sustainability into their strategy, operations and value chain through a three-level certification framework.

Achieving the SDG Ambassador recognition required SBE to complete an extensive assessment process and demonstrate that sustainability is structurally embedded throughout the organisation. The trajectory focuses strongly on **due diligence, human rights, stakeholder engagement and transparent sustainability governance**.

The SDG Ambassador label represents the culmination of many years of sustainability efforts. It recognises organisations that take on a leading role in advancing the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, both within their own operations and across their wider value chain, while contributing to positive change at local and international level.

As part of this trajectory, SBE developed its first sustainability report on 2024, implemented a company-wide **Code of Conduct** and organised internal **"Dilemma Thursdays"** to stimulate dialogue and awareness around ethical and sustainability-related challenges. We also established a **Human Rights Due Diligence strategy**, thoroughly reviewing our procurement policy and supply chain to better identify and manage potential risks linked to human rights and international operations.

In addition, a sustainability-focused business development plan outlining how sustainability ambitions will further evolve within future projects and services was prepared. This includes a science-based action plan aimed at contributing to biodiversity restoration and climate neutrality.

Throughout the process, stakeholder involvement played a central role. SBE actively seeks external perspectives to challenge and strengthen its sustainability approach, while also sharing knowledge and expertise as broadly as possible. This open dialogue with stakeholders is considered essential, not only within the organisation itself, but also in the company's projects and collaborations.

One of the highlights of this trajectory was our contribution to the structural calculations of the **Trideal House project**, which develops self-sufficient tiny houses in Ethiopia to help lift vulnerable communities out of poverty. The initiative contributes to no fewer than 12 of the 17 SDGs. More about this in section "5.2.6. Building a responsible future" on page 57.

## Noah Feron

Advisor sustainable entrepreneurship: Voka, Chamber of Commerce Antwerp-Waasland

"Since 2017, SBE has participated in the Voka Charter for Sustainable Entrepreneurship, a programme in which companies commit to carrying out a wide range of sustainability initiatives each year.

What makes this journey particularly successful for SBE is its deliberate choice to look beyond quick wins and embrace sustainability as a long-term strategic growth path. At the same time, significant efforts are made to actively inform and engage all employees in the company's sustainability ambitions.

SBE demonstrates how sustainable design can generate both ecological benefits and cost savings for clients. The company achieves this by developing in-house tools and by taking a leading role within the sector to further refine existing methodologies through collaboration and dialogue.

**"What makes this journey particularly successful for SBE is its deliberate choice to look beyond quick wins and embrace sustainability as a long-term strategic growth path."**

In October 2025, SBE was awarded the title of SDG Ambassador, the highest recognition that Voka can grant on behalf of the United Nations.

To achieve this distinction, SBE implemented concrete and well-substantiated actions, including an extensive supply chain risk analysis, a scientifically validated climate and biodiversity strategy, a human rights policy and transparent reporting practices. These efforts are translated into measurable impact within the organisation itself, across the sector and throughout the value chain."

# 04 Sustainability in projects

## 4.1. Emissions in projects

This paragraph relates to VSME B2-C2.

At SBE, we are increasingly aware that the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions related to our activities originates from the projects we design. While these emissions are not directly generated by our own operations, they are strongly influenced by our design choices, material selection and the requirements we define together with clients and contractors. As such, we consider it our responsibility to actively steer projects towards lower-carbon solutions by embedding sustainability principles into design, encouraging the adoption of innovative practices and integrating clear environmental criteria into tender and execution specifications.

← Redevelopment of the Leie and lock complex at Harelbeke (BE)

However, a structured and widely accepted framework to quantify project-related emissions in the Belgian context remains lacking. To address this gap, SBE co-developed the **$CO_2$-light tool for infrastructure** in 2025 in collaboration with the Belgian Road Research Centre (BRRC/OCW). This spreadsheet-based tool is not intended to replace a full LCA, but rather to provide a fast, transparent and accessible estimate of project-related $CO_2$ emissions. By using independently compiled and representative default values, it enables a first-order assessment of carbon impact, particularly in early design stages or in situations where detailed input data is not yet available. This pragmatic approach supports informed decision-making and increases awareness of climate impact across project teams.

SBE applies the $CO_2$-light tool internally to estimate emissions within the framework of the $CO_2$-Performance Ladder, supporting both monitoring and continuous improvement. In addition, **the tool is made publicly available**, allowing other stakeholders to adopt a consistent and transparent approach. By openly sharing this methodology, SBE contributes to a broader sector-wide effort to better quantify and reduce the climate impact of infrastructure projects.

| STRATEGY | MEASURE | REDUCTION IN 2030 (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Structural engineering | Design more efficiently | 5,00 |
| | Bio-based construction | 0,26 |
| | Reuse & recycling | 3,54 |
| | Alternative materials | 2,75 |
| Asset management | Recalculation and prevention | 7,57 |
| | Renovation and lifespan extension | 2,28 |
| Sector improvements | Innovative materials | 6,26 |
| | Sustainable equipment | 2,34 |
| | **Total** | **30** |

Using the $CO_2$-light tool, SBE performed an initial estimation of the annual emissions associated with its project portfolio. This assessment indicates an order of magnitude of approximately **388.197 tons $CO_2$-equivalent per year***, corresponding to roughly **0,4% of Belgium's total territorial emissions**. While indicative, this result highlights the significant climate impact linked to infrastructure design and underlines the urgency of accelerating sustainability efforts across the sector.

In response, SBE has developed a **climate transition plan** focused on reducing project-related emissions (see table). This plan defines a set of strategic levers aimed at achieving **a 30% reduction in emissions by 2030 compared** to 2025 levels. The Climate Transition Plan will further elaborate on the baseline calculation, the rationale behind the selected reduction pathways and the governance approach that will be used to monitor progress towards these objectives.

*Note: given the innovative nature of this assessment methodology and the assumptions required to estimate emissions across a diverse project portfolio, the calculated results should be interpreted as a first-order estimate intended to support awareness, decision-making and continuous improvement.

A detailed explanation of the methodology, underlying assumptions and technical calculation approach will be provided in SBE's Climate Transition Plan.

Further elaboration and formalization of this plan, including its integration within the $CO_2$-Performance Ladder framework, is scheduled for 2026, when it will also be published on the company website as part of SBE's commitment to transparency and sector engagement.

←↑ Westende Green Sea Dike (BE)

# 4.2. Climate-resilient infrastructure projects

This paragraph relates to VSME B2-C2.

### DESIGNING CLIMATE-RESILIENT AND BLUE-GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

At SBE, climate-resilient design is a core principle in response to increasing risks from extreme weather, drought and flooding. As infrastructure must increasingly cope with uncertain and changing conditions, we proactively incorporate blue-green strategies into our designs, creating spaces that manage water intelligently, reduce heat stress and enhance ecological and social resilience.

Examples include water-permeable road structures, adaptive public spaces, integrated stormwater buffers and landscape elements that serve both hydraulic and environmental functions. These interventions not only mitigate climate risks, but also support biodiversity, enhance spatial quality and reduce long-term maintenance costs.

Since 2025, this approach has been structurally reinforced through the integration of a **dedicated Environment cluster** within SBE's internal ecosystem. This cluster brings together expertise in sustainability, water management, ecology and climate adaptation, enabling a more integrated and multidisciplinary approach to project delivery. In 2026, this ambition is further translated into the development of a project framework that formalizes the contribution of the Environment cluster, tailored to the scale and type of each project. This ensures that climate resilience and environmental performance are consistently embedded across all project phases.

# 4.3. SPIRIT-tool

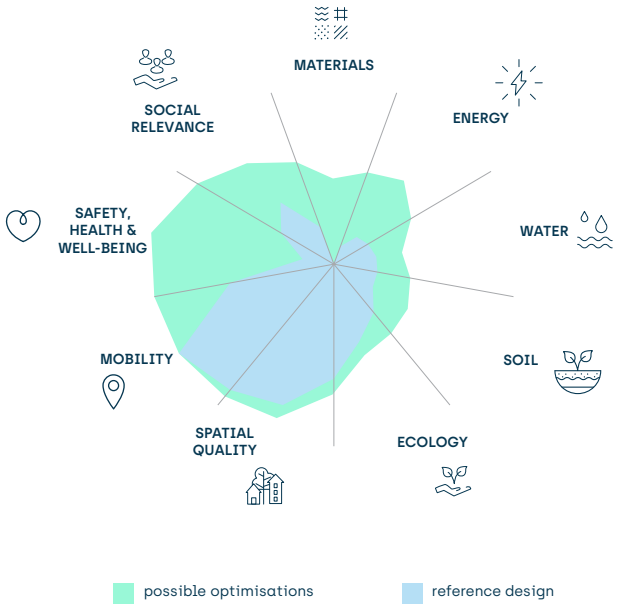
This paragraph relates to VSME B2-C2.

### EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN DESIGN THROUGH SPIRIT

To actively integrate sustainability into our project work, SBE has developed it's own SPIRIT-tool, short for **'Sustainable Project Index to Reduce Impact Tool'**. This self-assessment tool enables project managers to evaluate and enhance the **sustainability performance** of their projects in a structured and practical way. Using a guided questionnaire, SPIRIT prompts reflection on a wide range of sustainability themes, offering both predefined and customizable improvement suggestions tailored to each project context.

SPIRIT supports a consistent approach across all projects by raising awareness, fostering early design-phase reflection and making best practices easily accessible via the embedded Sustainability Library. While it offers an indicative sustainability score, the tool's primary value lies in enabling project teams to think critically and proactively about sustainable design choices.

SPIRIT also facilitates dialogue with clients and stakeholders, serving as a valuable framework for co-creating more sustainable infrastructure. Its continued development is driven by internal expertise and user contributions, reflecting SBE's collaborative and forward-thinking approach to sustainable engineering.



Bicycle bridge Vijfstraten, Sint-Niklaas (BE) →

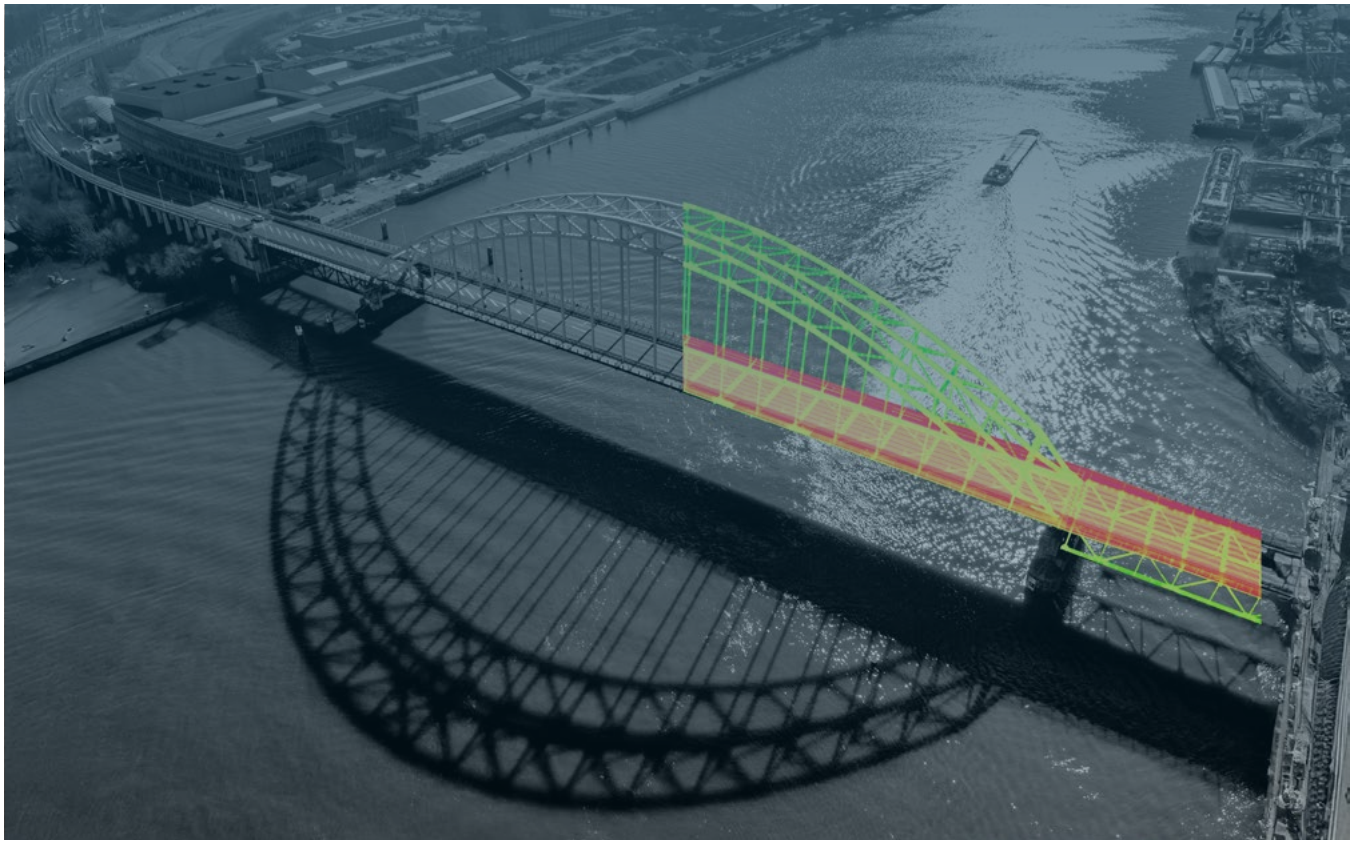
# 4.4. LCA/LCC calculations

This paragraph relates to VSME B2-C2.

### MEASURING AND OPTIMIZING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT THROUGH LCA AND PARAMETRIC DESIGN

To quantify and reduce the environmental impact of our infrastructure projects, SBE performs Environmental Cost Indicator (ECI) calculations based on life cycle analysis (LCA). This methodology **evaluates the environmental footprint of materials and energy use across all phases of a structure's life cycle**. By integrating these calculations early in the design process, we enable data-driven **variant studies** that guide our teams and clients toward **lower-impact design decisions**. In early design stages or in situations with limited data availability, these LCA-based insights are complemented by the **$CO_2$-light tool** developed by SBE, which allows for a fast and accessible estimation of project-related $CO_2$ emissions.

In addition and specifically for bridges, SBE also developed a **Sustainable Bridge Tool (SBT)**, a parametric tool designed to support sustainable decision-making during the concept phase of bridge design. Based on basic boundary conditions, the tool will automatically evaluate feasible design permutations and provide a sustainability trade-off that combines financial, ecological and maintenance costs with qualitative aspects such as construction time, technical complexity and end-of-life reuse potential. Once finalized, the tool will help demonstrate to clients why a proposed bridge type represents the most sustainable solution and serve as a starting point for further structural detailing.



↑ Brug over de Noord (NL)

**Together, these tools reflect SBE's commitment to integrating sustainability in every phase of infrastructure design, from concept to construction.**

# 4.5. Building catalogue for sustainable infrastructure

This paragraph relates to VSME B2-C2

### PROMOTING INFORMED DESIGN THROUGH THE BUILDING CATALOGUE FOR SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

As part of its ongoing commitment to sustainable design, SBE developed a comprehensive **Building Catalogue for Sustainable Infrastructure** on behalf of OVAM, the Public Waste Agency of Flanders. This practical reference tool is designed to support infrastructure designers in making conscious, sustainability-oriented decisions throughout the design process.

The catalogue consists of two types of sheets: **material sheets** and **construction sheets**. Each sheet offers clear, structured guidance on key sustainability considerations, including environmental impact, circular design principles, best practices and innovative technologies. By consulting the relevant sheets designers can quickly access targeted advice and explore alternatives that align with project-specific goals.

This initiative empowers engineers with the knowledge to integrate sustainability from the earliest design stages, further embedding environmental responsibility into SBE's project delivery.

↑ Download the Building Catalogue for Sustainable Infrastructure

# 4.6. SBE as partner in sustainability related working groups

This paragraph relates to VSME B2-C2

### EXTERNAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

SBE actively promotes its sustainable vision beyond the organization by participating in several **national working groups focused on sustainability**, such as 'Bouwakkoord Beton België,' 'Werkagenda circulair bouwen' and 'Green Deal Klimaatbestendige omgeving'. Through these collaborations, SBE contributes to shaping industry standards and best practices.

Additionally, SBE organizes its own event series, **SBE-Get Inspired**, which serves as a platform to share knowledge, spark innovation and engage with a broader community of professionals dedicated to sustainable construction. The 2025 inspiration session for public clients and other stakeholders focused on **circular and sustainable concrete mixtures**. During the session, participants were informed about the possibilities and applications of circular concrete, with particular attention to innovative and future-oriented solutions within the sector.

↑ Get Inspired event

## Veerle Vanempten

Climate Environment Expert, Agentschap Wegen en Verkeer

SBE is an active participant in the Climate-Resilient Infrastructure focus group and contributes in various ways to achieving a high-quality end result.

SBE does this by introducing new ideas through inspirational sessions organised for the other participants. Their presentation on the approach taken for the Eastern Tangent project, which focused on the screening tools used to identify risks and subsequently refine their final remediation strategy, was a real eye-opener.

The practical implementation of how they integrated climate adaptation measures into tender specifications was also particularly inspiring.

Such collaborations within the focus group are extremely valuable for generating new insights. Moreover, the synergy between the involved parties leads to a greater societal impact across various projects, thereby contributing to a stronger climate approach and reinforcing the government's role as an example setter.

For this reason, **the Climate Transition Network hopes to continue this fruitful collaboration in the future**.

# 4.7. Impact of climate risks on our strategy

This paragraph relates to VSME C4.

### UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE RISKS AS BOTH A DESIGN IMPERATIVE AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

At SBE, climate-related risks are not only a critical design consideration, they are also increasingly shaping our role as an engineering partner. Rising sea levels, more frequent extreme rainfall, prolonged droughts and heat stress directly influence the technical requirements and performance criteria of infrastructure. **These realities demand forward-thinking, adaptive solutions that respond to environmental uncertainty and safeguard long-term functionality**.

Beyond their impact on individual projects, climate risks also affect SBE at an organizational level. They drive demand for new expertise, shape evolving client expectations and open opportunities for innovative project types such as integrated water management systems, flood-resilient transport corridors and climate adaptation planning for public infrastructure. In this way, climate change acts as both a risk factor and a catalyst for innovation, reinforcing the need for strategic agility and long-term investment in knowledge and tools.

By embedding climate risk awareness across our design processes and business development strategies, SBE positions itself to meet the infrastructure challenges of tomorrow with resilience and relevance.

↑ Refurbishment Seine Scheldt (BE)

# 4.8. Participation in projects

### STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AS A KEY DESIGN TOOL

At SBE, we believe that the best infrastructure solutions are those shaped not only by technical expertise, but also by the insights and concerns of the people and ecosystems they affect. That's why we actively integrate participatory processes during the design phase of our projects.

**PROJECT IN THE SPOTLIGHT:**
BINNENDIJLE MECHELEN EXPERIENCE SITE

In the development of Belevingssite Mechelen, sustainability is approached as an ongoing and collective process, with participation and stakeholder management at its core. It is not treated as an end result, but actively integrated throughout all project phases via structured collaboration.

A comprehensive stakeholder mapping formed the basis, involving not only the three clients (City of Mechelen, Pidpa and De Vlaamse Waterweg), but also internal departments, residents, businesses and organized groups.

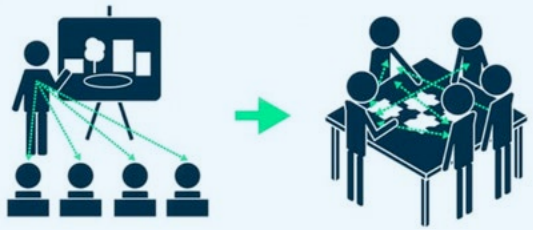
Even non-human stakeholders, such as flora and fauna, are explicitly considered, ensuring a holistic integration of ecological interests.

To manage these diverse perspectives, a clear process architecture was established, linking design phases to targeted participation moments. This ensures that participation goes beyond information sharing and becomes a strategic tool to improve design quality and stakeholder support.

A co-creative approach plays a central role. **Stakeholders are actively engaged as co-designers through dialogue sessions and iterative feedback loops**. Transparent communication, supported by tools such as VR simulations, strengthens trust and enhances awareness of spatial and ecological considerations. The process remains iterative and adaptive, evolving in response to new insights and contextual challenges. Anchored in the broader Masterplan Binnendijle and its citizen-defined guiding principles, the project aligns closely with local values.

Overall, this approach demonstrates how **structured participation and stakeholder engagement can drive sustainable outcomes**, fostering shared ownership and balancing social, ecological and spatial objectives.

Instead of making a design on an island and presenting it at the end, we engaged the stakeholders in the process from the beginning.



# 4.9. Innovation

### DRIVING SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS THROUGH INNOVATION

At SBE, we see **innovation as a key enabler of sustainable development**. By embracing new technologies and digital approaches, we aim to create smarter, more resilient infrastructure solutions that respond to both current and future challenges. Our innovation efforts are embedded within a broader ecosystem in which dedicated innovation managers drive focused progress in key domains, including sustainability and artificial intelligence.

Within the sustainability domain, this renewed focus reflects a deliberate shift towards the development and application of environmentally driven innovations. At the same time, SBE is actively exploring the potential of artificial intelligence to support both project delivery and internal processes, enabling more efficient workflows, enhanced data analysis and improved decision-making.

In parallel, SBE continues to invest in **advanced digital solutions** such as **digital twins, virtual replicas of infrastructure** assets that allow us to monitor, simulate and optimize performance throughout their life cycle. This technology enables data-driven decision-making, early detection of maintenance needs and scenario planning that can extend the lifespan of assets. By reducing the need for premature reconstruction and minimizing material use over time, digital twins contribute to avoided $CO_2$ emissions and support broader climate mitigation objectives.

In this way, innovation at SBE is not only about **improving efficiency**, but also about **accelerating the transition towards more sustainable, low-carbon infrastructure systems**.

← Viaduct Vilvoorde (BE)

# 05 Sustainability at SBE

## 5.1. Energy & greenhouse gas emissions

This paragraph relates to VSME B1-B2-B3-C3.

At SBE, we recognize the urgent need to address climate change and take responsibility for reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. We strive to be **carbon neutral by 2035**. To structure our efforts, we use the $CO_2$-Performance Ladder, an externally audited management system that guides our approach to emission insight, reduction, transparency and sector engagement.

Our policy focuses on **reducing emissions both in our internal operations and throughout the execution of our projects**. This includes measures such as electrifying our company fleet, improving energy efficiency in our buildings, promoting remote work and transitioning to renewable energy sources. These actions are grounded in clear objectives and a long-term vision for sustainability. In addition, within our projects, we aim to extend the lifespan of existing assets and encourage the circular use of existing elements and materials wherever possible.

When no suitable solution can be achieved through these approaches, we carefully assess the use of environmentally friendly materials in order to realize $CO_2$ reductions wherever feasible.

Transparency plays a vital role in our approach. We regularly communicate our progress and strategies to employees and stakeholders, reinforcing a culture of accountability and collective action. By embedding structured energy and emissions management into our operations, SBE contributes meaningfully to the transition to a low-carbon future.

↓ Charging our fleet at Sint-Niklaas office

## CARBON FOOTPRINT 2025

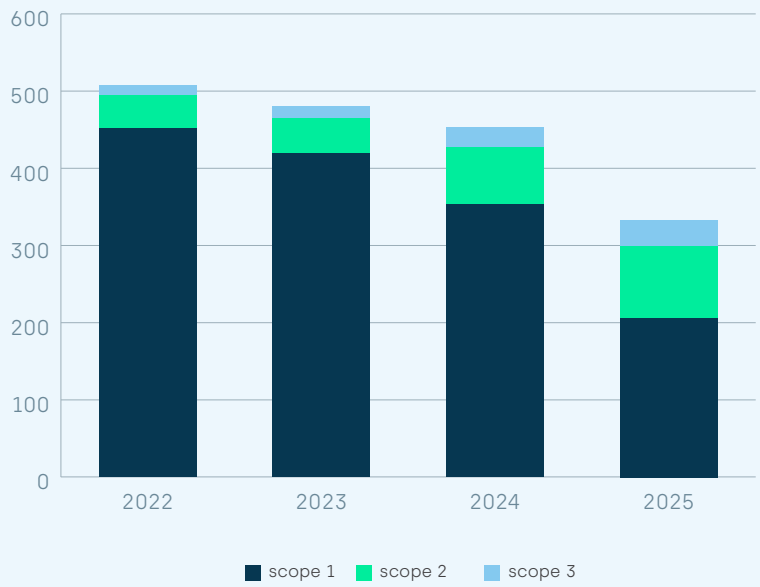
Measuring and understanding our $CO_2$ footprint is a crucial starting point. It is only with this insight that we can take effective, targeted action to reduce our carbon impact. Therefore, we calculate our carbon footprint annually since 2020, with regards to our $CO_2$-management system ($CO_2$-Performance Ladder) and in accordance with applicable standards such as the Greenhouse Gas (GHG).

↓ SBE Café

We map our $CO_2$ emissions arising from:

- **Scope 1:** Direct emissions caused by internal sources within the organization, such as heating and fossil fuels fleet.
- **Scope 2:** Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity consumed by SBE. This relates to electricity consumption of the offices but also electricity from charging company cars.
- **Scope 3:** All other indirect emissions that occur in the value chain (up to 2024 limited to business travel (e.g. travel by plane, train, private cars)).

**ANNUAL CARBON FOOTPRINT IN TONS $CO_2$ EQ**



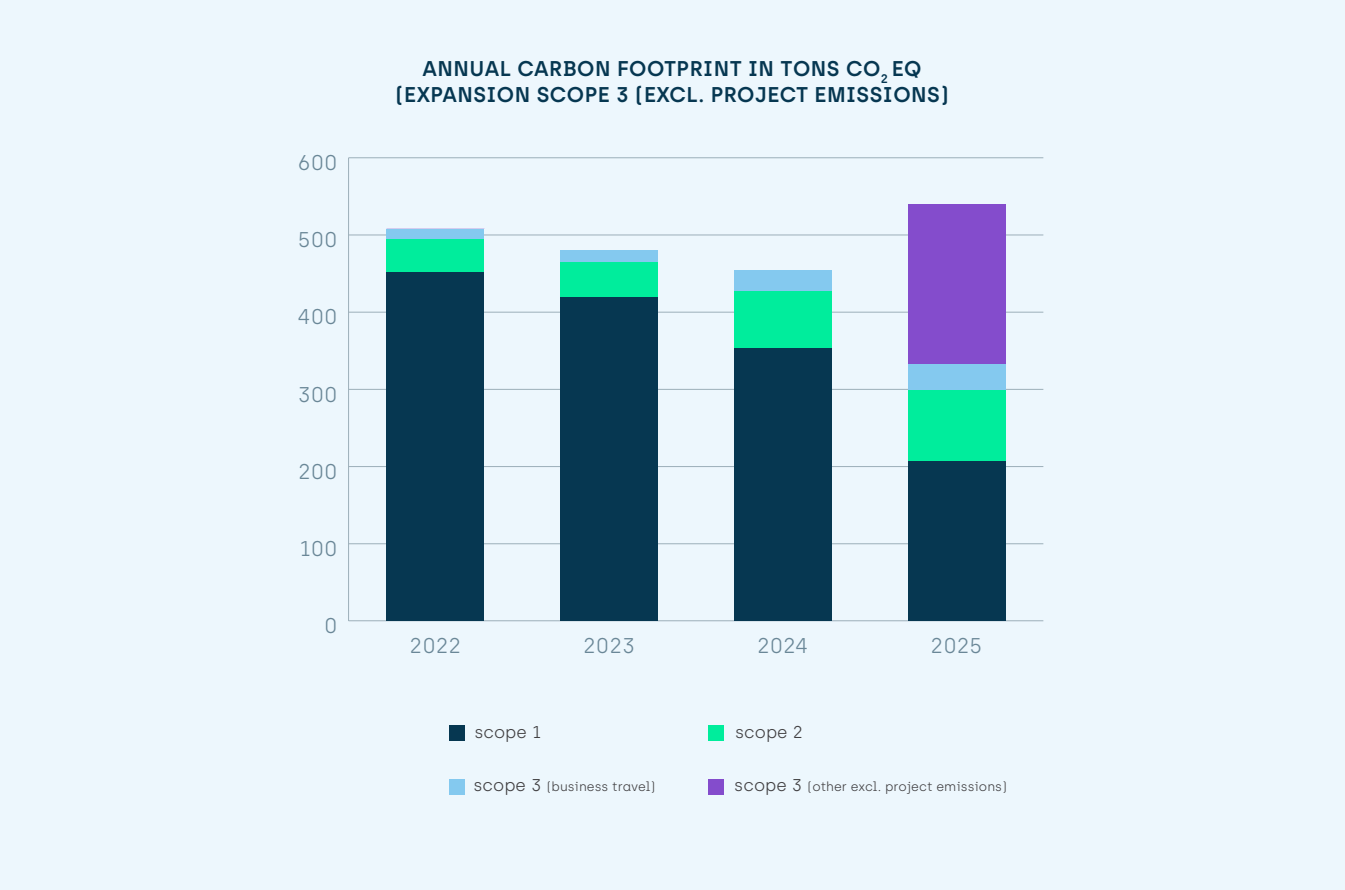

When applying the same scope boundaries as in previous years, the total carbon footprint across all six offices and the SBE Café amounted to **333 tons** of $CO_2$ equivalent in 2025. This represents **a reduction of 175 tons** compared to our 2022 base year, corresponding to an overall decrease of 35% in scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 (limited to business travel emissions).

Since 2021, SBE has been certified at Level 3 of the $CO_2$ Performance Ladder Manual 3.1. Under this certification level, organisations are only required to report Scope 3 emissions related to business travel.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of our environmental impact, SBE **expanded its scope 3 emissions in 2025 beyond business travel** for the first time. As a result, the reporting now also includes indirect $CO_2$ emissions generated throughout the broader value chain, covering **both upstream and downstream activities**, including emissions related to the construction phase of our designs.

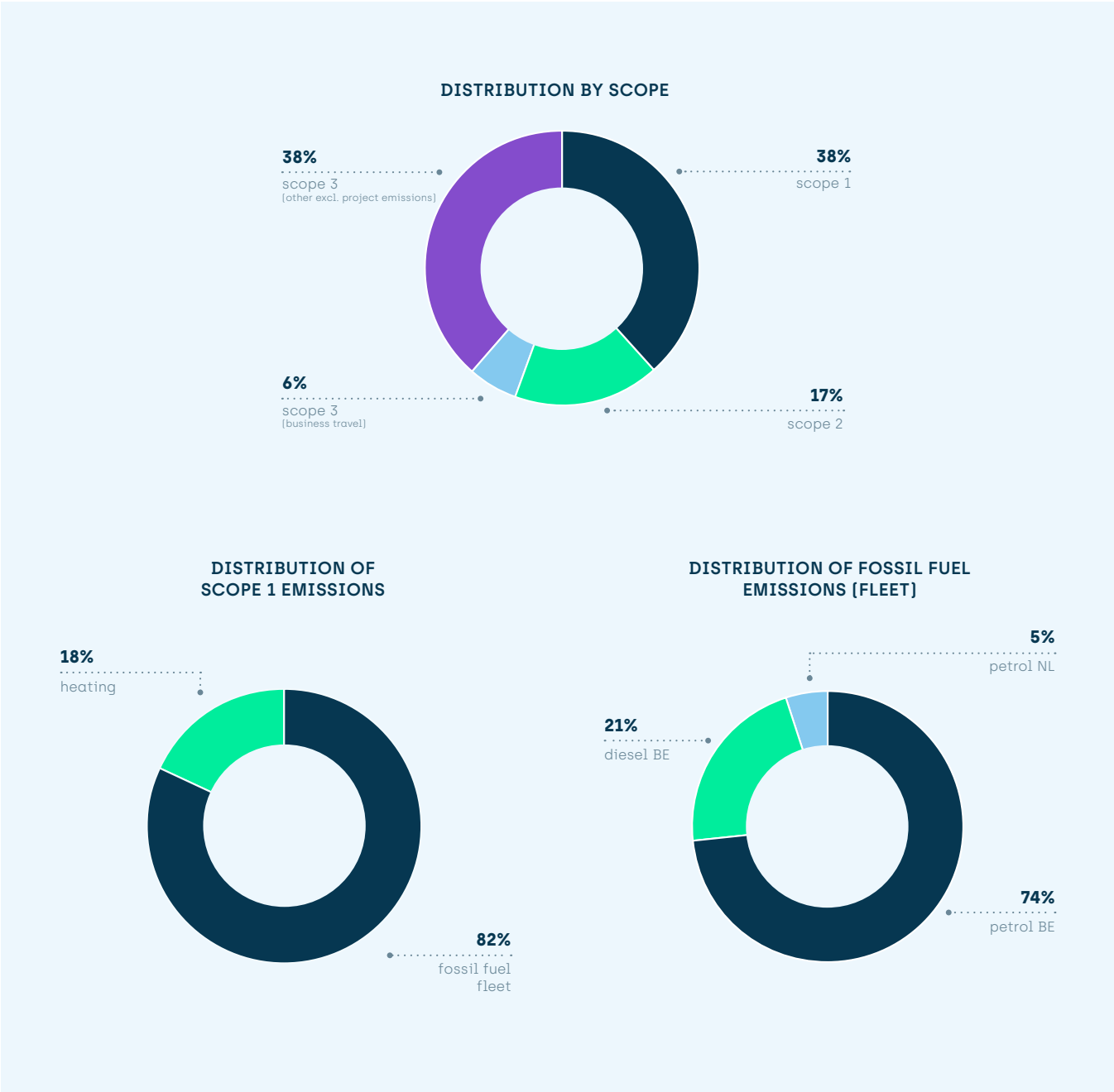
In addition to business travel emissions, the following indirect emissions are now included:

- Purchased goods and services, such as IT equipment, cloud computing and data centres
- Waste generated by the offices and the Café
- Employee commuting (excluding leased vehicles already included in scope 1 and 2)
- Upstream leased assets, such as IT equipment
- Use of sold products and services (emissions due to realisation of our projects)




When including these additional scope 3 categories (excluding the use of sold products and services), total scope 3 emissions from business travel and upstream value chain activities amount to **241 tons** of $CO_2$ equivalent, making scope 3 the largest source of emissions within the organisation. **It should be noted that project emissions have a completely different order of magnitude and are therefore disclosed seperately in "4.1. Emissions in projects" on page 22.**

Since the additional scope 3 emissions are now included in our calculations, scope 1 is no longer the largest contributor to our total carbon footprint for the first time. The significant reduction in scope 1 emissions compared to the 2022 base year is mainly driven by the electrification of the company fleet. At the same time, we observe that scope 2 emissions have doubled compared to the base year, making them a more prominent contributor to our overall footprint.




## SCOPE 1

In total, scope 1 is associated with emissions of **206 tons of $CO_2$**, representing a **decrease of 55% compared to the base year**. With a share of 82%, the fossil fuel vehicle fleet remains the largest emission source within scope 1 but it's share has been decreasing significantly due to the electrification of the company fleet. In total, the $CO_2$ emissions associated with heating of SBE's various sites correspond to 36,85 tons (compared to 40,12 tons in 2022) of $CO_2$ of which Sint-Niklaas still has the largest share. While the headquarters recorded a small decrease in gas consumption, energy use increased in the Namur office following its relocation at the end of 2024 to a space that is twice the size of the previous office.

Consumption in the Mechelen office, on the other hand, also decreased. Although the office moved to a larger location in 2025, gas is no longer used there, resulting in lower emissions. In addition, 2025 was the first full year in which the SBE Café was fully operational, contributing to an additional increase of approximately one ton. The total gas consumption increased marginally but remained broadly in line with 2022 levels.

SBE's fossil **car fleet** caused emissions of **168,93 tons of $CO_2$** in 2025. The diesel share keeps on decreasing (from 45% in 2022 to 21%).

## SCOPE 2

In total, emissions of **93,26 tons of $CO_2$** can be linked to electricity consumption in 2025 (scope 2). The **Belgian electric fleet accounted for the largest share of these emissions**, mainly due to the increase in public and home charging sessions, which resulted in an additional 15 tons of $CO_2$ compared to 2024. By the end of 2025, **almost 70% of the company fleet was electric**, which is clearly reflected in the increased share of the electric fleet within the overall footprint. The Sint-Niklaas office represented the second-largest share, although its emissions decreased by 4 tons of $CO_2$ compared to the previous year.

In comparison with 2022, the **total $CO_2$ emissions from scope 2 increased with 51 tons**. This increase can mainly be attributed to the continued growth of the electric vehicle fleet, as well as changes in office infrastructure and energy consumption. Several office relocations and operational changes influenced the results in 2025.

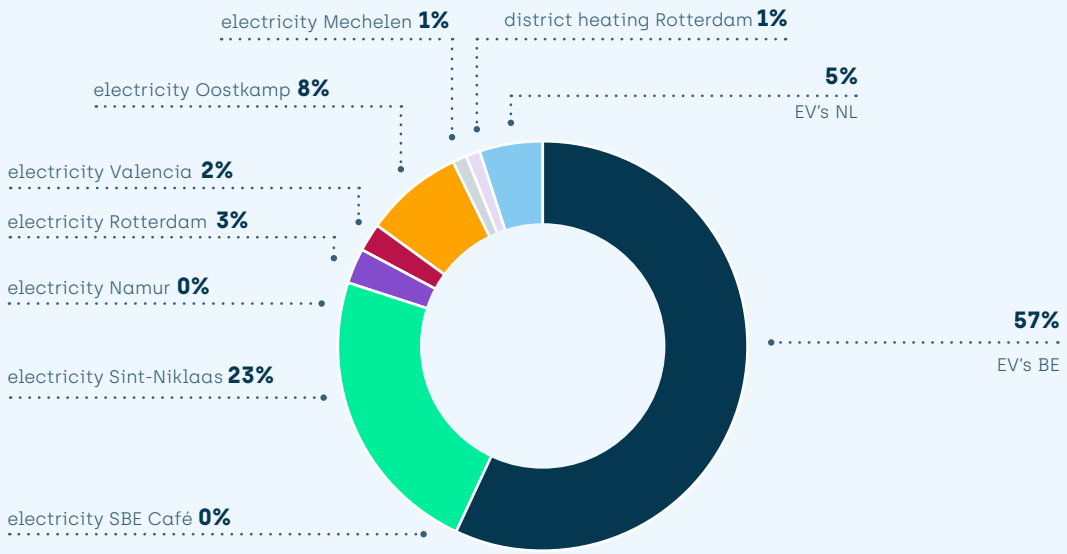
Both the Namur and Mechelen offices relocated to significantly larger office spaces, with the Namur office moving at the end of 2024 and the Mechelen office following in 2025. In addition, 2025 was the first full year in which the SBE Café was fully operational, leading to higher electricity consumption.

Both the SBE Café and the Namur office operate on green electricity contracts, meaning their increased consumption is not reflected in additional emissions.

The new Mechelen office, however, does not yet operate on a green electricity contract, although part of its electricity demand is covered by solar panels. Since the office only opened in 2025, next year will be the first year to include a full year of partly grey electricity consumption. In Rotterdam, emissions also increased because the office has no longer been operating on a green electricity contract since 2024.

Furthermore, the Rotterdam and Oostkamp offices recorded higher electricity consumption than in 2024, mainly due to more intensive use of the buildings and a slightly colder winter period. Rotterdam also showed an increase in district heating consumption. Nevertheless, total electricity consumption across all offices still decreased slightly compared to the previous year, primarily driven by the significant reduction in consumption at the Sint-Niklaas office.

**DISTRIBUTION OF SCOPE 2 EMISSIONS**



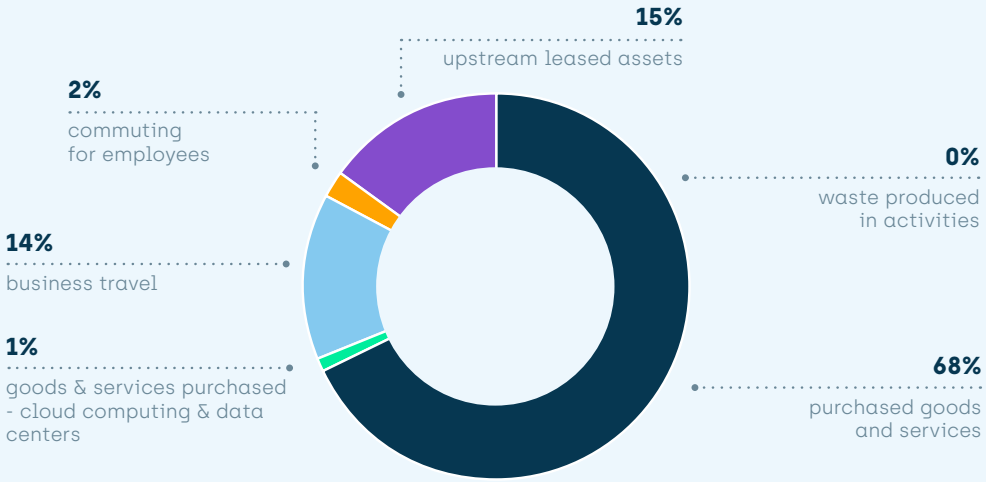
## SCOPE 3

**Scope 3 emissions were significantly expanded for the first time in 2025**. When only considering business travel activities, these were associated with 34,20 tons of $CO_2$ emissions. Within these emissions, air travel still has the largest share (82%).

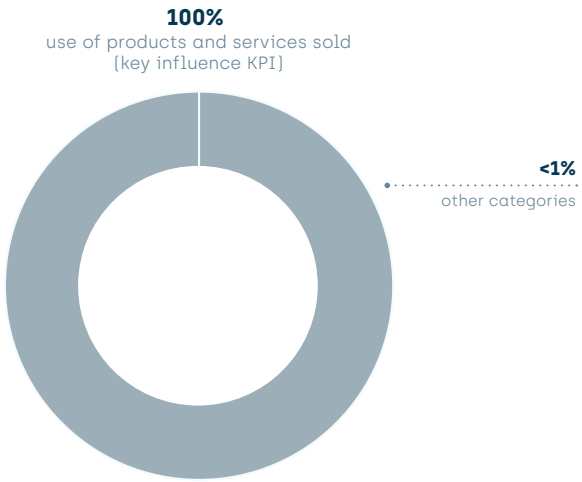
Compared to 2022, total scope 3 emissions related to business travel increased by 13 tons of $CO_2$, mainly due to a significant rise in air travel, particularly between Valencia and Brussels. In addition, the number of kilometres travelled by train doubled compared to 2022.

Taking a look at the extended scope 3 emissions (excl. project emissions), business travel represents only a small share of our upstream emissions. Purchased goods and services account for one of the largest contributors within scope 3. In total, upstream scope 3 emissions amounted to **241 tons of $CO_2$**. Purchased goods and services, accounting for 30% of the total emissions of all scopes. These emissions are mainly related to purchases for the offices and the SBE Café, including IT equipment, cloud services and other operational goods and services. Finally, upstream leased assets, including leased laptops, printers and IT infrastructure, account for approximately 7% of the total carbon footprint.

**SCOPE 3 - UPSTREAM**




**SCOPE 3**
**UPSTREAM + DOWNSTREAM**




However, when **scope 3** is even further expanded beyond upstream activities and **also includes downstream activities** within the value chain, the **emissions from upstream activities become negligible** compared to those generated by our projects. Emissions related to projects amount to approximately 388.197 tons of $CO_2$.

More information on this can be found in section 4.1 “Emissions in Projects”.

## ENERGY CONSUMPTION OFFICE: RENEWABLE ENERGY VS NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY

This table shows the distribution of total energy consumption across all offices and distinguishes between different sources of energy. This doesn't include the charging session of company cars at the offices.

| ENERGY | MWh 2024 | MWh 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| **Renewable** | | |
| Wind | 3,32 | 1,65 |
| Solar | 64,05 | 71,27 |
| Waterpower | 0 | 0 |
| Biomass | 4,35 | 24,72 |
| Other renewable* | 8,44 | 58,11 |
| **Total renewable** | **80,17** | **155,763** |
| | | |
| **Non renewable** | | |
| Gas | 185,46 | 201,64 |
| Coal | 0 | 0 |
| Nuclear | 76,23 | 82,36 |
| Other non-renewable | 92,24 | 109,06 |
| **Total non-renewable** | **353,93** | **393,05** |
| **Total energy in MWh** | **434,10** | **548,81** |

*Other renewable refers to the electricity consumption of the Namur and Valencia office and the SBE Café. Although this electricity originates 100% from renewable sources, the origin is unknown.

For the Sint-Niklaas office, the electricity mix shown on the invoice consists of fossil fuels (38,617%) and nuclear energy (61,93%). The invoices for the Valencia office also indicate a variation in the origin of the electricity mix, including nuclear energy, carbon-based sources and other renewable sources.

However, as no certificate of origin is available for either office, the electricity consumed at both locations must be classified as grey power in the carbon footprint calculations.

In the future, we aim to increase the share of renewable energy by purchasing more green electricity for those offices where we manage the energy contracts ourselves.

| SCOPE 1,2 OR 3 | SOURCE POWER (e.g. natural gas, diesel, etc.) | EMISSION SOURCE (vehicles, buildings, machinery, etc.) | SITE | ACTIVITY DATA | UNIT | EMISSION FACTOR (KG/UNIT) | EMISSIONS (TONS/Y) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scope 1 | natural gas (BE) | heating & hot water | Sint-Niklaas | 149.798 | kWh | 0,185 | 27,71 |
| | | | Namur | 28.773 | kWh | | 5,32 |
| | | | Valencia | 7.602 | kWh | | 1,41 |
| | | | SBE Café | 10.000 | kWh | | 1,85 |
| | | | Mechelen (old) | 2.990 | kWh | | 0,55 |
| | petrol (E10) (BE) | fleet | Belgium | 58.093 | liter | 2,139 | 124,26 |
| | diesel (B7 blend) (BE) | fleet | | 14.812 | liter | 2,462 | 36,47 |
| | petrol (E10 blend) (NL) | fleet | Rotterdam | 2.681 | liter | 3,059 | 8,20 |
| Scope 2 | grey power (BE) | electricity | Sint-Niklaas | 128.229 | kWh | 0,167 | 21,41 |
| | renewable energy (BE) | | SBE Café | 34.503 | kWh | 0 | 0 |
| | solar power | | Sint-Niklaas | 70.827 | kWh | | |
| | injection of solar power | | | 66.411 | kWh | | |
| | renewable energy (BE) | | Namur | 22.125 | kWh | | |
| | grey power (BE) | electric fleet | Home charging sessons/at location | 248.033 | kWh | 0,167 | 41,42 |
| | grey power (BE) | | Sint-Niklaas | 71.432 | kWh | | 11,93 |
| | solar power | | | 39.455 | kWh | 0 | 0 |
| | grey power (NL) | electricity | Rotterdam | 5.905 | kWh | 0,497 | 2,93 |
| | | electric fleet | | 8.709 | kWh | | 4,33 |
| | grey power (BE) | electricity | Valencia | 8.673 | kWh | 0,167 | 1,45 |
| | wind force (BE) | | Mechelen (old) | 1.652 | kWh | 0 | 0 |
| | grey power (BE) | | Mechelen (new) | 6.136 | kWh | 0,167 | 1,02 |
| | solar power | | | 443 | kWh | 0 | 0 |
| | grey power (BE) | | Oostkamp | 46.435 | kWh | 0,167 | 7,75 |
| | waste heat without co-firing (NL) | district heating Rotterdam | Rotterdam | 89 | GJ | 11,3 | 1 |

| SCOPE 1,2 OR 3 | EMISSION SOURCE (vehicles, buildings, machinery, etc.) | SITE | EMISSIONS (TONS/Y) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Scope 3 Upstream** | i. Purchased goods and services | All offices | 163 |
| | i. Goods and services purchased - cloud computing and data centres | | 2 |
| | ii. Capital goods | Negligible | 0 |
| | iii. Fuel and energy activities | | |
| | iv. Upstream transport and distribution | Not applicable | |
| | v. Waste produced in activities | All offices | 1 |
| | vi. Business travel | | 34 |
| | vii. Commuting for employees | | 4 |
| | viii. Upstream leased assets | | 37 |
| **Scope 3 Downstream** | ix. Downstream transport and distribution | Not applicable | 0 |
| | x. Processing of sold products | | |
| | xi. Use of products and services sold | All offices | 388.197 |
| | xii. End-of-life processing of sold products | Not applicable | 0 |
| | xiii. Downstream leased assets | | |
| | xiv. Franchises | | |
| | xv. Investments | | |

*The table above presents the 15 categories of scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions. To maintain clarity and readability, only the aggregated emissions per category are included in this report, as a detailed breakdown of all underlying components would be too extensive.

A more detailed overview of the scope 3 calculations, will be provided on the $CO_2$ management system page on the company website later in 2026.

| SCOPE 1,2 OR 3 | EMISSIONS (TONS/Y) |
|---|---|
| Scope 1 | 205,77 |
| Scope 2 | 93,26 |
| Scope 3 (excl. projects) | 241 |
| Scope 3 (projects) | 388.197 |
| **Total** | **388.737** |

## OUR REDUCTION GOALS

In recent years, our organization has grown significantly through the opening of new offices, the launch of the SBE Café, the relocation to larger office spaces and an increase in the number of employees. This growth has led to higher emissions in some scopes. **To account for this growth, our reduction targets are expressed in $CO_2$ equivalents per FTE**. Additionally, we track GHG intensity, defined as emissions relative to revenue, to provide further insight into our environmental efficiency.

In 2025, the SBE **$CO_2$ intensity** for scope 1 + 2 + 3 (only business travel), was **8,15 g $CO_2$e per euro of revenue** (compared to 14,39 g $CO_2$ per euro of revenue in 2022) or 8,15 tons $CO_2$e per €1 million revenue.

When taking the expanded scope 3 categories (excl. projects) into account, the total $CO_2$ intensity across all scopes in 2025 amounted to 13,19 g $CO_2$e per euro of revenue.

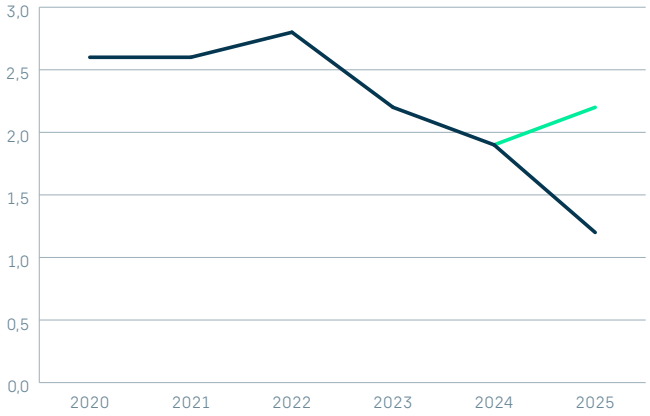
If we then take a look at our reduction goals we notice, **a decrease of 53% emissions per FTE** in total over all scopes (scope 3 limited to business travel) compared to 2022!

| SCOPE | REDUCTION TARGET RELATIVE TO 2022 PER FTE IN % | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **2025** | **2026** | **2027** |
| Scope 1 | 50% | 60% | 65% |
| Scope 2 + 3 (only business travel) | 5% | 10% | 20% |

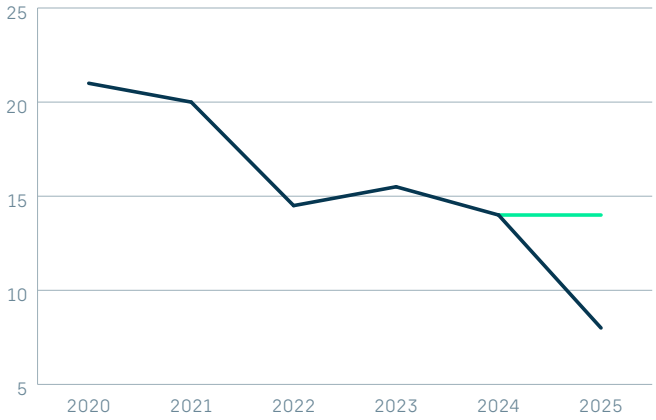
Starting from 2026, we will also **monitor and compare emission reductions across the full scope 3 categories**. As 2025 was the first year in which these broader scope 3 emissions were calculated, 2025 will serve as the base year for future scope 3 reduction assessments. Following reduction goals were determined.

| SCOPE | REDUCTION TARGET RELATIVE TO 2022 (SCOPE 1 & 2) AND 2025 (SCOPE 3) PER FTE IN % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2025** | **2026** | **2027** | **2030** |
| Scope 1 | 50% | 60% | 65% | |
| Scope 2 | 5% | 10% | 20% | |
| Scope 3 (excl. projects) | | 5% | 7% | |
| Scope 3 (project emissions) | | | | 30% |

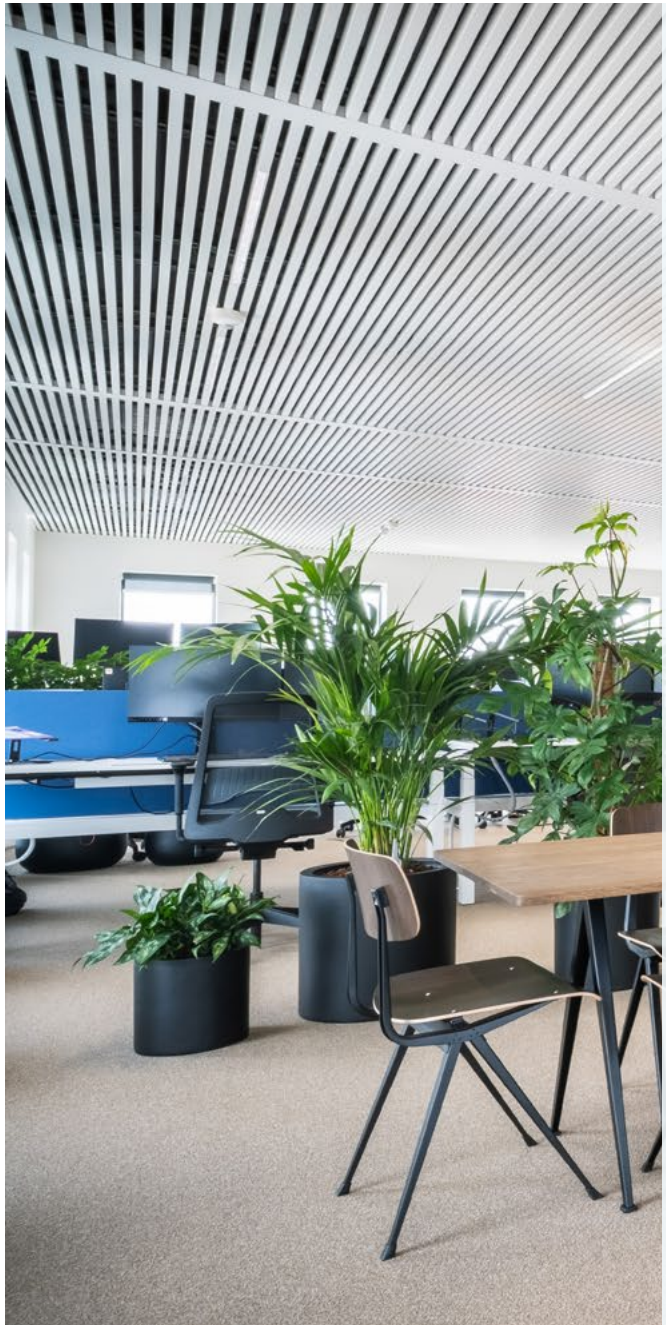
**TONS OF $CO_2$ EMISSIONS PER FTE OVER THE YEARS**




**G $CO_2$ PER EURO OF REVENUE**




- scope 1 + 2 + 3 (only business travel)
- scope 1 + 2 + 3 (excl. project emissions)



In scope 1 we achieved a decrease of **68% tons of $CO_2$ per FTE** compared to 2022 (**246,23 tons of $CO_2$** in total). Mainly due to the increase in number of electric cars in our fleet. So we achieved our scope 1 reduction goal of 50% by far.

Unfortunately we did not achieve the set reduction goal of 5% per FTE for **scope 2 + 3 (business travel)**. Instead, scope 2 + 3 (business travel) increased by 71,45 tons of $CO_2$ in total. On a per FTE basis, this represented a 62,5% increase (0,299 ton of $CO_2$ per FTE in 2022 to 0,486 ton of $CO_2$ per FTE).

The reduction target for scope 2 and scope 3 emissions proved to be overly ambitious and did not sufficiently account for the growing number of charging sessions for company vehicles. As the origin of the electricity used for these charging sessions cannot currently be fully traced, the associated emissions must be classified as grey electricity.

The continued expansion of the electric vehicle fleet, combined with the absence of a green electricity purchase contract in the HQ, had a significant impact on overall emissions. In addition, emissions from air travel increased across all travel distances. To address this, the company intends to switch to a green electricity contract for the Sint-Niklaas office in 2026 and investigate the use of guarantees of origin for electricity consumed during company vehicle charging sessions.

These figures do not yet include the broader scope 3 value chain emissions. When taking the newly expanded scope 3 categories into account, total reported emissions increase significantly due to the substantially wider reporting boundary and the inclusion of additional upstream and downstream emission sources throughout the value chain.

For the reduction goals relating to our **scope 3 (project emissions)** and our climate transition plan to obtain these goals, we refer to paragraph “4.1. Emissions in projects” on page 22.

## FROM EMISSIONS TO AMBITIONS: REACHING NET ZERO BY 2035

The total emissions from the fossil fleet, decreased with another 47% last year. This demonstrates that our efforts toward sustainable mobility are paying off. In addition to our 2022 decision to fully electrify our fleet by 2027 and the installation of additional charging infrastructure (25 charging points in total), we actively encourage sustainable commuting.

Since 2023, we've also offered the **mobility budget**, allowing employees to exchange their company car for more sustainable transport solutions. This supports the use of shared mobility and contributes to a reduction in the number of company cars in our fleet.

We also offer tax-efficient **bicycle leasing** and employees receive a bike allowance for commuting by bike.

Each year, we celebrate Mobility Week, during which all offices organize a **Car-Free Workday**. Many colleagues cycle to the headquarters in pelotons from all over Flanders, while some of our Experts at Play take on remarkable commuting challenges: one colleague cycled 120 km from the Belgian coast to the office, two others ran a full marathon to work and one colleague even combined all three triathlon disciplines during their commute. Last year, another colleague started the day before sunrise and walked 40 km to the office.

Besides this, since the corona period, we still offer employees the flexibility to continue working from home up to 3 days each week, which also impacts the emissions resulting from commutes. During covid, lockdowns resulted in a big decline in emissions from our fleet.

**Since 2023, 458 solar panels have been installed on the roofs of our headquarters, allowing us to generate around 35% of our electricity needs through solar energy.**

Looking ahead, we plan to switch the remaining purchased electricity at our headquarters to a 100% green energy contract by the end of 2026.

We've also introduced a range of **energy-saving measures** to use energy more efficiently at our headquarters. For example, HVAC systems are now programmed with interim shutdowns during the day and lighting in the renovated office building is controlled by motion sensors.

These initiatives help us further reduce our consumption and support our transition to a more sustainable energy system.

We're also working toward phasing out **natural gas use** at our main office. To achieve this, we're currently exploring sustainable alternatives such as **heat pumps** and the use of **riothermy** (heat recovery from wastewater).

For a complete list of our actions, we refer to our list of measures published on our website $CO_2$-management page.

# 5.2. Our People, Our Strength, Our Experts at Play

As a proud family-owned engineering consultancy, we believe that our people are the heart of everything we do. That's why **we go beyond traditional workplace expectations** to create a culture where well-being, growth and enjoyment go hand in hand.

Our team works hard and continuously strives for excellence, but we equally believe there should always be room for fun, connection and celebrating successes together. While our colleagues are highly committed and driven in their work, creating an enjoyable, supportive and energising workplace culture is just as important to us.

That philosophy is reflected in the way we describe our employees as "Experts at Play". They are encouraged to bring their full selves to work in an environment that is both professionally challenging and personally rewarding. **As experts at work and teammates at heart**, they contribute not only to innovative engineering solutions, but also to the strong sense of connection, collaboration and team spirit that defines SBE.

Creating a healthy work-life balance is one of the cornerstones of our HR philosophy. From the launch of our very own **SBE Café** offering healthy lunches, to the many **sports and wellbeing initiatives** that earned us the **Sport Vlaanderen award**, we continuously invest in the vitality and happiness of our team.

In an industry where long hours and high pressure can be the norm, we aim to set a different standard, one where **expertise, engagement and enjoyment** thrive side by side.

**"Experts at work and teammates at heart."**

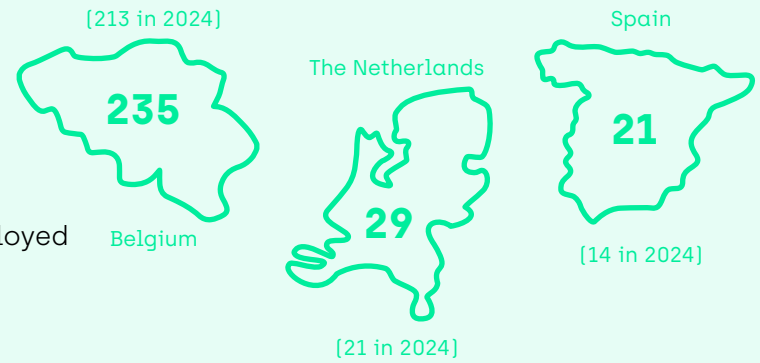
# 5.2.1. General characteristics

This paragraph relates to VSME B8-C5-C9.

As part of our commitment to transparency and responsible business practices, we report below key workforce indicators in line with sustainability disclosure requirements. The figures reflect our total headcount, excluding self-employed individuals under long-term collaboration contracts.

## + Geographical distribution

SBE operates across multiple countries. The distribution of employees (excluding self-employed individuals) by country and employment type is as follows:




## + Employment contract type

As of the reporting period, SBE employed a total of 285 people at the end of 2025 (248 in 2024), in all offices. Last year we also welcomed **12 people** (similar to 2024) with a temporary contract like interns, jobstudents and temporary workers.

On top of that, **10 self-employed professionals** were engaged on a long-term basis at SBE that year (compared to 7 in 2024). Of which 8 (compared to 5) of them operate without personnel who are working exclusively for the undertaking.

No temporary workers were provided by undertaking primarily engaged in 'employment activities' in 2025.

## + Employee turnover

in 2025
**-9** employees

employee turnover rate
**3.25%** (3.52% in 2024)

This low figure is a strong indicator that we are on the right path in our ambition to remain the best employer in our sector. It reflects high employee satisfaction, strong engagement and a positive working environment.

Even more telling: those who do leave often return, a clear sign that SBE is a place people value and want to be part of.

## + Gender distribution

We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. Although the construction sector remains predominantly male, we are proud to report a solid representation of women 28% (2024: 27%) within our team.

Our workforce is composed of:

**204** men (181 in 2024)

**81** women (67 in 2024)

## + Diversity

Diversity is more than a value,it's a strength. As an international engineering consultancy with offices in Belgium, Rotterdam and Valencia, we are proud to bring together talented colleagues from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and perspectives.

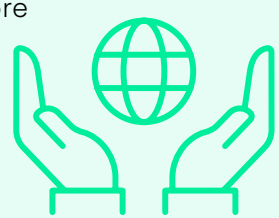
Today, our team includes professionals from

**28** different countries

(19 in 2024)

including

- Belgium
- the Netherlands
- Spain
- Greece
- Argentina
- Morocco
- South Africa
- and many more



We continue to grow as a truly international workplace. But diversity at SBE goes beyond nationality. We value **differences in gender, age, culture, experience and background**, knowing that inclusive teams lead to more creative thinking, better decision-making and a richer working environment. This diversity enriches our workplace, sparks innovation and helps us look at challenges from different angles.

In a competitive market for engineering talent, we see diversity not as a challenge, but as an opportunity. By opening our doors to a wide variety of profiles, we broaden our horizons and build stronger, more inclusive teams, **ready to design solutions for a world that's just as diverse as we are**.

## + Towards more balanced leadership

Increasing the **representation of women** in top management is essential not only for ensuring gender equality, but also for bringing diverse perspectives to strategic decision-making.

Currently, women hold

**2 out of 7**

positions on our governance body, slightly better than back in 2024 with a ratio of 1 in 5.

In our project organisation, the female-to-male ratio of management profiles stands at

**2 to 7**

compared to 3 to 7 in 2024.

This shift is mainly the result of internal changes in the project manager function following the ecosystem exercise, which led to a broader inclusion of colleagues within this management group.

We are committed to giving equal opportunities to all talents and actively working to create a more balanced representation at every level of our organization.

# 5.2.2. Well-being

This paragraph relates to VSME B2-B9.

## SBE-FIT

### BUILDING A CULTURE OF MOVEMENT AND WELL-BEING

A healthy mind and body are key ingredients for engineering excellence. Regular physical activity not only improves **focus, energy and resilience**, but also strengthens team spirit and creates moments of connection beyond the daily workload; all of which contribute to a more balanced and motivated workforce.

Since 2019, our **SBE-FIT** programme has been encouraging employees to stay active and engaged, offering a variety of accessible activities such as **boot camps, yoga sessions, padel** and creative yearly challenges like the 2025 "The Claw" campaign. Thanks to the dedication of our sports ambassadors and a remarkable **66%** participation rate during last year's "The Claw" challenge, SBE-FIT has become an integral part of our company culture.

This commitment to employee well-being was proudly recognised with the **Sportbedrijf Award 2024-2025** from Sport Vlaanderen. The award recognises organisations that actively invest in a healthy and active workplace culture and serve as role models in promoting employee well-being in a structured and meaningful way.

The jury particularly values companies that encourage employees to stay active before, during and after work through sports initiatives, movement-focused activities and supportive infrastructure. By fostering a culture that prioritises both physical and mental well-being, organisations not only contribute to healthier and more engaged employees, but also to a stronger workplace atmosphere and long-term positive impact for both employees and society.

← SBE Experts at Football

# SBE CAFÉ

## A DEDICATED SPACE FOR COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION

In September 2024, SBE proudly inaugurated the SBE Café, a unique venue exclusively for our Experts at Play. Located in Sint-Niklaas at 130 meters from our office, this space was formerly known as the King George Café, which had a successful eight-year run before its transition. The SBE Café serves as more than just a dining area; it's a central hub designed to foster collaboration, creativity and community among our teams.

By providing a dedicated environment for **informal meetings, knowledge sharing and social interaction**, the SBE Café and its event hall embodies our commitment to employee well-being and a vibrant company culture. This initiative reflects our belief that a strong, connected team is essential for driving innovation and delivering sustainable solutions.

At our company café, colleagues can enjoy a healthy, tasty and affordable lunch every day. Our chef focuses on using local and seasonal vegetables as much as possible, ensuring fresh and sustainable meals.

**The café also plays an important role in fostering an inclusive workplace** through a partnership with Raakzaam, a supported employment program. This initiative gives adults the opportunity to engage in meaningful work activities under guidance, helping them participate in the regular labor market. In the afternoons, you can find one of these young adults assisting the chef with wrapping up the lunch service and preparations for the next day. All while gaining hands-on experience and developing practical skills in a warm, supportive environment.

## SBE RECOGNISED AS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK AND MULTIPLE HR AWARDS WINNER

We are proud to have been officially certified as a **Great Place to Work** since 2021, reflecting our commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture. This certification is based entirely on direct employee feedback through the Trust Index, a survey measuring workplace experience across key dimensions such as credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie. The results confirm that SBE is a workplace where trust, collaboration and employee wellbeing are strongly embedded in the company culture.

In 2025, SBE achieved an overall Trust Index score of 87%, scoring 85% or higher across all dimensions, with particularly strong results for pride (88%) and camaraderie (89%). In recognition of these outstanding results, SBE was ranked among the **top 5 Best Workplaces in Belgium** in the medium-sized enterprises category, highlighting the strong engagement, mutual trust and team spirit within our organisation.

In addition to this certification, SBE was honoured with the **"Most Remarkable Employer Organisation"** award at the HR Excellence Awards Belgium in 2025. This accolade recognises our innovative HR practices and dedication to employee well-being. These achievements underscore our ongoing efforts to create an environment where our employees feel valued, supported and inspired to contribute to sustainable and impactful engineering solutions.

Later that year, SBE was also recognised with the #ZigZagHR ZoHRo Award for **"HR Team of the Year"**, acknowledging the strong people-driven culture embedded throughout the organisation. The award highlights SBE's focus on employee engagement, open communication, coaching and creating an environment where employees are encouraged to grow, collaborate and contribute meaningfully. This recognition reflects our belief that **sustainable success starts with listening to and investing in our people**.

Our forward-thinking approach combines technical development with personal growth, supported by initiatives like the **SBE Academy, SBE-FIT, hybrid work options and a culture of open feedback**. Together, these actions reflect our long-term commitment to being a people-first employer shaping the future of the engineering and construction sector.

## FOSTERING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY THROUGH CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT

At SBE, the well-being of our employees is a cornerstone of our sustainable growth strategy. To support a safe, respectful and inclusive work environment, SBE appointed extra dedicated confidential counsellors at all its offices. These trusted figures play a crucial role in the prevention and management of psychosocial risks such as stress, bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, aggression and other forms of undesirable behavior.

All employees, including interns, external collaborators and temporary staff, can contact a confidential counsellor for discreet advice, support and guidance. Operating under strict confidentiality, these counselors serve as first-line responders, helping individuals navigate difficult situations and, where needed, referring them to internal or external experts. Their work not only supports individuals but also contributes to a broader culture of empathy, safety and dialogue. By embedding this approach into our wider well-being and prevention policy, SBE reaffirms its commitment to creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and empowered to thrive.

# 5.2.3. Safe Work, Strong Foundations

This paragraph relates to VSME B9.

For us safety is more than a condition for working, it's an ongoing action. It's something we must actively build, reinforce and improve every single day. We are committed to ensuring **a safe and healthy working environment for all employees**. A strong safety culture is essential not only to prevent incidents, but also to create a positive and responsible working environment in which everyone feels valued and protected.

Achieving the **Safety Culture Ladder Level 3 – Light** certification in 2024 demonstrates our proactive commitment to safety beyond legal compliance. This level of certification reflects that safety awareness is embedded in our daily operations and that employees take ownership of safety in their own work and that of their colleagues, visitors,… By continuously investing in safety culture, training and open dialogue, we aim to strengthen trust, reduce risks and contribute to a sustainable and healthy work environment.

Our safety principles state that safety is a shared responsibility; from our Co-CEOs to interns, everyone plays a role in protecting each other. We promote a proactive **safety mindset**, encouraging all employees to stay alert, speak up and look out for one another. Our **S.T.O.P. principle** empowers anyone to immediately stop unsafe work, without fear of consequences, until it's safe to proceed. We also value the **power of reporting**: by sharing unsafe situations or near misses and also safety alerts of accidents, we learn, adapt and continuously improve. Together, we create a culture where health and safety are not just rules, but they're part of how we work every day.

In the reporting year, the following figures were recorded:

- The number of recordable work-related accidents was 1, resulting in a **rate of 0.59** compared to 4 accidents and a rate of 2.14 in 2024.

  Note: This rate is based on number of work-related accidents in the reporting year and the total number of hours worked by all employees. Commuting accidents and rejected incidents by the insurance company are not included in this figure.

Rate of recordable work-related accidents of employees

$$\frac{\textbf{Number of work-related accidents in the reporting year}}{\textbf{Total number of hours worked in a year by all employees}} \times 200{,}000$$

**= 2.14**

- The significant decrease compared to 2024 may reflect the positive impact of the continued focus on workplace safety, including increased awareness initiatives and the implementation of the Safety Culture Ladder certification.
- There were **0 fatalities** as a result of work-related injuries or work-related ill health.

# 5.2.4. Great work deserves great reward

This paragraph relates to VSME B10.

### FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND VALUES-DRIVEN REMUNERATION

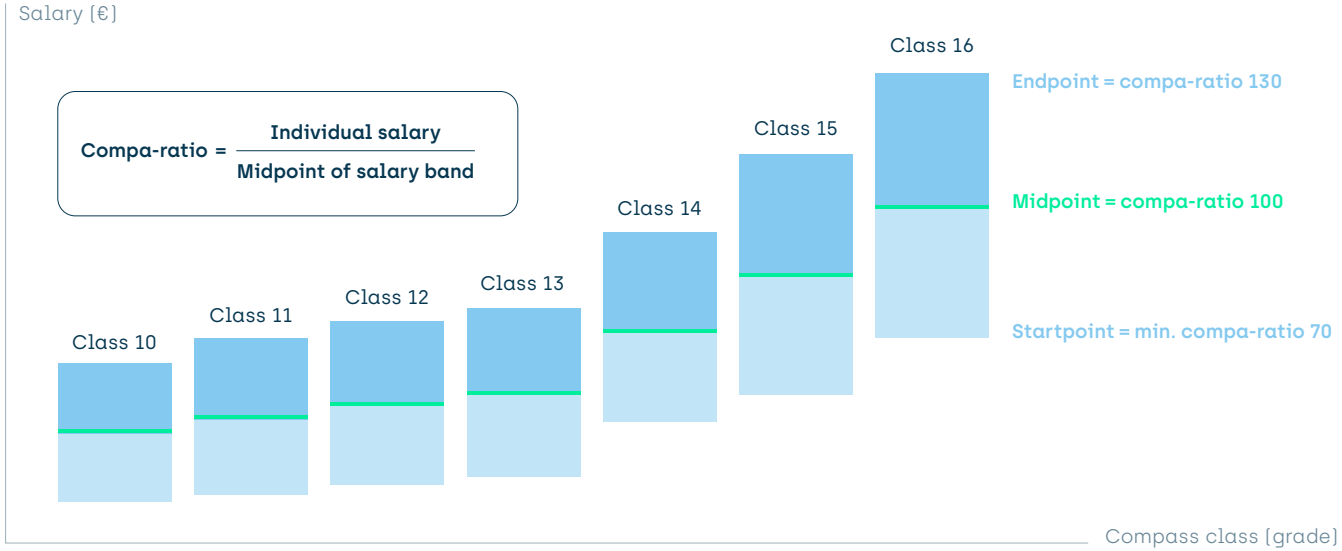
Our remuneration policy is deeply rooted in our core values: assuring quality, designing as one team and building a family. We strive for a transparent and equitable compensation framework that rewards excellence with above-market salaries, reaffirmed through a biennial benchmarking process to ensure fairness and competitiveness. Great work deserves great reward. That's why we are committed to offering competitive salaries that go beyond the market average. Our goal is simple: to **be the best employer in our sector**. Fair and motivating compensation plays a crucial role in achieving that ambition.

Beyond financial remuneration, SBE offers a comprehensive package of non-financial benefits designed to support employee well-being and work-life balance. These include flexible working hours, remote work options and a holistic well-being program. Employees also benefit from extra-legal advantages such as group and hospitalization insurance, meal vouchers, a mobility budget and profit-sharing opportunities.

In 2025, SBE undertook a comprehensive revision of its salary policy, which came into effect in early 2026. The new framework was designed to enhance transparency, objectivity and consistency in remuneration practices. Developed in collaboration with the external HR consultancy Hudson, the policy is based on an **objective job classification system** that **links each role to a defined salary band**. These salary bands include a minimum, midpoint and maximum salary level and are **regularly benchmarked against the market** with the midpoint positioned competitively compared to the market for similar functions.

Annual salary progression is determined through a transparent process that considers the available salary budget, an employee's position within the salary band and their contribution to the team and the organisation. This approach provides employees with a clear and equitable framework for compensation and career development.

**"Great work deserves great reward."**




This integrated and inclusive approach underscores SBE's commitment to creating a supportive work environment in which all employees feel recognized, empowered and motivated to contribute to the company's sustainable growth.

The lowest remuneration within the organisation remains significantly above the statutory minimum wage in each country in which we operate. The difference amounts to 22,7% for white-collar employees in Belgium (2024: 14,72%), 18,9% for blue-collar employees in Belgium (2024: 2.01%), 98% in the Netherlands (2024: 54,3%) and 43% (2024: 84,52%) in Spain.

The relatively large difference in the Netherlands can mainly be explained by the absence of recent junior hires. Recruitment activities in recent years have primarily focused on senior profiles and civil engineers, which generally correspond to higher salary levels. In Spain, on the other hand, a larger proportion of newly recruited employees consisted of junior profiles, resulting in a smaller gap compared to the national minimum wage.

## EQUAL PAY

At the core of our remuneration policy is a strong commitment to fair and equal pay for all employees. In Belgium, our current gender pay gap stands at **10,7%**, compared to **7,06%** in 2024. This gap is primarily related to the composition of our workforce rather than differences in remuneration for comparable roles. The increase can mainly be attributed to the recruitment of more experienced male profiles, while the newly hired female employees were predominantly recent graduates entering the labour market.

A significant portion of our female employees work in support functions, while our project organisation(where average job grades and salaries are typically higher)is predominantly staffed by engineers and technical profiles.

This distribution reflects broader societal trends: engineering fields continue to have a lower proportion of female graduates, resulting in fewer women applying for or entering engineering roles. In contrast, support roles attract a higher number of female applicants, which is reflected in our staffing. Since these roles are generally associated with lower job grades than project engineering roles, this structural difference is the key driver of the observed gender pay gap.

Our compensation and benefits policy defines pay bands based on job grades. When analyzing gender pay data across the entire workforce(without adjusting for job grade) the difference in average pay reflects the current gender distribution across job levels rather than unequal pay for equal work.

We remain committed to addressing these structural imbalances through inclusive hiring, talent development and support for greater gender diversity in technical career paths.

In Spain, the gender pay gap amounted to 20,6% in 2025 (2024: 19,56%). However, this analysis does not take into account factors such as seniority, job complexity, level of responsibility or years of experience, which have a significant influence on remuneration levels. In the Netherlands, only one female employee was employed in 2025, making the dataset insufficiently representative to calculate or meaningfully interpret a gender pay gap figure.

While these factors explain part of the observed gap, we remain committed to fostering greater balance and equal opportunities across all areas of the organisation. We continue to invest in initiatives that support career development, promote inclusive growth and encourage greater diversity throughout all departments.

Pay equality is not just about numbers it's about creating an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

The coverage rate of collective bargaining agreements equals 100%. This number excludes self-employed colleagues.

# 5.2.5. Building Experts at Play

This paragraph relates to VSME B2-B10.

As an engineering firm, we know that knowledge is one of our most valuable assets. Our success depends on the expertise, creativity and problem-solving abilities of our people. That's why we place such a strong focus on continuous learning, training and professional development.

Technology and regulations evolve fast and so do we. Continuous learning helps us stay ahead, deliver top-quality solutions and empower our engineers to grow in their careers. For us, knowledge isn't just an advantage. It's a mindset.

### SBE ACADEMY: KNOWLEDGE SHARING AS A DRIVER FOR INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

At SBE, the **SBE Academy** plays a vital role in fostering knowledge sharing among colleagues. Through technical articles, training summaries, organized braintables and accessible spreadsheets, expertise and insights are widely disseminated. Employees can easily subscribe to channels relevant to their interests, creating a personalized learning experience. The academy also encourages co-creation sessions where knowledge from different domains intersects to develop valuable new content.

Knowledge communities provide a low-threshold environment for asking targeted questions and enhancing collaboration. This comprehensive approach to **knowledge sharing** not only supports the professional growth of our employees but also contributes to sustainable innovation within our organization.

For each knowledge domain (ranging from disciplines, materials, methodologies and software packages), we have allocated **knowledge managers**. Knowledge Managers play a vital role in capturing, organizing and sharing expertise within their domains. They

prioritize knowledge activities based on feedback, balancing day-to-day sharing with strategic projects. They organize training, support colleagues with guidance and resources and act as ambassadors for their fields. Working closely with coordinators and teams, they ensure knowledge initiatives align with company goals. They also maintain platforms like **SBE Academy** and **SharePoint** to keep knowledge accessible and up to date. Their work fosters continuous learning and collaboration, helping the company stay efficient, innovative and competitive by making sure valuable knowledge is retained and shared.

There is also a knowledge domain **Circularity and Sustainability** that focuses on sustainability in projects. Via brain tables (both internal and external), presentations (e.g. let's talks), news articles and the integration of new tools, we strive to create general environmental awareness among our employees and increase our internal knowledge of sustainability and environmentally conscious design.

## EMPOWERING LIFELONG LEARNING AND PERSONAL GROWTH

We believe that sustainable growth as a company starts with growing our people. Our training policy is designed to foster a culture of continuous learning, personal development and knowledge sharing. Aligned with our ambition to become the best employer in the sector, SBE empowers all "Experts at Play" to take charge of their own professional journey.

Each employee is entitled to an average of five training days per year, with additional opportunities for role-specific and collective training initiatives.

Our training offer includes technical and soft skill development, on-the-job coaching, role-based learning tracks and personal development paths. Through our SBE Academy and strong support network of team coaches and knowledge managers, employees are encouraged to shape their learning experience in line with their aspirations and the evolving needs of the organization. Learnings from external trainings are actively captured and shared, reinforcing SBE's identity as a learning organization.

This commitment to professional growth not only supports individual development, but also strengthens our capacity to innovate, adapt and contribute meaningfully to a sustainable future.

In 2025 all SBE employees together followed **8.252,5 h** (2024: 8.123,17 h) of trainings, what resembles **28,95 h per employee** (2024: 32,75 h). Divided per gender this corresponds to 5.433,15 h (2024: 5.407,67 h) of training by male and 2.819,35 h (2024: 2.715,5 h) by female employees.

Although total training hours increased slightly in 2025, this growth did not keep pace with the increase in the workforce, resulting in a lower average number of training hours per employee across both genders. This was mainly due to 2025 being an exceptionally busy project year, leaving less time for formal training.

It should be noted that, consistent with the previous reporting year, these figures only include hours spent attending formal training courses. Training hours related to onboarding programmes, learning on the job, participation in dedicated task forces and other informal learning initiatives are not included.

### Average training hours

| Male | Female |
|---|---|
| **26,63** | **34,81** |
| 29,88 in 2024 | 41,14 in 2024 |

## EMBEDDING QUALITY

For us, quality is more than a result, it's a mindset embedded in our culture. As an independent engineering and design consultancy, we continuously improve our processes, people and projects to meet industry standards and exceed client expectations.

In civil and electromechanical engineering, technical excellence is essential, but we believe true quality also means delivering reliable, solution-oriented service. That's why we build long-term, confidential relationships with clients, suppliers and subcontractors based on trust and collaboration.

We invest in the growth of our people, challenge our operations daily and maintain a rigorous quality system with internal audits, external reviews and real-time feedback. Our Integrated Management System (IMS) ensures streamlined operations and consistent results across the board.

Client centricity is at the core of our DNA. With a no-nonsense, pragmatic approach, we work as one team, internally and with our partners, to deliver tailored solutions that make a difference.

At SBE, we don't just offer services, we build lasting partnerships. We are more than a technically strong engineering company. We are a community driven by connection, collaboration and shared success.

# 5.2.6. Building a responsible future

Companies do not operate in isolation. They are part of and benefit from, the society around them. As a company, we recognise the responsibility we carry and strive to lead by example within society. Our role goes beyond delivering engineering solutions and it's essential to **give something back to the communities we're part of**.

By giving back, we help build stronger, more resilient communities, which in turn supports long-term business continuity. It also fosters trust, strengthens relationships with stakeholders and attracts employees and clients who value purpose-driven organizations.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER: CHARITY

Part of the employee-driven initiative Teambuilders, is our Charity workgroup that focuses on community involvement. Each year, every office, chooses a local charity they want to support that year. During the year, they can support the charity in different ways. For example, by building connections with local charities by volunteering or organising fundraising initiatives and charity events.

In the Flemish offices, the team rallied behind "Kom op tegen Kanker" for a second consecutive year in honour of a colleague who recently lost their battle with cancer. The support took many forms, from fundraising through after-work events like the Charity Café, "Koffiekoeken" and smoothie sales to a full charity week including a Warmathon, as well as the annual Christmas market featuring food stalls and a tombola.

In March 2025, two SBE teams also participated in the 100 km run for Kom op tegen Kanker, raising an impressive €5,510 through bake sales, with 78% of the proceeds directly supporting cancer research. In addition, several colleagues volunteered during the national flower sale of Kom op tegen Kanker, highlighting how small, dedicated efforts can create a wider societal impact. On the Day Against Cancer, we showed our support in a more personal way by wearing yellow ribbons, spreading awareness and sharing heartfelt messages for patients, their families, caregivers and volunteers, offering a small but meaningful boost of encouragement.

The Rotterdam office raised funds for Support Casper through after-work drinks and other social activities. The organisation supports innovative research into pancreatic cancer, focusing on immunotherapy and viro-immunotherapy to improve survival for one of the most aggressive cancer types.

The Valencia office supported Bancos de alimentos de Valencia, raising money via similar social initiatives. The food bank works to provide essential food support to people in vulnerable situations, helping address one of the most basic human needs.

The Namur office continued its support for Les Chemins d'Ariane, an organisation providing psycho-medical-social-educational care for people with severe or profound intellectual disabilities through residential and integration services, including "La Navette" .

Following a volunteer day in Ciney in December 2024, the office made a financial donation in 2025, further strengthening its support for the organisation's mission to promote inclusion, care and an improved quality of life for people with disabilities.

Besides that, each year SBE helps organise a **charity concert** for "De Warmste Week" of Studio Brussel in collaboration with the Casino of Sint-Niklaas to support "**the Kinderkankerfonds"**. In 2025, all proceeds (€10.000) from the Sylvie Kreusch concert tickets and drinks went directly to this foundation for children with cancer.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sint-Niklaas | KOM OP TEGEN KANKER | € 11.659,43 |
| Namur | LES CHEMINS D'ARIANE | € 1.500 |
| Rotterdam | SUPPORT CASPER | € 725,70 |
| Valencia | BANCO DE ALIMENTOS DE VALENCIA | € 1.223 |
| Corporate | KINDERKANKERFONDS<br>Together with De Casino | € 10.000 |

## GIVE A LITTLE, CHANGE A LOT

Every year, blood and plasma donations help save lives, with a single donation making a vital difference. With the local donor center being only 850 meters away from our Sint-Niklaas office, giving blood and plasma has never been easier. Between June 2025-May 2026, **102 donations** were made by SBE employees of the Sint-Niklaas office, an impressive ratio of nearly 1 in every 2 colleagues for the office, making us the top-performing company in the region in absolute numbers of donations. This year, an additional award was presented to the company with the highest donation rate: Eerstelijnszone Waasland. Thanks to our team's remarkable commitment to blood and plasma donation **Red Cross Flanders**, named SBE the **"Company with the Biggest Heart"** for the Sint-Niklaas donor centre, for the second consecutive year.

This recognition is part of the Red Cross' "Company with a Big Heart" campaign, which encourages businesses to motivate their employees to donate blood or plasma, both vital for lifesaving treatments. At SBE, donation has become a shared habit, with colleagues frequently visiting the nearby donor center during lunch breaks or after work, sometimes even turning it into a social moment.
The initiative was inspired by one of our colleagues, a regular plasma donor, who helped promote the campaign internally. His enthusiasm sparked wider participation and helped foster a stronger sense of social responsibility across the company.

## BEPASIN, SPRING LITTER CLEAN UP

In 2025, Bepasin, the umbrella federation of companies in Sint-Niklaas, organised the very first Litter Clean-Up for business parks, in collaboration with the City of Sint-Niklaas.

Litter is a global problem. Litter can harm wildlife, pollute waterways and damage ecosystems. Plastics, in particular, take years to decompose and can even enter the food chain. While we sort our waste well at home and in the office, there's still room for improvement when we're out and about. Business parks in particular are sensitive areas, which is why this joint initiative aims to keep all industrial zones in Sint-Niklaas clean and well maintained. **SBE was one of the litter ambassadors** for our region, allowing nearby companies to join the initiative.

The first edition was a great success, with around **400 participants from companies across all business parks in Sint-Niklaas joining forces to collect litter** during their lunch break. This collective effort created a strong sense of connection between companies and employees. Together with fellow company Studiegroep Irtas, SBE helped clean the streets around its office, contributing to a cleaner and more pleasant working environment for everyone.

## STUDENTS AT PLAY

Inspiring and empowering the engineers of tomorrow is an essential part of our mission. By opening our doors to students and involving them in real-life projects, we aim to pass on our expertise, foster enthusiasm for STEM fields and promote sustainable thinking from an early age.

One example is the **SBE Student Challenge**, a yearly design contest where university students from various disciplines team up to work on a real-world, integrated design assignment. The 2025 edition focused on the design of the connection across the Willebroek Canal in Brussels-Vilvoorde, inspired by an actual SBE project.Through a series of workshop days hosted at our Sint-Niklaas office, students explored architecture, landscape and engineering themes under the guidance of our in-house experts. The challenge promotes **transdisciplinary teamwork**, creativity and knowledge-sharing, reflecting our own design philosophy. It also provides a valuable platform for SBE to connect with future graduates, offering them a hands-on learning experience. The 2025 edition concluded with strong concepts and innovative designs from all four student teams, with one standout group taking home the title of **challenge winner**.

We also reach out to younger students through the **Scholenproject**, which we've supported since 2021. Final-year secondary students in science-based tracks are invited at SBE to discover the world of sustainable infrastructure. They get to explore our Vijfstraten cycling bridge project, take a guided tour of our office, experiment with our bike simulator and even build a bamboo bridge.

Both initiatives underline our commitment to **sharing knowledge and inspiring future talent**. By showing students the tangible impact of engineering, we hope to encourage them to pursue technical studies and, one day, help shape a more sustainable future, possibly even at SBE.

## TRIDEALHOUSES: INNOVATIVE SOLUTION TO SLUM POVERTY

SBE is proud to support the Tridealhouse project, an **innovative housing solution** addressing urban poverty in Ethiopia through sustainable, self-sufficient homes. In 2024, SBE optimized the steel structure for the second Tridealhouse prototype. This is a **modular, triangular-shaped home** designed to endure **extreme weather** while empowering slum dwellers with a path out of poverty.

These compact homes are more than shelters; they offer a means of **self-reliance**. Each rooftop garden supplies residents with vegetables, providing food security while enabling income generation. Two-thirds of the produce can be sold, making the homes partially self-financing. Future Tridealhouse communities, called "hamlets", will feature shared gardens and social spaces, forming resilient, self-sustaining urban villages.

**"The cooperation with SBE serves as a powerful example of how technical knowledge and social responsibility can go hand in hand."**

Michel Loots, founder Trideal Houses

Engineered to last over 80 years with minimal upkeep, these homes rely on durable materials and smart construction techniques. The first prototype, built at Addis Ababa University, provided critical insights, such as the necessity of corrosion-resistant steel and a weld-free structure. Additionally, water management challenges inspired a shift toward shared central water tanks for each hamlet, rather than placing them beneath individual homes. While the first prototype's heavy concrete panels led to over-dimensioning, upcoming models will feature lightweight sandwich panels, significantly reducing the steel frame size and overall material consumption.

To showcase this innovation to the rest of Africa, a second demonstration home was constructed in 2025 in the parking lot of the Ministry. The government fully supports the hamlet concept and the founder currently finalizing financing from the World Bank for an extensive feasibility study. Developing this comprehensive study first was a deliberate strategy. It will not only help technically refine and fund the execution of the initial hamlets, but it will also serve as an international validation for other countries where the World Bank operates.

The project emphasizes modularity and local production, enabling communities to assemble homes themselves, creating employment opportunities and building local capacity. SBE collaborated closely with Ethiopian engineers and architects to ensure effective knowledge transfer and context-specific design.

Beyond housing, the Tridealhouse initiative delivers long-term benefits: **job creation, food security and stronger community ties**. It aligns with 12 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, including those focused on decent work, responsible consumption and global partnerships. This project also demonstrated the importance of reliable partners who apply their knowledge for social impact. When experts come together with a shared purpose, we can build solutions that change lives.

## BALANCING PROFIT AND PURPOSE

Socially responsible entrepreneurship is no longer an optional add-on; it has become an essential part of modern business. At SBE, we view this not as a cost, but as a strategic, long-term investment in our people, our environment and the future of our industry.

Our commitment to sustainability and social value has yielded tangible results. We see stronger engagement and motivation among employees, thanks to the SBE Café, teambuilder workgroups, HR policies, and more. We have received multiple awards for our wellbeing efforts. Additionally, we've built strong, trust-based relationships with stakeholders who value transparency and ethical conduct. Major initiatives like electrifying our vehicle fleet, installing 458 solar panels, and adding 25 charging points required upfront investments but now reduce CO2 emissions and shrink our environmental footprint. Beyond environmental gains, we enhance our societal impact. Since rolling out our sustainability business development plan, we contribute more to biodiversity and promote future-proof infrastructure solutions. Our new environmental cluster and structured framework ensure a consistent sustainability approach across projects. By reinforcing our socially engaged role, these initiatives are core to how we create value, not just side benefits.

By balancing profitability with purpose, we believe we are building a resilient business that benefits both society and our clients. The return is not only visible in numbers, but in trust, credibility and long-term relevance.

# 5.3. Responsible Business Conduct

This paragraph relates to VSME C6-C7.

While we do business, we strive to demonstrate integrity and making mindful, responsible choices. We take a proactive, values-driven approach to ensure that our actions contribute positively across our operations and in every part of our value chain, strengthening trust, minimizing risks and supporting the well-being of people, communities and the environment.

## CORPORATE CULTURE

SBE's culture as a family-owned company with a flat organizational structure fosters strong personal connections, open communication and a sense of belonging. This distinctive work environment sets us apart from competitors and serves as a key opportunity to attract new talent seeking purpose, autonomy and a supportive team dynamic.

## LIVING OUR VALUES THROUGH ETHICAL CONDUCT

This paragraph relates to VSME C6-C7-C8.

A policy only has value when it's actively lived and applied. Therefore, our **code of conduct** is more than a set of rules, it is a reflection of our core values:

**Building a Family**

**Designing as One Team**

**Assuring Quality**

This code guides our daily actions and decisions, ensuring we act with integrity, respect and accountability towards colleagues, clients and society.

We foster a safe workplace where fairness, inclusiveness and well-being are paramount. Discrimination, harassment, corruption and bribery are not tolerated and all employees are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards committed to human rights. Clear

expectations are set for respectful behavior, financial integrity, data protection and sustainable collaboration with partners.

Through this shared commitment, SBE promotes a strong, transparent and values-driven culture that supports long-term, responsible growth for our people, our clients and the communities we serve.

We have nothing to disclose related to severe negative human right incidents in our own workforce and are not aware of any confirmed incidents involving workers in the value chain, affected communities, consumers and end-users. SBE also has nothing to disclose concerning revenues from certain sectors and exclusion from EU reference benchmarks.

## SUPPLIER CODE OF CONDUCT

While our procurement needs are relatively limited and are mainly focused on on office/ SBE Café supplies, software, facility services and project-related contractors/consultants, the broader impact of our work lies the **infrastructure solutions** we help deliver.

All our suppliers are expected to comply with applicable laws, standards and regulations, as well as the principles outlined in the **SBE code of conduct**. These include a strong commitment to **health and safety, environmental responsibility, ethical business practices, legal compliance** and the **protection of human and labour rights**. Upholding these standards ensures a responsible and sustainable approach across all areas of cooperation.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Even though our client projects are mostly situated in **Belgium, The Netherlands and France** and the risk of violating human rights in our own business operations are very small, SBE attach a lot of importance to human rights. It is included in both our internal as our supplier code of conduct.

We are committed to **upholding human rights across our operations and value chain**. This includes a strict ban on child labour, forced labour, illegal employment, inhumane working conditions and a strong commitment to equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Whenever negative impact on human rights is detected, we'll take immediate actions to address this. Through internal training and open dialogue, we continuously strengthen awareness across our teams.

We expect the same commitment from our suppliers and partners. Respect for human rights and decent working conditions is a prerequisite for collaboration and concerns can be reported through the **Whistle Willow**.

## INTEGRITY LINE: WHISTLE WILLOW

This paragraph relates to VSME B11-C6.

In line with Belgian and European legislation, SBE has introduced a **whistleblower system** to support **ethical conduct and transparency**. This whistle willow system allows employees and external parties to confidentially report breaches of internal policies, applicable laws and any other type of misconduct. The system guarantees confidentiality, protects whistleblowers from retaliation and provides both internal and external reporting options.

There were no convictions or fines incurred for the violation of anti-corruption and anti-bribery laws during the reporting period.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIVACY AND CYBERSECURITY AT SBE

As a knowledge-driven engineering company, SBE handles large volumes of sensitive project and client data, making privacy and cybersecurity critical to our operations. In 2024, the SBE **Let's Inspire** event highlighted the importance of **cybersecurity awareness**, emphasizing that every employee can be a potential entry point for digital breaches. To strengthen our defense, we organize regular phishing simulations and weekly online training sessions to **raise awareness and reduce human error**.

While our IT department implements robust security systems and protocols, we acknowledge that cyber threats are evolving rapidly. It is not a question of if, but when an attack might occur. As such, we consider cybersecurity one of our highest risk areas, requiring continuous vigilance and company-wide engagement.

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