



BALANCE
green and stable

GREEN PRACTICES INTEGRATED IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS

NATIONAL REPORT

BELGIUM

**euro
geo**



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

CONTEXT

Grant agreement	2020-1-KA204-079048
Programme	Erasmus +
Key action	Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
Action	Strategic Partnerships for adult education
Project acronym	BALANCE
Project title	BALANCE - Green & Stable - Bringing Sustainability and Environmental Action Together for Better Future
Project starting date	01.11.2020
Project duration	24 months
Project end date	31.10.2022
Project Activity (A)	Output 1 - A3 – Dissemination
Deliverable title	Green policies and financial sustainability: national reports
Produced by	EUROGEO

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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About the Project

The need for climate action and sustainable resources management is more important than ever. The Green Deal presented by the European Commission on 11th of December 2019, sets the goal, Europe to be a climate-neutral continent by 2050. The Green Deal addresses the immediate need for specific actions that support Circular Economy, helping to reduce CO2 emissions, transform the energy industry, move the production to a more environmental-friendly stage and many more.

The way to becoming Climate-Neutral continent will put in front of us new types of challenges. One of them lay in front of small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) which have an essential role in achieving a greener economy as it is indicated by the Green Action Plan.

The upcoming regulations based on the Green Deal are extremely needed, but also they put many of the traditional business models in a transitional situation. The small business struggled in the past decay to recover from a financial crisis and now is facing new challenges operating in COVID-19 world. This business finds it hard to adapt quickly to the needed.

The most sensitive are the SMEs, where change management is challenged by the lack of present financial or human resources, sustainability and knowledge, especially for micro-SMEs.

BALANCE is a project that steps on the key learning points from the Green Action Plan for SMEs, to combine best practices around EU and back them up with financial knowledge in order to create a valuable and training program which curriculum is based on ECVET for the transformation of the small business into greener ones without having to sacrifice the financial sustainability of the enterprises and allow them to keep their employees.



The Balance project aims to develop and provide SMEs decision makers with an innovative program that will help them transform into greener operations while improving their financial literacy and enhancing their environmental awareness. The project addresses a key priority of the EU related to environmental and climate goals. Supporting individuals in acquiring and developing basic skills and key competencies is the horizontal priority underpinning this project.



Objectives and Conduct of the research

This research reviews the situation for SMEs in Belgium. It aims to show some successful, implemented examples of companies that focus on greener operations in order to increase the awareness of environmentally friendly transitions.

The research was undertaken initially by an Internet search on the national situation and initiatives. Then attempts were made to contact SMEs operating in different regions. However, due to COVID lockdown it was difficult to reach directors of the companies by phone or email. Of those that responded only one was prepared to conduct the interview online. Therefore a fuller Internet search was undertaken and information extracted from reports and company Web sites.

National Context for SMEs: Belgium

Belgium has an open economy, which is largely driven by SMEs and free and sustainable competition. The green economy is both an environmental and an economic priority for Belgium and for SMEs. As a result, the country's various public authorities award various types of aid to companies, including allowances, subsidies and tax breaks, for investments and R&D that are designed to ease the burden on the environment. In addition to such aid, Belgium's three Regions have reoriented their economies towards sustainable development.

Based on business figures from 2019 (Statista, 2020), more than half of all small and medium enterprises in Belgium were located in the Flanders region. Overall there were around 1.1 million SMEs in the country. According to BusinessBelgium (2020), over the past 10 years, the number of companies active in the environmental industry in Belgium has increased by 44%. At the same time, the turnover of this sector has risen by 22%, and the number of jobs has soared by 40%.

Belgium has established a framework for Business Clusters to facilitate development. These clusters aim to provide better knowledge between members and with a view to knowing the environment of the concerned area of activity, updates of technical and commercial issues providing thematic seminars, to strengthen the commercial links between members and allow an innovative capacity and higher competitiveness to be reached. The clusters seek to develop partnerships in the fields such as the production of goods and services, research-development or commercial approaches creating new activities. The framework promotes the region internationally with a view to strengthening the appeal to foreign investors and their participation in specialised trade fairs. The Clusters help members to share knowledge and exchange good practices and strengthen the synergy between the activities of the business cluster and those of other forms of enterprises.

According to the Brussels Times (2019), Belgium is Europe's SME country according to the Director of UNIZO. According to SME Lead (2020) a report by business intelligence provider Graydon suggested small business in Belgium are enjoying their most successful period for ten years, despite seven months of political uncertainty. However, a minority of SMEs are in serious trouble and run a considerable risk of bankruptcy, Graydon notes. In Wallonia and Flanders, about 10% of small and medium-sized businesses are in that situation, but in Brussels, the figure climbs to 20%. Euractiv (2020) say that according to estimations by Belgian bank Belfius based on a survey of 19,000

companies, up to 30.8% of Belgium's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) may not survive the COVID-19 crisis if the current measures to combat the pandemic continue.

National and other initiatives

Belgian policy to promote innovative entrepreneurship and innovation activities in SMEs is largely designed and delivered at the regional level through three regions three regions, the Brussels-Capital Region, Flanders and Wallonia. The following initiatives indicate some examples of this.

A new centre of competitiveness for Wallonia

The Walloon government decided to devote a new 'centre of competitiveness' to new environmental technologies. Wallonia is deploying economic tools to seize this opportunity, focussing in particular on starts-ups, spin-offs, very small enterprises (VSEs) and SMEs in industries in the environmental sector and also on training in professions within these areas of activity. In addition, three green clusters (Eco Construction, Tweed and Waste) are already active in Wallonia (<https://clusters.wallonie.be/federateur-en/the-walloon-business-clusters.html?IDC=36&IDD=250>).

Environment and Sustainable Development



CAP 2020 is the Walloon network of sustainable construction. It brings together all types of construction actors: architects, design offices, contractors, installers, producers and materials suppliers, real estate developers, research centers and training, associations. Together, members work together to promote sustainable construction, acquire new skills and develop their business.



Eco-construction is a network of companies that aim at building while taking into consideration today's environment and the one of future generations while offering a maximum of comfort to the inhabitants. It gathers architects, infrared thermography and electromagnetic pollution specialists, builders, companies active in the green renovation sector, manufacturers, green building materials suppliers and green electricians, companies active in the field of renewable energy, building contractors specialized in water treatment by lagooning, natural pools installation, rainwater treatment and recovery...



TWEEED cluster (Technology of Wallonia Energy, Environment and sustainable Development), is the Business Cluster gathering entities active in the 'sustainable energy' sector, which means renewable energy sources, energy efficiency: the implementation of new processes in order to achieve energy savings, energy efficiency or the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, green products and services.

Developments in Brussels

The Brussels-Capital Region also has an environmental technology centre, which provides Brussels-based companies with assistance on all aspects of environmental protection, ranging from air, water and soil purification to biotechnology and training.

BrusselsGreenTech (<https://www.circlemade.brussels/en/>) was founded in 2018, with Circlemade as the Brussels network for circular economy pioneers. It is an organisation of cutting-edge companies, public institutions and experts. It monitors, informs, supports and mobilises to drive innovation which boosts the development of the regional circular economy offering and maximises the impact of its members' initiatives. Members commit to cooperating to develop innovative circular solutions together.

Coopcity

Coopcity is the centre for social, cooperative and collaborative entrepreneurship in Brussels. Coopcity supports Brussels entrepreneurial initiatives with high added value for society and is particularly interested in the needs of emerging collective projects. Their approach is based on cooperation, commitment offering the best resources to materialize and develop Brussels social entrepreneurship projects, creativity and the continuous improvement of services, trust having full confidence in the professionalism of the partners, in the strength of the collective and in the ability of the people of Brussels to become entrepreneurs of change.

The Greenbizz initiative

GreenBizz is a business incubator in the economic sectors of sustainable energy and the environment. It offers reception, hosting and support infrastructure for managers of environmental projects with the incubator boasting 7,500 m² of incubation, pre-incubation, prototyping and pre-production spaces at the heart of Brussels' green and circular economy ecosystem, offering opportunities to develop business networks and grow business. It is a 4-hectare space dedicated to the development of environment-conscious enterprises. Greenbizz is the first sustainable economy incubator in Brussels. Launched in 2016, the initiative is one of several strategies employed by the Brussels-Capital Region with the goal of making Brussels a more sustainable city.



Greenbizz is part of a large-scale urban development called TIVOLI, funded by the European Regional Development Fund (FEDER) and CITYDEV. The facility is housed in an energy-efficient building made of wood and other sustainable materials. "As a passive building, it is well insulated and doesn't require a lot of energy for heating. In fact, the building generates more energy than it uses," says Greenbizz director Jean-Marc Bryskère.



At present, Greenbizz is incubating about 40 different start-ups. The place has a good feel to it, where people are devoted to the same philosophy and mission of promoting and cultivating socially and environmentally responsible ways of making profit. Greenbizz welcomes entrepreneurs who want to

make a more positive impact on the planet. Greenbizz provides them with work spaces in a stimulating environment conducive to innovation.

There are production workshops, modular offices and co-working spaces. The Workshops are from 120 to 550 m² (height 6 to 8m) meeting low energy energy standards, Casco with water - gas - electricity - internet connections – outlets and are adaptable to AFSCA laboratory standards. There is access by vans and unloading space for trucks. The modular offices provide accommodation for 1- 10 people, in the new passive building, “all in” formula. Greenbizz offers fixed prices including all services in the cost, flexibility in terms of the contract duration and in terms of office space, adapting to the needs of clients. The co-working spaces provide a flexible format either as full time (24/7) or half-time (20h / week) with a flexi-desk formula in a calm space. The co-working spaces have been approved by Bruxelles Économie et Emploi giving the possibility of benefiting from a bonus grant of up to €450.

Greenbizz is said to offer a work environment entirely dedicated to the sustainable economy, with many startups who can exchange, share and develop business. Privileged contacts with players in the innovative and sustainable economy in Brussels: hub.brussels, Bruxelles Environnement, Innoviris, etc. and access to specialized funding sources.

Greenbizz offers fully flexible production workshops and private offices, 100% equipped meeting rooms and fablab with the latest digital equipment, reception and logistics service: with high-speed internet, telephony, printers, furniture, common areas, bicycle parking with showers.

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Green Practise 1: Working with Wood

Company name: **Wood Harmony**

Size: less than 10

Industry: **Carpentry and wood refurbishment**

Years of Existence: 4

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals

Wood Harmony is a carpentry business that creates wood products for indoor and outdoor applications. Their approach is underpinned by a local, environmentally responsible philosophy that we apply at every stage, from design to manufacturing. Our workshop uses cutting-edge wood dust filters. Our projects can optionally be built using wood from sustainably managed local forests. We also offer the possibility of using reused wood and hardware.

Their values are:

- Quality of work: Great attention to detail in all aspects of projects from conception to installation at our customers
- Modern equipment: The equipment is recent. The workshop is installed in "GreenBizz" which brings together companies active in sustainable development.
- Reliability: Open and constructive partnership with our clients in the development of their project.
- Respect of deadlines: They attach the greatest importance to respecting deadlines both for submitting an offer and for carrying out our work

Wood-Harmony performs all types of work in the field of carpentry and cabinetmaking. They produce from the most classic to the most contemporary, whether for interior or exterior projects. We are also specialized in shutter repair and we are approved by for the installation of fire doors. They make outdoor terraces which are aesthetically pleasant and durable. The materials are carefully selected from local suppliers. The products used are adapted to the project, always with a concern for aesthetics and durability. The company is concerned with green practices through sustainability of products.

Procedures, Activities, Phases:

Wood Harmony have an eco-responsible approach. They define themselves as an eco-responsible carpenter-designer. This means identifying the environmental impact of their activity and acting accordingly to limit it. This is to preserve our planet, for future generations and quite simply for its own health and safety.

The actions they are taking are as follows:

- The wood used comes from sustainably managed forests and our manufacturing processes are entirely eco-responsible: wood certified PEFC (Program for the recognition of forest certifications).
- They are responsible purchasing by sourcing wood and materials from local suppliers
- They optimise travel and priority management of local sites
- There is respect for the environment: using glues and natural finishing products
- There is a reduction and management of waste, among others recycling, recovery of used or abandoned wood
- They limit the consumption of non-renewable resources
- The focus on the reduction of nuisances (noise, dust, etc.)
- Renewable energy heating from production waste is used
- The offcuts produced are reused to make decorative and innovative objects
- There is customer orientation towards solid wood or VOC-free (formaldehyde) panels.
- Production is carried out in a shared workshop to have a better rationalization of energy and space.

They are members of a network on "The valuation of our noble waste" (solid wood chips) by making them available for associations in permaculture.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs

Wood Harmony is one of the non-food start-ups at Greenbiz, the first sustainable economy incubator in Brussels. The carpentry business carries out all types of woodwork from classic to contemporary design for outdoor and indoor installations.

Investments have been made in equipment, materials, workshop space in "GreenBizz" a location where SMEs are based that are operating sustainable practices.

- Challenges

It's a struggle for most sustainability ventures to make it in the market. "Since sustainable economy is a fairly new sector, it's quite difficult to launch these start-ups. It involves a lot of risk. You have to develop new business models and find new clients, you have to challenge old business practices and traditional ways of consumption,"

Getting new clients is particularly challenging since sustainable products are more expensive in general. The business of having to look for rarer and more durable alternative materials and solutions that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits all at the same time – is not cheap.

People need to understand that sustainable economy is not particularly less expensive than traditional economy. But it has a huge positive impact on the environment and on public health. It will take time for mentalities to change, but it's happening slowly.

- Role of digital technologies

Digital technologies are used for marketing and for design purposes.

- Results of implementation

The company has established a unique selling point for its products.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)

All employees are responsible for sustainable actions.

- Externally

Web site, Facebook.

Lessons Learnt

Company has a clear vision on environment and sustainability.

Focus on sustainability, even if costs higher.

Visual materials and links





Company logo, brochure etc. etc.



URL: <https://www.wood-harmony.be/>



Green Practise 2: Greener by design

Company name: EuGeos

Size: less than 10

Industry: Environmental Design

Years of Existence: 21

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals

EuGeos is a consultancy company based in the UK with a Belgian office. They focus on life cycle assessment (LCA, EPD and footprinting), environmental management and sustainability consultancy for a circular economy

The company works to ensure that environmental and sustainability management delivers business benefits for client organisations.

As an environmental consultancy, EuGeos's ultimate objective is to benefit the environment. However, EuGeos's activities do consume resources and create pollution, but they aim to understand and minimise this.

- Procedures, Activities, Phases

Their consultants and associates come from a wide range of industrial, commercial and environmental backgrounds. They have extensive experience of implementing effective environmental management and sustainability programmes in organisations ranging in size from the very small to the multinational. They are able to assist organisations to face the challenges of management for sustainability, where actions for - and communications about - environmental care and social responsibility play an important part in the total performance picture.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs

The company take the following steps to control and reduce the harmful effects on the environment:

- making as much use as possible of modern communications technology to reduce travel needs and consumption of resources such as paper and ink.
- using paper which is certified to at least one national eco-labelling scheme and reducing paper consumption through minimising printing and using the double-sided option.
- selecting energy-efficient office equipment which meets respected environmental standards and using the low-power standby facilities of this office equipment.
- optimising business travel and using public transport whenever convenient.

- making high fuel efficiency a strongly preferred feature of any business car, purchasing cleaner fuels where these are available at competitive prices, and regularly maintaining vehicles.
- recycling as much as possible and disposing of wastes safely and legally.
- Challenges

Adjusting to new regulations. This adjustment however creates more business.

- Role of digital technologies

Digital technologies are used to save on communication and reporting. Also essential for management, monitoring and report of environment.

Over 15 years Eugeos have employed various LCA software solutions, integrating data from a range of sources. (LCA = life cycle assessment)

EuGeos' 15804+A2_IA v4.1 database is a version of ecoinvent v3_6 extended to allow calculation of the indicators required in construction product EPD to meet European standard EN 15804.

- Results of implementation

Measuring, monitoring and reporting of environmental management and savings. Environmental product information enables customers to check whether the environmental attributes of products or services meet their expectations, and enables the green credentials of competing products to be compared.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)

All the consultants employed 'buy in' to the vision of the company. As environmental experts they seek to share expertise and provide savings for their clients

- Externally

The company are very active on the Web.

- Possible alignment with the company's CSR

The alignment is clear in the vision statement on the company web site.

Financial details explanation:

The company make savings on using modern communications technology to reduce travel needs and consumption of resources, using paper which is certified to at least one national eco-labelling scheme and reducing paper consumption through minimising printing and using the double-sided option, selecting energy-efficient office equipment which meets respected environmental standards and using the low-power standby facilities of this office equipment, optimising business travel and using public transport whenever convenient, making high fuel efficiency a strongly preferred feature of any

business car, purchasing cleaner fuels where these are available at competitive prices, and regularly maintaining vehicles and recycling as much as possible and disposing of wastes safely and legally.

Lessons Learnt

The company have a clear vision on environment and the high-level and advanced services it can offer to its clients, this is shared within the company and acted upon.

Visual materials and links:

<p>Measure and analyse the environmental impacts of your organisation's products and services, including their carbon footprint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) studies • carbon footprinting and water footprinting • Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) preparation 	<p>Manage and improve your products, services, processes and supply-chains to reduce their environmental impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental management and environmental management system (EMS) • environmental reviews • environmental audits • ecodesign
<p>Communicate the environmental performance of your products and the sustainability achievements of your organisation to all your stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) • green marketing & ecolabels • green claims (environmental self-declarations) 	<p>Comply with standards, legislation and regulations to meet your obligations as well as the expectations of customers and wider society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental compliance • environmental permits • LCA critical reviews • Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) review and verification

life cycle assessment environmental management EPD environmental audits carbon footprinting EMS

environmental permits ecolabels LCA critical reviews EPD verification LCA water footprinting

Environmental Product Declarations openLCA



Company logo, brochure etc. etc.



URL: <http://www.eugeos.co.uk/>



Green Practise 3: Clean and green

Company name: Informativ Poly Cleaning IPC

Size: less than 10

Industry: Specialised cleaning services

Years of Existence: 25

Description of the green practices involved:

IPC services garages and manufacturing plants, SMEs and information centres.

- Goals

Using a 100% environmentally-friendly method, workstations are cleaned, server rooms cleaned, dust removed from server. The company is a supplier of: Cleaning services | Cleaning products for information technology | Networks - installation and maintenance | IT Services | computer assistance maintenance.

- Procedures, Activities, Phases

IPC is in the computer equipment cleaning and disinfecting business and has successfully combined flexibility and logistics – two factors that enable it to extend its services to many sites and business sectors such as banking and insurance, the hotel and outside catering industries, Ministry of Justice and European institutions, public and social services, garages and manufacturing plants, SMEs and information centres. Using a 100% environmentally-friendly method, workstations are cleaned, server rooms cleaned, dust removed from server racks and Switch by Ionization, Moving and ergonomics (relocation), server rooms decontaminated. IPC has premises in Brussels and Luxembourg, close to the major administrative centres, and its recognized experience has resulted in it working for numerous businesses in Belgium, Luxembourg and further afield. IPC has had the IBGE Enterprise Ecodynamic label for more than 13 years. IPC uses a leading-edge process that is unique in Europe,

The cleaning of computer equipment also contributes to maintaining hygiene, brand image and respect for the equipment.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs

Investments have been made in terms of specialist machinery and equipment, logistics support for mobile workforce and training for staff

IPC has developed extensive know-how in 100% environmentally-friendly IT equipment cleaning and disinfection using a nanotechnology-based process. We also specialise in data centre maintenance and hot and cold server micro-dusting.

- Challenges

Specialisation – keeping up to date with changes in technology.

Marketing unique processes establishment.

- Role of digital technologies

Digital technologies are used for training, logistics of staff.

Informatic Poly Cleaning is actively using 24 technologies for its website, including Viewport Meta, iPhone / Mobile Compatible, and SSL by Default.

- Results of implementation

Their focus is on making cost savings for organisations, their clients – for instance on energy and inefficiency and lowering the failure rate of equipment. Due to implementation they are able to stay ahead of competitors

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)

Employees are specialised and undergo high quality training to meet customer demand.

- Externally

Web site and via trade agencies.

Financial details explanation:

Informatic Poly Cleaning is located in Bruxelles, Belgium and is part of the Electronic Equipment Repair Services Industry. Informatic Poly Cleaning has 1 employee at this location and generates \$191,000 in sales (USD).

Lessons Learnt

Stay ahead of technology changes

High level training of staff to be able to meet specialist needs of clients

Develop and promote unique methods – selling point

Visual materials and links:

BREAKDOWN PREVENTION
Our professional teams use the right tools to remove dust particles which can interfere with the proper operation of your computer equipment over the long term.

ENSURING HYGIENE
Work instruments like your keyboard and mouse can harbour many bacteria if you don't clean them on a regular basis.

WORKING CONDITIONS
More positive working conditions. It's always more agreeable to work with clean equipment.

A BETTER BRAND IMAGE
Given that computer equipment is the main work tool at companies, it's important that it project an impeccable image.

ENERGY SAVINGS

IPC

Server micro-dusting

Micro-dusting of servers with ionisation removes static electricity and safely removes dust and particles from the equipment.

Cold dusting (Servers off)

The server is released and carefully slid forward to ensure that no cables are disconnected.

Hard drives, power sources, fans, internal protective plastic covers and hard drive covers are removed.

The server is cleaned with a high-volume ESD vacuum. High-powered ionised air is then blown throughout the

The cards, then the electrical power block are dusted with the high-powered ionising air gun.

Vacuuming and damp dusting of gutters taking special care with the cables.

Damp dusting of racks, cabinets, frames and edges. Dusting of equipment on racks.

Damp dusting of sockets, lights, etc. Damp dusting of other equipment.

Vacuuming and damp dusting of gutters.

Cleaning with a safe ESD-compliant vacuum (electrostatic discharge).

External dusting of rack fan grilles, cabinets, etc. Dust removal using an ionising gun.

External dusting of servers and other components on the racks taking special care with the cables. All equipment can continue to run safely during the entire operation (hot dusting).

Dusting of equipment on racks.

Company logo, brochure etc. etc.



URL: <https://www.ipc-cleaning.eu/en/>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/informativ-poly-cleaning/about/>

Green Practise 4: Green Energy Solutions

Company name: Vortex Energy

Size: 3 (in the Belgian office) set up in 2017

Industry: Renewable energy solutions

Years of Existence: 3

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals

Vortex Energy develop, engineer, finance, implement and operate projects with 100% renewable energy. Our mission is to develop renewable energy in a sound socially responsible and sustainable manner. Our goal is to unite public policy and area characteristics, landowners, local authorities, citizens' initiatives, residents, NGOs, etc., and shape the interests into the implementation of concrete projects, with an emphasis on wind energy.

The company deploys its services where they are needed – offering customized service components (e.g. planning and development, construction and technical and commercial management) or as full-service turnkey renewable energy provider.

- Procedures, Activities, Phases

Vortex Energy develop, engineer, finance, implement and operate projects with 100% renewable energy. They flexibly deploy their services as a partner for renewable energy projects and are open for your participation in projects. In addition to projects that they develop themselves, they also buy started projects that are in difficulty or have been abandoned at an early stage and determine what it will take to implement them successfully.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs

Since 2004 Vortex Energy have offered their services as a responsible, experienced partner for local authorities, landowners, institutions and investors, primarily in the fields of wind energy and photovoltaics. As such vortex energy developed a portfolio over 390MW of wind energy projects mainly in Germany and Poland. In 2017, vortex energy started an office in Belgium as part of the internationalization strategy of the company. In 2018, Vortex Energy Deutschland GmbH became part of E.ON.

The Vortex Energy Group remains internationally active and pursue its growth targets with the Polish and Belgium offices. Our Belgian/Polish and German ways diverge but richness of experience stays for future activities.

- Challenges

Establishing own priorities.

Difficulties related to COVID as public enquiries, related to energy projects, have been postponed since March 2020. Due to the measures taken to limit the spread of the COVID - 19 virus in the population on the Walloon Region, the Walloon Government has, by Decree of special powers, decided, dated March 18, 2020 to suspend deadlines for public inquiries.

- Role of digital technologies

The company offer digital solutions to monitor and maintain energy. They use digital marketing tools.

- Results of implementation

Before Covid the company was very successful in developing projects and supporting clients. However since Covid they are under threat and may be forced to close despite national and European focus on green energy.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)

The company is based on green energy projects and employees are experts in the field.

- Externally

Via Web sites and trade agencies. Environmental groups.

Lessons Learnt

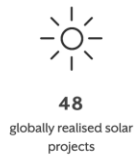
Before COVID green energy development projects were rapidly growing and SMEs like Vortex played a key role in developing major projects. The sector has been struggling through the pandemic but will recover once restrictions are lifted as green energy schemes are high priority in national and European policy.

Visual materials and links:



Shifting towards a better future

Our global impact



Company logo, brochure etc. etc.



URL: <https://vortex-energy.be/>

Green Practise 5: Change Consultancy and visual storytelling

Company name: Visuality

Size: 1-10

Industry: Graphic design for change and consultancy, including training for sustainability

Years of Existence: 2

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals

The company provides visual design and graphic consultancy based on Teambuilding, Strategy sessions, Meetings, Brainstorming, Scenario planning, Conferences and Co-creation sessions to companies who are seeking to create a more sustainable, social and inclusive future, for both people and the planet.

The company use 'graphic recording' is an opportunity to turn a meeting into a stimulating space designed to spark fruitful discussions, encourage collective thinking, and a thinking tool to engage audiences. Graphic Recording helps create an environment that motivates people to be active participants, speak up, and share their knowledge to better reach the meetings objectives.

Visuality facilitates and accelerates impactful change towards a more sustainable and conscious society through visuals. As a visual consultancy, they offer graphic facilitation, graphic recording, and visual storytelling services. They facilitate interactive workshops for companies and organizations and give training on visual thinking for personal and business use.

- Procedures, Activities, Phases

The purpose is to drive positive change helping clients to co-create a future that is sustainable for our planet and its inhabitants. Their consultancy work focuses especially on the environment, education and equality. They produce Infographics, Explainer videos, Presentations, Manuals and reports, Training material etc.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs

The company allocates 5% of company revenue to pro bono projects that reflect Visuality's core values of sustainability, either by doing a job totally for free or by reducing the original fee. The available amount is calculated quarterly. They also give each employee two days a year to devote to pro bono projects that they believe in.

- Challenges

The first main challenge was finding a venue / green location for the company. Obtaining a range of services and a portfolio of clients.

- Role of digital technologies

As a design company much of their work relates to digital and online designs, helping promote sustainability in different industries.

- Results of implementation

Visuality are collaborating with many different organisations, including “Hommes et Terre”, an organisation that is reforesting sub-Saharan areas in Africa thus creating new agricultural zones and forests. Since planting trees helps to capture carbon, it's in-line with our goal to minimise our carbon footprint!

Visuality have initiated the creation of the European Forum of Visual Practitioners by organising co-creation sessions. The company organised the EuViz conference in the summer of 2018 and co-hosted the Leadership Festival in 2019.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)

As a company, they practice what they preach as they drive electric, use bicycles and fly as little as possible - and only if it's really necessary. They work in a green building surrounded by many like-minded businesses.

- Externally

Web site, using publicity opportunities through green initiatives in the Brussels area and through the European Forum of Visual Practitioners network they launched.

- Possible alignment with the company's CSR

Visuality seem to be fully aligned as they are involved in promoting sustainable practices in other organisations.

Financial details explanation:

No information available. Due to COVID the company has not been operating F2F but it has moved its training online.

Lessons Learnt

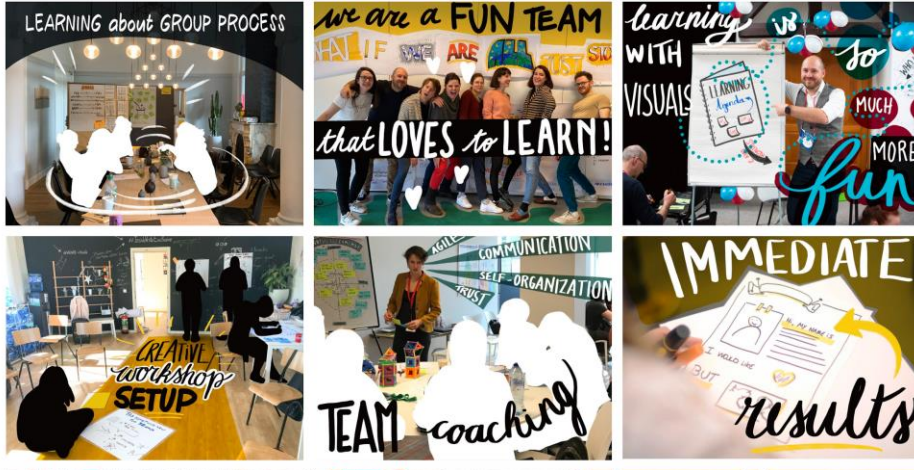
Green and sustainable initiatives need leadership.

Companies need support services to help them green their practices.

They are a scale-up company based on new and experimental forms of leadership and management.

Storytelling is fundamental to establishing a clear message.

Visual materials and links



Company logo, brochure etc. etc.



URL: <https://www.visuality.be/>

Green Practise 6: Innovative eco-construction

Company name: Réconfort Plus

Size: 15

Industry: Construction

Years of Existence: 8

Description of the green practices involved:

- Goals

The company was established in Brussels in 2012. The green practices take place across the main operation of the company as they are involved in renovation of older properties with sustainability as the main goal in terms of eco-construction and renovation of properties.

Réconfort + is a general contractor specializing in the fields of sustainable eco-renovation and eco-construction. They use environmentally-friendly renovation and rebuilding techniques and is constantly looking for new and innovative "green" technologies.

Their economic goals are the creation of sustainable jobs in eco-construction with a view to professional integration. They aim to provide vulnerable households with healthy, better insulated housing and reduced environmental impact due to better energy efficiency.

The company has two objectives: to improve the energy performance of homes; and the sanitary and environmental quality of homes.

In general, Réconfort Plus is based on a consensus that sustainable development is essential to meeting human needs and improving the quality of life. The company's missions incorporate the main dimensions of this vision: the social pillar (social reintegration) and the environmental pillar (thermal eco-rehabilitation of buildings), while combining the essential economic viability.

Fuel poverty is the consequence of two closely related factors: low income and poor thermal quality of housing. The project aims to provide these households with better insulated housing that will allow them to reduce their energy bill and free up a budget for other items.

- Procedures, Activities, Phases

Réconfort Plus is a green and innovative company. They offer a full range of services from design to construction. They aim to do the renovations so that the home will remain healthy and safe for years to come.

They take care of all the renovation work including insulation, painting, plumbing, electricity, heating, laying of floor and wall coverings, carpentry ... As specialists they focus on "green aesthetics", which includes the use of natural materials, to make a dwelling, a house, soothing and invigorating. The environment is necessarily one of our priorities. By positioning ourselves as the greenest company, we are implementing various actions to achieve and maintain our objectives.

Their clients are avant-garde: owners who seek to make the world a greener place through innovative and ecological techniques.

Réconfort + effectively aims to create green jobs, the development of current jobs taking into account environmental issues and the integration of unemployed people. They have chosen to put environmental and social goals in the foreground and on the other hand to develop an economic model promoting the active participation of workers in company decisions.

Description of the implementation:

- Investments and running costs

The training and integration of groups in a company with a social purpose.

- Challenges

Marketing and developing a reputation and recognition for their work.

- Role of digital technologies

The technologies that are used by Réconfort Plus are: Schedulista, F5 BIG-IP Application Security Manager, Facebook Analytics, F5 BIG-IP Platform. These have allowed the company to develop its market, do innovative and attractive design and promote itself online.

- Results of implementation

For more than 8 years, they have been developing dynamic partnerships with institutional and economic players.

They have earned recognition for their work, as on the initiative of His Majesty the King, 25 organizations including Réconfort + have been working together in recent months on a new platform for and on social entrepreneurship.

Description of the communication:

- Internally (towards the employees)

The environmental dimension of Réconfort Plus is inseparable from its social purpose. The company makes significant investments in continuing education on sustainable actions for its employees.

- Externally

The company principally communicate through the Web site and via word-of-mouth, testimony from others.

- Possible alignment with the company's CSR

There is investment in training for all staff in new innovative materials and practices

Financial details explanation:

Réconfort Plus annual revenue is equivalent to \$1 Million

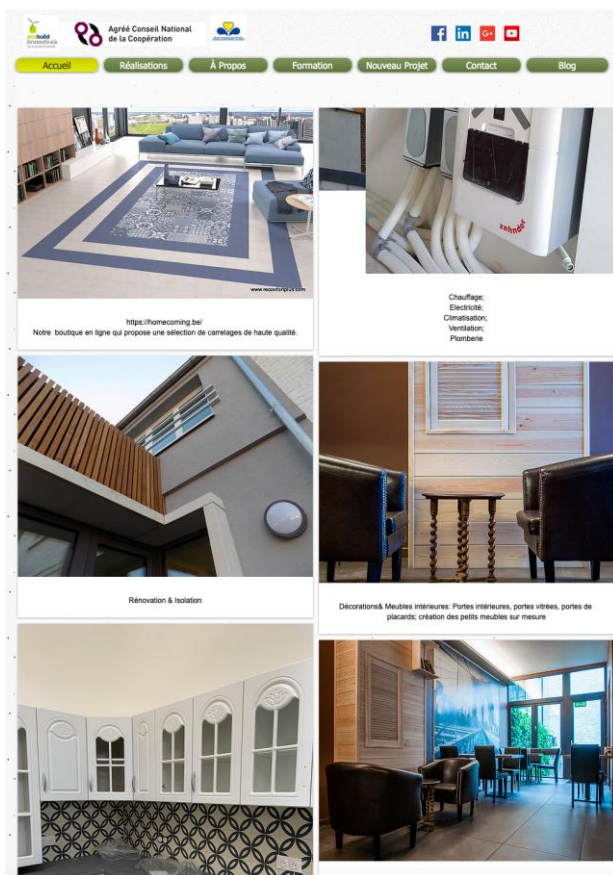
Lessons Learnt

Promoting green practices is challenging.

Training of staff is vital.

The company benefits by being part of a Green Business hub – where useful services are available like architects, marketing, legal support etc.

Visual materials and links



Company logo, brochure etc. etc.



URL: <http://www.reconfortplus.be/>

Conclusions & recommendations

There is a strong and healthy environment for environmentally-conscious SMEs in Belgium. There are many benefits and advantageous regulations which have allowed entrepreneurial activities to develop pre-COVID. They have illustrated innovation capacity that has enabled the possibility for them to develop unique products and services for local regional, national and international markets. This makes the SMEs key actors for increasing resource efficiency and improve 'quality of life'.

The individual environmental footprint of small enterprises may be low, but their aggregate impact can make a big difference. However, SMEs require the right political and legal framework and opportunities to establish themselves. Major hubs of active companies, like Greenbizz, can offer SMEs many interconnections, beneficial relationships, networking, actions and services. The organisations that cluster tend to have a similar vision, they assist one another in encouraging development. Specifically, examples of eco-design involving collaboration with networks of companies including suppliers in designing green products and offers the potential of turning environmental practices into systemic processes.

SMEs have been providing innovative solutions in response to local social, environmental and economic challenges. They tend to be based on innovative business cases. As enterprises that focus on environmental benefits, they have the ambition drive a sustainable economy forward. They have developed eco-business models for the green economy transition. The adoption of green supply chain practices by SMEs show that eco-design and green purchasing can affect economic and environmental performance.

Re-manufacturing, repair, maintenance, recycling and eco-design have the potential to become drivers of economic growth and job creation, while simultaneously addressing environmental challenges. Through innovation and the redesign of products as well as production and business models, companies can reduce the use of expensive primary raw materials and create less waste

COVID has brought uncertainty and it is likely that many SMEs may not have survived, however there is a lot of rhetoric about the use of the environmental sustainability of SMEs as a means for a green recovery.



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union