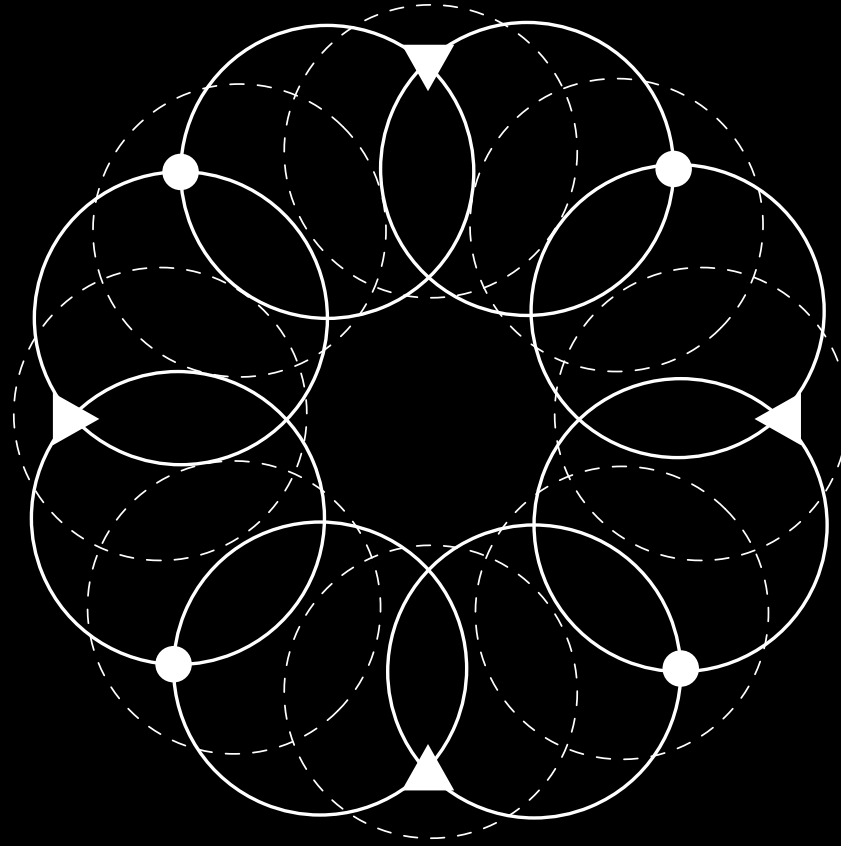


Sustainable development charter



vo
event vo
citizen

Context

According to the Sustainable Development Report 2021¹, Belgium is one of the top 5 most advanced countries on the road to the Sustainable Development Goals. That said, there is still a long way to go before they are achieved. Three issues remain very problematic on a global level: reducing inequality, action for the climate and biodiversity on earth.

From a local perspective, Belgium is indeed making progress with most of the objectives, but remains in the red on two important issues: responsible consumption and production, and action for the climate.

Through this charter, VO explains its vision for its transition.

- > How is it positioned?
- > What is its role as a company?
- > How can it contribute to the common good and to the Sustainable Development Goals?
- > How can it help its customers achieve some of their own sustainable development goals through its services? What are its own goals and priorities?
- > What action is it taking to achieve them?
- > And where does it stand today, in 2021?

¹ Sachs, J., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Woelm, F. (2021). *The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals: Sustainable Development Report 2021*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.s.



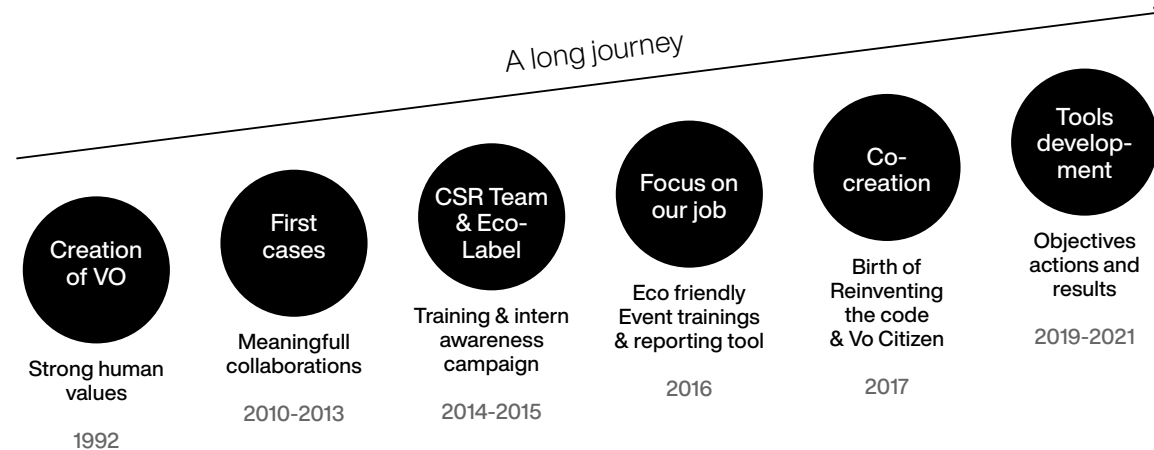
**OUR
POSITIONING**

Our positioning

Since the beginning, **VO Event** and **VO Citizen**, along with the entire **VO Group**, have been committed to strong values.

Certain key partnerships from the 2000s onwards have enabled the agencies to embark on the delivery of sustainable events and, in parallel, on a profound internal transition focused on controlling its impact as a company.

Transition history



Since 2016, the agency has decided to formalise this position and, at the same time, implement a programme of actions to reduce the impact of its activities. Building on that foundation, VO now wants to make a difference and contribute positively to overall value by doing what is necessary to ensure that we can act and achieve these global objectives together.



**OUR
AMBITIONS**

Our ambitions

As a major player in the sector, our mission and ambition are to play a role in the overall transition of the sector.

By seeing **sustainability as a driver for innovation**, we aim to:

- Contribute to the transformation of the sector and its professions towards more environmentally friendly practices.
- Implement circularity as a practical production model in the event industry.
- Provide operational tools to operators in charge of event projects.
- Encourage the emergence of event production ecosystems (clients, partners and suppliers) committed to circularity in the sector.
- Contribute to the two objectives still in the red on which we have the power to act: responsible consumption and production, and action for the climate.

Our primary objective is to become a company that has a sustainable, beneficial offer for society. Gradually, we are upgrading our expertise, reducing the negative impact of our activities, and increasing our positive impact.

We want to remain a driver of change in our sector, and be an initiator of innovation. To this end, we have set ourselves clear objectives to be achieved by 2030, and are developing partnerships with Belgian companies that will enable us to improve certain aspects of our strategy.

Linking communication and sustainability
Maintaining our human values

Implementing our principles internally while
being consistent in all our offerings.

Helping our clients to achieve their goals
and communicate them.

These are our priorities.



OUR ACTIONS

Reducing the impact of our activities

Circular Event Toolkit

As a leader in the sector in Belgium, VO considers that its role is to set an example and come up with possible solutions. In order to gather and share all these solutions, VO has created a toolbox in collaboration with circular economy expert Emmanuel Mossay and the agency Sense.

The Circular Event Toolkit project aims to transform the events sector from a predominantly linear model that generates significant environmental impact into a circular, ecological, ethical model.

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The project was elected winner of the Be Circular programme in 2019 and has therefore received a grant from the Brussels Capital Region for its implementation.

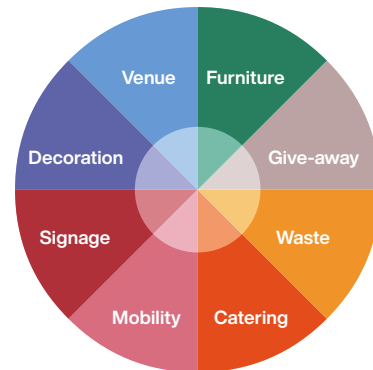
The objectives and scope of the Circular Event Toolkit



- **To increase the life** and use of the “solid” materials used during events: materials, equipment, consumables.
- **To reduce the volume** of waste generated at events.
- **To increase the use** of environmentally friendly, local materials and eliminate the use of the most harmful products.
- **To reduce energy** consumption (and CO2 emissions) in event production - in manufacturing as well as in logistics and transport.
- **To ensure** that the working conditions of workers in the sector are respected and to contribute to a real social ethic throughout the value chain of the activity.
- **To raise awareness** of sustainability among event participants.

Focus on 8 subject areas

Furniture, decor, food, venue, management of waste, signage, goodies and mobility. Each of these 8 subject areas has been investigated in depth and developed in the form of datasheets with solutions for adopting circular instincts when putting together any event. The solutions are accompanied by a reporting system to measure action and progress over the long term.



Sharing the toolbox

To help all the players in the sector with this inevitable transition, the Circular Event Toolkit has been shared in open source and is accessible on the circular-event.eu website.

The desired evolution of the circular economy approach and longer-term objectives at VO

Status in 2021

Use of the toolkit in all our offers and activities.

Targets for 2022

Systematic reporting on circular performance

Targets for 2025

Significant progress.

Targets for 2030

To become a 100% circular agency, organising exemplary events for all our clients.

Re-establishing equilibrium

Carbon offsetting in-house calculation tool

Since 2018, VO has been using a carbon footprint calculator designed to accurately measure its footprint, with a view to offsetting the CO2 emissions associated with each project. Although offsetting is not an end in itself, calculation of the CO2 balance remains an invaluable indicator for measuring the environmental impact of our activities. Despite all our efforts and actions, we are aware that an event will always have an impact, however small.

Therefore, since 2019, offsetting has been offered to all our customers. If they refuse, the agency will pay for a part of this offsetting at its own expense on a flat-rate basis.

In 2021, VO is also launching the production of a tool designed to calculate the impact of the creation and distribution of a communication campaign - a first in Belgium.



Status in 2021

100% of projects offset at a minimum of 5 tonnes/project
40% of projects designated as CO2 Neutral

Targets for 2025

100% of projects designated as CO2 Neutral
20% reduction in the overall impact of our activities

Targets for 2030

100% of projects designated CO2 Neutral
Further 20% reduction in overall impact.

Partnership with CO2 Logic and Microsol

VO offers its customers two options for offsetting. The first is to fully offset their event and obtain the CO2 Neutral Event designation certified by Vinçotte, in which case we work with the projects proposed by CO2 Logic. In this way, we contribute to various projects around the globe, for example in Eritrea, Turkey, Guatemala, Zambia and Ghana. These projects are all different, but what they have in common is that they are monitored and certified, and contribute to at least 3 SDGs.

When full offsetting is not an option, we use a flat-rate system and work with the association Microsol. Mainly active in South America, the Gold Standard certified association is implementing a number of support programmes for local populations, notably Utsil Naj, which is active in Peru, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico.



For example, between January 2019 and December 2020, VO and its customers have offset and invested **€ 39,648** in sustainable projects by offsetting **3167.8 tonnes of CO2**.

Partnership with Beeodiversity

In order to focus our efforts on our local environment, VO is embarking on a new path in early 2021 with the ambition of understanding and reducing its impact on biodiversity. As the impact of an event on local biodiversity is complex to calculate, we have developed a partnership with association Beeodiversity, with whom we are working to develop measurement indicators and solutions to reduce, offset and reverse this impact. This work involves understanding the impact of the entire production chain of an event on the environment, and on all the living beings affected.



Status in 2021

R&D on the development of the tool and initial tests

Targets for 2023

Routine use of the measurement tool, and implementation of actions to minimise negative impact and increase positive impact.

Targets for 2030

40% reduction in negative impact.

Partnership with Alpaca

Food waste is one of the major issues of our time and in our sector. At 345 kg/p/year, Belgium ranks as the 2nd biggest waster in Europe. 12% of this waste comes from food services provided in the hotel and catering industry relating to events. At the same time, 170,000 people were using the services of food banks in Belgium in 2019. In order to combat these figures, and in addition to the actions taken upstream to reduce this waste as much as possible, VO is joining forces with Alpaca to introduce systematic collection of surplus food after events. All usable foodstuffs are distributed to people in need; the rest is recovered to be transformed into energy via biomethanisation.



Status in 2021

60% of events

Targets for 2025

100% of events in Belgium and 50% of events abroad

Targets for 2030

100% of events

Inclusion

Partnership with Art2Work

Non-profit organisation Art2work is a Brussels-based agency active in socio-professional integration involving social economy activities. These are aimed at young adults aged 18 to 30, living in Brussels, who are registered with Actiris and have obtained the certificate of secondary education (CESS) as a maximum.

We are integrating the call for Art2Work in all compatible projects, in order to use staff for field implementation and event management.



Status in 2021

First collaborations

Targets for 2025

30% of events

Targets for 2030

70% of events

Partnership with BeFace

Since 2019, VO has been a member of the non-profit association Be.Face, a network of companies that promotes initiatives dedicated to the social and professional integration of vulnerable groups. Among the various possibilities for action, VO Group has chosen to invest in Bright Future. This mentoring programme is aimed at university students who are encountering an economic, cultural, social or community barrier that could make their access to the world of work more difficult.



Status in 2021

2 years of mentoring

Targets for 2025

increase the number of employees involved in the activity by 30%.

Targets for 2030

increase the number of employees involved in the activity by 50%.

*Change is not a threat, it's an opportunity.
Survival is not the goal, transformative success is.*

Seth Godin

**vo-event.
be
vo-citizen.
be**

VO Communication SA/NV
rue de stalle 142 b-1180 brussels
[T] +32 2 340 04 87

mglauden@vo-event.be