

The CGSLB and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the workplace!



# SDGs in the workplace



In June 2018 the CGSLB (General Confederation of Liberal Trade Unions of Belgium), in collaboration with the not-for-profit associations MIS and Comé, launched a pilot project on the SDG's. Its aim was to develop a method for the Liberal Trade Union to empower CGSLB union representatives and equip them with the necessary skills to place sustainability in the context of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) on the agenda of consultative bodies: making a positive contribution towards social change both in and out of the workplace.

## Why?

Since the start of the 2030 Agenda (approved in September 2015 by all United Nations member states including Belgium), the CGSLB has supported the 17 goals and the pledge to 'leave no one behind' at National, European and International level. Long-term thinking, sustainability and the SDGs are ideal topics that can be addressed in the context of a social dialogue between employers and employees. The CGSLB wants to integrate sustainability into trade union action, with an understandable reference framework and with a sufficiently practical and operational approach. The CGSLB aims to provide an inspiring and constructive narrative from the bottom up union action, visibly putting the principles of sustainable business into practice.



# What are the SDGs?

The SDGs, or Sustainable Development Goals, were drawn up in 2015 by all United Nations member states with the aim of calling on the general public, companies and governments to take action and change the world together. We need to join forces to end poverty, protect the planet and combat climate change, to fight against inequality and improve the lives and prospects of everyone. In order to tackle these challenges the SDG framework provides a 15-year plan with 17 goals that must be achieved by 2030.



## Change starts with you

It may seem impossible to make a difference as an individual, but that is not the case. Small changes in our daily habits can have a big impact if they are adopted by everyone. For example, if everyone were to take their own shopping bag to the store, plastic bags would no longer be necessary. **This leaflet demonstrates how you can make a difference as a trade union representative.**

# Focus of the SDGs

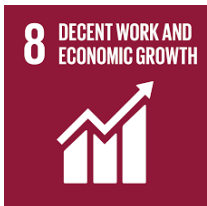
We've already done our homework to make it a whole lot easier for you. As a union representative, there are **6 SDGs** that can enable you to have a powerful impact in the workplace. They are:



SDG 3 : ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.



SDG 4 : ensuring equal access to quality education and promoting life-long learning for everyone.



SDG 8 : promoting economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for everyone.



SDG 11 : making cities resilient and sustainable.



SDG 12 : ensuring responsible consumption and production.



SDG 13 : acting now to combat global warming and its impact.

It is important to remember that the SDGs are transformative in nature and interconnected. This means that working towards goal 8, creating decent work, also automatically has an impact on employees' health and well-being, goal 3!

# SGDs in practice

In order to implement the SDGs in practice, we collaborated with Professor Hans Verboven (affiliated to the University of Antwerp) to introduce a Sustatool method adapted specifically to our organisation and activities, along with accompanying support. Initially as a pilot project at five companies, later to be expanded to the companies where we are represented. This pilot project included:

- Devising a practical strategy and a refined catalogue of activities for the Sustatool, tailored to the needs and responsibilities of CGSLB representatives.
- A tangible system supported by methodology to link the responsibilities of trade union representatives within companies' various consultation structures to the 17 SDGs.



*2018 pilot project: CGSLB trade union representatives from six companies: ING, Colruyt, Q-Park, N'Allo, Brussels Airport and Mölnlycke.*

# How does the Sustatool help to achieve the SDGs?

The Sustatool helps companies to tackle the global SDGs in a practical and logical manner. Over the last two years, the Government of Flanders and MVO Vlaanderen have invested a great deal of effort in applied research into sustainability management within companies from a business-oriented perspective. The Sustatool method was developed for them and is available to all companies free of charge.

In late 2019 the CGSLB collaborated with the not-for-profit associations MIS and Comé to organise ten half-day workshops, attended by more than 250 trade union representatives, for the purpose of applying the SDGs linked to the Sustatool in practice. The aim was to:

- Raise awareness of what companies are doing to improve sustainability (both in relation and not in relation to the SDGs).
- Take inspiration from sustainability actions other companies are already carrying out to further expand their own initiatives.
- Learn how to use the Sustatool to place actions on the agenda of consultative bodies.
- Make a social and liberal difference during works council elections!



For more information visit [www.sustatool.be](http://www.sustatool.be)



# A close up on the Sustatool

Sustatool is a sustainability management method based on academic research, management literature, best practices and extensive testing within companies in various sectors. Before a policy can be implemented, it is essential to understand and get to grips with sustainability within an organisation. With Sustatool we make sustainability visible in a way that is recognisable in terms of products and services, processes and people, and organisation. At each of these three levels we identify five sustainability and optimisation themes. These 15 themes are in turn subdivided into 90 projects or subthemes within which specific actions are then taken.

To achieve maximum integration of sustainability with the processes and structures of the business operations, a vision, a plan and, most importantly, a project-based approach are essential. By working according to the PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act), on which the Sustatool is based, it is possible to develop a policy that ties in with the company's strategic objectives while simultaneously allowing for rapid efficiency gains and long-term investments. There are close similarities to a quality or environmental management system such as ISO 9001:2015 or 14001:2015.

Product service excellence	OFFER 1	MATERIALS 2	PACKAGING 3	CONSUMERS 4	SUPPLY CHAIN 5
Operational excellence	LEAN 6	ENERGY 7	WATER & SITE MANAGEMENT 8	TRANSPORT 9	ENVIRONMENT 10
Organizational excellence	ETHICS 11	EMPLOYEES 12	HEALTH & SAFETY 13	COMMUNICATION 14	STAKEHOLDERS 15

# Focus on Sustatool themes

Here too, together with the 6 companies in the pilot project, we have taken on the task of drawing up a list of the most important Sustatool topics. We chose **5 of the 15 themes** where trade union representatives can make a strong positive contribution.



Theme 9 : reducing carbon emissions from commuting by focusing on more sustainable transport options and by reducing the number of kilometres travelled.



Theme 10 : trying to avoid and limit any type of nuisance and environmental pollution.



Theme 12 : a life-phase oriented career development policy that ensures everyone can develop according to their own abilities and wishes and feels valued by the organisation. Producing satisfied and motivated employees who enjoy working for the organisation.



Theme 13 : healthy employees with no mental or physical problems who exercise daily and eat healthily.



Theme 14 : A company whose actions are fair and transparent and whose internal communication is open and efficient, whereby every employee receives and understands the message in a timely manner.



# Getting started!

In the following section we take a closer look at the six SDGs linked to the five Sustatool themes. We try to provide inspiration for the further expansion of existing sustainability initiatives and propose new sustainability actions.

We first give a concise introduction to the context of the relevant SDG, then go on to explain the win-win for the employee and employer, and we suggest a number of indicators you could use to use indicators that already exist within the company. Finally, we provide an example of a 'best practice' from companies in various sectors that have already successfully implemented sustainability initiatives. In collaboration with more than 250 trade union representatives from different companies who participated in the 10 workshops, we formulated around 60 actions in total: around 10 per SDG.



# SDG 3

## Good health and well-being



Employees are the driving force of an organisation. It is vital that they feel well and safe in the workplace at all times. Employees are having to work for longer now that the retirement age has risen to 67, which means that the topic of wellbeing is becoming more and more important. Ensuring proper health and safety is a key issue and a focus area for the CPBW (Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work).

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### Win-win for the employer and employee

The employer can only benefit from having happy employees who are pleased and proud to work for the organisation. This increases productivity and job involvement, while minimising days of absence.

### How can you measure this?

- Employee absenteeism: number of days of absence
- Employee satisfaction: number of happy employees
- Employee incidents: number of workplace accidents

### A real-life example

*“We are confidants, a guiding light”, trade union representatives are aware of their multi-faceted union role in the workplace. “Employees shouldn’t be afraid to approach us about anything. We act as a neutral intermediary between employees and management, avoiding immediate conflict.”*

<https://www.aclvb.be/nl/non-profit-en-onderwijs/artikels/zorgen-voor-de-patient-en-de-collegas>

Organise a weekly meat-free day! Do something that is both good for your own health and for the environment!

*E.g. Thursday as veggie day.*

1

Take preventive health measures rather than control measures wherever possible.

*E.g. offer everyone a free flu vaccine as standard!*

2

## Theme Sustatool 13 HEALTH & SAFETY

Make sure employees have access to healthy food.

*E.g. provide a fresh fruit basket and/or ensure vending machines offer healthy options*

3

Hold brief discussions with the CPBW to promote safety in the workplace and to closely monitor any problem areas.

*E.g. a toolbox meeting*

4

### Comment éviter des problèmes de santé en cas de travail sur écran ?



Combat all forms of aggression and ensure that employees feel comfortable at work and are less likely to be absent.

*E.g. use notification forms for rapid follow-up.*

6

Encourage exercise at work and provide exercise breaks.

*For example, plant a tree for every 100 steps taken, or occasionally hold a walking meeting!*

5

Votre liberté, votre voix



Offer a reimbursement for resources that make work pleasant and manageable.

*E.g. computer glasses.*

7

## Theme Sustatool 12 EMPLOYEES

Make health and safety goals part of everyday life in the workplace and get employees involved.

*E.g. link a CAO90 wage bonus to a health and safety policy.*

8 11

# SDG 4

## Quality education



Allow employees scope to contribute ideas and develop. Training that is tailored to the individual employee with a view to lifelong learning is always a key objective. Everyone should have the opportunity to continuously improve their current knowledge and skills. Identify, listen to and accommodate employees' wishes, and pursue them together.

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### Win-win for the employer and employee

Staff development has a huge positive impact on the organisation's development. Employees who have better development opportunities make a stronger contribution and have a more positive attitude towards the organisation.

### How can you measure this?

- Range of training on offer: number of training hours p/employee
- Competence development: development p/employee
- Improvement board: number of suggestions for improvement p/employee
- Employee satisfaction: number of happy employees

### A real-life example

*The CGSLB calls for future-oriented training efforts for employees!  
"During training we can be ourselves, which makes us more involved in the training. That improves our self-confidence."*

*Geert and Maria, CGSLB course participants*

Training doesn't always need to be strictly work related. Make sure you also provide training for personal competence development.

*E.g. produce a personal development plan for training tailored to each individual employee.*

1

Assign a coach to ensure that new employees receive the best possible support in their new working environment.

*E.g. appoint a 'buddy' as a coach.*

4

Also provide a first aid training policy. This can also take the form of E-learning.

*E.g. training in resuscitation, the use of an AED etc.*

7



Ensure that employees have the opportunity to suggest improvement initiatives in the workplace.

*E.g. an improvement board: what difficulties do we face?*

2

Always provide an extensive and up-to-date training offering.

*E.g. extend internal company training to also include external training to make sure that employees receive the most appropriate training.*

3

## Theme Sustatool 12 EMPLOYEES

Try to avoid burn-outs wherever possible and identify them at the earliest possible stage.

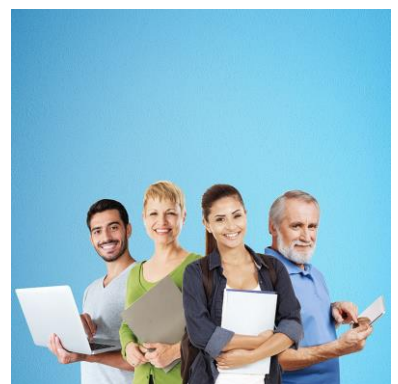
*E.g. train a number of employees to be burn-out managers for the purpose of rapid detection, or provide training in workable work.*

6

In order to give new employees a proper induction they also need to know about the company's past errors.

*E.g. develop a 'blunder book' listing blunders made in the past and common mistakes.*

5



Try to retain potential new workers wherever possible.

*E.g. provide better quality training*

8

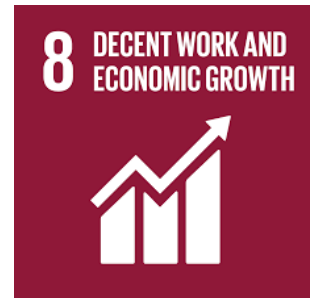
Link training programmes to E-learning. This makes training fun and efficient.

*E.g. ensure these programmes always include a test (non-uniform), to guarantee quality*

9<sup>13</sup>

# SDG 8

## Decent work and economic growth



Today, the creation of decent work for everyone is a standard and a must. The world of work needs to be equipped for the future and always operate in appropriate conditions with a view to protecting fundamental rights. The main focus here is on promoting economic growth via a people-oriented approach. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has also launched the **#Timefor8** campaign on the central role of SDG 8 as a 'global call for a new social contract'.

### Win-win for the employer and employee

Long-term investment in employees is essential to improve the quality of careers and to ensure a safe and healthy working environment. Employers are also able to take advantage of new opportunities in the labour market.

### How can you measure this?

- Discrimination ratio: number of reported or established cases of discrimination/number of employees
- Employee satisfaction: number of happy employees
- Appraisal ratio: number of employees with whom you hold appraisal interviews/total number of employees

### A real-life example

*The CGSLB supports the #Timefor8 campaign.*





Present safety instructions to employees in a fun, up-to-date and accessible way.

*E.g. in a booklet with pictograms, using an instructional video etc. This ensures that those who speak different languages can also understand.*

1

Consider the possibilities for working from home, provided that sound policies are in place. Integrate this into the framework of a CLA where possible.

*E.g. allow employees to work from home to avoid valuable time being wasted in traffic.*

4



Take part in the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) #timefor8 campaign, and join the fight for decent work!

<https://timefor8.org/>

6

## Theme Sustatool 13 HEALTH & SAFETY

Provide employees with healthy and flexible work schedules with normal working hours. Particularly if your company operates with day, evening and night shifts.

*E.g. coordinate flexible timetables in consultation with employees.*

2

Try to minimise waste and allow employees to focus on activities that add value and that matter.

*E.g. look at movements such as lifting, bending, searching, walking around etc. that do not add any value and minimise these unnecessary movements.*

7

Develop high-quality policy in relation to burn-out.

*E.g. an essential high-quality rehabilitation plan.* 5

## Theme Sustatool 12 EMPLOYEES

Try to minimise work pressure and stress within the working environment.

*E.g. set up a task force to deal with stress and work pressure.*

3

Ensure you have a working environment with sufficient diversity and gender equality.

*E.g. establish a diversity task force.* 8

## Theme Sustatool 14 COMMUNICATION

15

# SDG 11

## Sustainable cities and communities



Make the cities we live in more human, resilient and sustainable. To get to work we need to move around every day. We can look together at how we can organise this in a way that is viable.

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### Win-win for the employer and employee

Opting for smart and green mobility solutions for both the employer and employee offers benefits for both the individual and society. As an employer you are taking care of both your workforce and the environment, while saving money now and in the future. As an employee you benefit from improved mobility.

### How can you measure this?

- Commuting: determine the % per means of transport
- Employee satisfaction: number of happy employees

### A real-life example

“I didn’t know that car-sharing was so easy. I looked at the different options together with an expert from the CGSLB, and now I occasionally take advantage of car sharing near my home. It’s also already saved me a lot of money.”

Mohammed, aged 55

<https://www.aclvb.be/nl/werktmetjemee/mobiliteit>

Green the environment and promote bio-diversity at your company's site. Make the working environment a great place to be.

*E.g. plant green roofs, a small garden where employees can enjoy their lunch in the afternoon or install bee hives on the roofs of business premises.*

1

Not all workplaces are easily accessible by bike or public transport. In that case, make every effort to raise awareness of other alternatives.

*E.g. use of shared cars, electric vehicles, carpooling etc.*

4



Try to always increase bike allowances up to the statutory minimum and get as many people cycling as possible.

7

## Theme Sustatool 10 ENVIRONMENT

Invest in a spacious cafeteria design and allow for flexible pay. Ensure that this includes mobility opportunities.

*E.g. build in an option to purchase an electric bike.*

2

Raise awareness and strive for the use of public transport by both employees and customers.

*E.g. provide a financial contribution or offer free parking at the station.*

5

## Theme Sustatool 9 TRANSPORT

Organise a mobility week: a car-free week where everyone does their best to limit vehicular traffic.

*E.g. if everyone succeeds, lay on a free breakfast at the end of the week!*

3

Offer employees an extensive bike lease scheme and raise awareness of the scheme for maximum impact.

*E.g. make sure you also provide bike parking with sufficient capacity, a repair service, showers, charging points etc.*

6

Try to make the proposed mobility initiatives available to all employees within the organisation.

*E.g. if office workers are given an electric car, make sure that workers are also able to use an electric car on site.*

8 17

# SDG 12

## Responsible consumption and production



It is important to encourage employees to adopt sustainable and healthy consumption habits in the workplace. Also to create in them a sense of responsibility. There are many initiatives you can put in place to minimise environmental impact at operational level.

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### Win-win for the employer and employee

Employees who are mindful and who act responsibly within the business environment set a good example. Both to the outside world and to other employees. The employer can only benefit from this kind of initiative now and in the long term.

### How can you measure this?

- Volume of waste: record the volume of waste per type (organic waste, recyclable waste, paper, non-recyclable waste etc.)
- Nuisance complaints: record the number of complaints about odour, noise or light nuisance.

### The ACLVB's position:

The ACLVB advocates a policy that encompasses a **fair transition** to a more resilient and sustainable society. Concerted efforts are needed to promote a circular economy. To make this transition possible, the ACLVB calls for measures to be taken to:

- Promote the sustainable and efficient use of energy and raw materials.
- Ensure that sustainable products become the norm.
- Extend the lifespan of products.
- Provide consumers with reliable information about product sustainability with a view to more environmentally friendly use.
- Encourage the various economic actors to commit themselves to the transition to a circular economy.

<https://www.aclvb.be/nl/een-economische-groei-die-steunt-op-voldoende-koopkrachtontwikkeling-lokale-consumptie-en-duurzame>

Try to lay down procedures with regard to reuse where possible. You will both reduce costs and make a positive contribution to the environment.

*E.g. use rainwater for toilet flushing systems or to wash coaches.*

1

Ban single-use plastics wherever possible within the business environment.

*E.g. replace plastic cups with drinking bottles or washable bags.*

2

Sort, compress and minimise waste within the business environment.

*E.g. use sorting bins for organic waste, recyclable waste, paper and non-recyclable waste as standard.*

3

Use water, lights, heating etc. responsibly.

*E.g. invest as much as possible in LED lighting and connect lighting to motion sensors where possible or turn off heating at weekends.*

4

Keep noise, odour and light nuisance to a minimum for both employees and local residents.

*E.g. always provide a sound barrier. Try to also build a green wall where possible.*

5

Make employees aware of the environment as much as possible so that it becomes an intrinsic part of the organisational culture.

*E.g. make company objectives and savings that have already been achieved visible in the workplace in a fun way*

6

Aim to go paperless wherever possible by committing to digitalisation.

*E.g. do not print out emails unnecessarily or aim for a 'paperless warehouse'*

8

Introduce an anti-smoking policy, saving valuable working time and ensuring your company has a healthy corporate image.

*E.g. analyse the current situation and draw up a smoking policy plan.*

7

## Theme Sustatool 10 ENVIRONMENT

Try to combat food waste and make good use of food waste flows.

*E.g. arrange for leftover cafeteria food to be collected by local residents.*

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9

**What can the  
CGSLB do for you?**

**<https://www.aclvb.be/nl/werktmetjeme/mobiliteit>**

# SDG 13

## Climate action



Try to minimise the negative impact of business operations. Adopt a responsible approach to production and encourage reuse where possible. Try to use and manage natural resources efficiently where possible.

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### Win-win for the employer and employee

Invest in installations or systems that generate renewable energy and they will more than pay for themselves in the long run. A cooperative structure can also enable employees to take part via and get them involved in your energy-aware policy. A win-win for both parties.

### How can you measure this?

- Volume of waste: record the volume of waste per type (organic waste, recyclable waste, paper, non-recyclable waste etc.)
- Carbon footprint: record the organisation's emissions
- Energy management

### The CGSLB's position:

The CGSLB supports the principle that economic growth and prosperity should be impeded as little as possible in the shift to a climate-neutral society, however we also call for a climate policy that is both effective and ambitious. "After all, there are no jobs on a dead planet!"

#Unions4Climate



Invest as much as possible in the use of renewable energy and green electricity.

*E.g. power from wind turbines, solar panels etc.*

1

Invest in a company water treatment system.

*E.g. treat and reuse waste water.*

2

Explore alternative transport options for distribution.

*E.g. transport goods by rail or water wherever possible.*

3

If your company operates in the retail sector, provide a returns policy that is as ethical and sustainable as possible to avoid waste and cut costs.

*E.g. only permit the return of goods that have not yet been removed from their packaging to maximise reuse or refrain from offering free returns.*

4



Invest in optimised, efficient and sustainable machinery and try to avoid unproductive machine hours.

*E.g. introduce a group bonus for employees who reduce unproductive operating hours.*

5

Allow employees to participate in your green energy supply and create involvement.

*E.g. set up a cooperative for solar panels.*

6

Increase the loading capacity for distribution shipments.

*E.g. consolidate and optimise smaller loads into larger shipments.*

7

Optimise and minimise the amount of packaging materials used.

*E.g. avoid constant unnecessary repackaging.*

8

Try to ban polluting fuels such as fuel oil wherever possible within the business environment and opt for other alternatives.

*E.g. biogas or a heat pump.*

9

## Theme Sustatool 10 ENVIRONMENT

Also look at the impact of your own company building in terms of energy efficiency and try to make improvements.

*E.g. draw up an action plan and make energy neutrality a long-term goal.*

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# The next step: what now?

Get started!

Use this leaflet as a guide in implementing or improving sustainability actions within your company.

Try it yourself with the Sustatool at [www.sustatool.be](http://www.sustatool.be)

Follow a Sustatool workshop

The CGSLB offers workshops for interested companies that want to go a step further with the Sustatool. Contact: [international@cgsלב.be](mailto:international@cgsלב.be)



# Together we can make a difference !

The CGSLB wants to thank all trade union representatives for their participation and efforts during the workshops and/or the pilot project. Only by working together and sharing initiatives can we make a difference!





**ESF**

INVESTEERT IN  
JOUW TOEKOMST



Europese Unie



**Vlaanderen**  
is werk



**Universiteit**  
**Antwerpen**

**MVO**  
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MAATSCHAPPELIJK  
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**Vlaanderen**  
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