

Collective Well-being at Vandersanden

Sustainability report

2021



VANDERSANDEN

TOGETHER WE BUILD GREATNESS

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Foreword

Vandersanden stands for values, not worth.

Sustainability, innovation and a people-oriented approach have always taken centre stage at Vandersanden. The interpretation of Collective Well-being has evolved over the years. One thing has always remained constant: profit maximisation has never been a goal in itself for Vandersanden. Vandersanden stands for values, not worth.

These values are woven into the DNA of our company, but above all, they are borne and propagated by our now over 800 employees. Last year, Vandersanden published its sustainability report on Collective Well-being for the first time. We are extremely proud to offer you an insight into our performance again this year. In this edition, we would therefore like to pay tribute to the employees of Vandersanden who, behind the scenes, make Collective Well-being a reality, both at management level and on the factory floor.

It is thanks to the commitment of all our employees and partners that Vandersanden can call itself a leader in Collective Well-being and sustainability. The shared belief in addressing climate change, energy efficiency and circularity characterises Vandersanden and its employees and we are enormously grateful for this.

This also applies to our new CEO Rudi Peeters, who took over from Jean-Pierre Wuytack in

October 2021. Further on in this report, he explains how he intends to continue on the same path, with the same sky-high ambitions. The aim: to motivate the entire sector to become more sustainable.

Just like last year, we will not only share our ambitions, but also reflect on the concrete achievements we have made, from the Great Place to Work certification in four countries to our ECO-packaging and our updated showroom in Northern France

Finally, I would like to reflect on the past year. We recognised that 2021 was challenged with both the battle against the Corona virus and also extreme weather and flooding in parts of Europe. At Vandersanden, we want to actively build on the solutions for the social and climate-based challenges that are coming our way.

With this second edition of our sustainability report, we hope to inspire as many people as possible. Only if we join forces will we succeed in making our world a better place

Eddy Deconinck

**Collective Well-being Director
at Vandersanden**

Collective Well-being in 2021

First
**Great Place
to Work** certification
in four different countries



Investment of
€500,000

on annual basis
in charities



RoboBrick®
Partnership

deepened (Spaansen) and
broadened (Westerveld-
Nederlof and Prefaco),
Voka Innovation Award (BE)
for RoboBrick

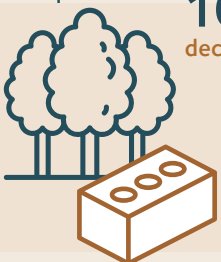
The energy consumption
per tonne of product produced
at the Tolkamer production
site has decreased:

16,5%

decrease in gas consumption,

17%

decrease in electricity
consumption

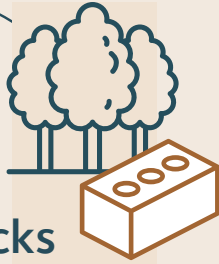


**“Best
Managed
Company”**

four years in a row,
good for a Gold Label

NL Greenlabel

Vandersanden's
paving bricks
with
NL Product Label A



Vandersanden Academy

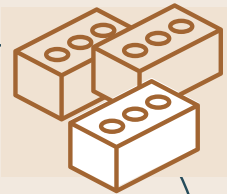
as a hub for
knowledge-sharing and
enrichment, various
training



Multi-deployability and
**sustainable
job path**
for people



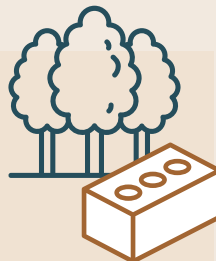
Opening
showrooms
in Halluin (FR) and
Tolkamer (NL)



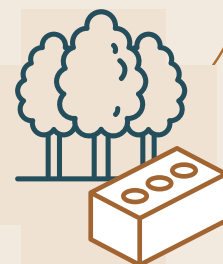
ECO packaging
with at least

30% recycled
material and

80% less ink,
which results in **400,000 kg**
less CO₂ each year



Participation
in
'Brick Valley'
sustainability programme



Collective Well-being at Vandersanden

“

Looking at the current CO₂ emissions globally, we only have one decade left to counteract global warming. There's no time to waste. We must join forces now to make our world a better place for everyone and everything.

”

A year of extreme weather conditions

Global warming was felt all over the world in 2021. Floods, heat waves and earthquakes were in the news almost daily last year. The facts are clear: if we want to continue to enjoy our planet, we will have to work together to achieve a stable climate. Looking at the current CO₂ emissions globally, we only have one decade left to counteract global warming. There's no time to waste. We must join forces now to make our world a better place for everyone and everything.”

At Vandersanden, this means that we don't just do business for ourselves; we also want to contribute to the solutions for the social challenges that lie

ahead. In doing so, Vandersanden looks beyond purely economic criteria. We strive for a stable and healthy balance between gains for society, the environment, our employees and our shareholders.

This is what we call 'Collective Well-being' at Vandersanden.

Our mission and vision

Vandersanden aims to be a leader in Collective Well-being; this is an integral part of our mission and vision of society.

Today, Vandersanden is in pole position to become the most sustainable and innovative company in the brick sector. Partly thanks to our solid



family values, we are able to make increasingly beautiful facades and streets. The starting point is always an innovative and sustainable framework. And, what is the key to our success in making Collective Well-being a reality? Innovation, smart investments and the Vandersanden culture, which strongly focuses on corporate responsibility.

At Vandersanden, profit maximisation is not a goal in itself. We consider good operational results a means to invest in the goals that really matter:

- Taking the lead in promoting collective well-being
- Playing a pioneering role in customer orientation
- Adopting a leading role in the entire value chain

Collective Well-being will continue to be a core element of Vandersanden's mission and vision in the future. We offer every employee the opportunity to have an impact on the environment, their community, the sector and

their own working environment, day in, day out. Collective Well-being is our guiding principle in times of rapid technological, social and economic development.

Our ambitions

At Vandersanden, we strive to take a leadership role in terms of Collective Well-being and thus drastically reduce our industry's negative impact on the environment.

In concrete terms, this means that we are committed to designing and manufacturing the brick, paver and facade system of the future every day. This innovative entrepreneurship starts from our shared belief in climate improvement, energy efficiency and circularity.





Eye on the future

At the same time, we realise that we cannot realise our ambition in all areas simultaneously. That's why Vandersanden focuses on ten specific fields where it can really make a difference:

Environment

- Raw materials
- Energy
- Emissions, wastewater and waste

Workplace

- Relationship with employees
- Health and safety
- Training and education

Sector

- Consumer health and safety
- Product information
- Marketing and communication

Community

- Contribution to the economic system

We have set ourselves the goal of completely carbon-neutral production by 2050 at the latest, but we also look beyond our own ambitions. Care for the well-being of our employees is central. We see each and every one of them as active entrepreneurs who all contribute to our ambition.

Vandersanden is consciously taking the lead in order to make our entire sector more sustainable. We don't do this alone. We join forces with other players and partners and support the communities in which we operate as true community builders, both financially and in terms of competence development.

Collective Well-being in our factories: from deep-rooted conviction to strategic priority

Sustainability and social responsibility were already strong motivators for Vandersanden founder Jaak Vandersanden. For decades, employees and family members organically passed on his values to new colleagues and future generations. Until we decided in 2018 to combine every idea surrounding sustainability in our strategy of “Collective Well-Being”.

What began as a deep-rooted conviction is now anchored in our mission and vision. Consequently, sustainability has taken on an additional dimension as of 2018. With Collective Well-Being now forming an integral component of our mission, it serves as a guiding principle in all strategic initiatives within the company, and we are actively seeking ways to make Collective Well-Being even more central to our operations. We do this by formulating strategic goals and by actively pursuing and monitoring our ambitions.

This certainly applies to our factories and operations, where sustainability and Collective Well-Being require great effort – but also have a great impact. This effort to make production more sustainable is undertaken in close cooperation between management and employees on the floor. It is a cornerstone of our “Collective Well-Being” strategy.

Those who work at Vandersanden, and particularly those who work in our factories, can clearly witness our ongoing sustainability efforts in our products and processes. Our efforts go further, however: in all our activities – from clay to brick – we have already taken very diverse and far-reaching initiatives for the benefit of our people, our environment, and our surroundings.

Our people

To promote well-being in a company, you must start with your own employees. Throughout the years, we have therefore devoted a great deal of effort to a clean and safe working environment.

The air quality in production environments receives special attention at Vandersanden. For instance, we focus on the prevention of smoke and gas formation. Our energy-efficient tunnel




VANDERSANDEN





Rudi Beusen

Plant Manager of the production site in Spouwen and Maasmechelen

Employed at Vandersanden for 29 years

"A playground for engineers"

"I am a Vandersanden veteran. I started working here in 1993; it was my first job after obtaining my engineering degree. It was a difficult time – crisis! – but one day, a boy who I played football with, came to my door and said: 'A production manager quit. Rudi, don't you feel like doing that job?' The rest is history (laughs)."

"I started as a production manager, and had to supervise 25 operators and technicians. On my first visit to the factory, I thought: 'Damn, a lot of that technology I haven't seen before.' Four years of school, and I had to learn everything all over again. Fortunately, there was an older colleague on the other production line; I learned a lot from him. Every brick maker works with a secret recipe. Our field relies on experience; you have to make mistakes to learn the trade. That's even encouraged here."

"Now, I run the factories in Spouwen and Maasmechelen. We live in a different world. Huge steps have been taken, especially in the area of sustainability. Our former CEO, Pirre Wuytack, was the driving force behind that transformation. He made everyone crazy (laughs). The year 2030 is stamped on everyone's memory: we will emit 55% less CO₂ by then. We already use solar energy and cogeneration. The first wind turbine will be operational by the end of 2022, and we will continue to innovate. For engineers, that is a playground. Entirely in line with the spirit of Vandersanden: we are going to shape the future, yesterday rather than today."



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kilns run on natural gas. Flue gas filters purify the released combustion gases.

Dust is unavoidable in a brick factory, but we have been taking measures for years to reduce exposure to dust. Extractor fans have been installed in all factories. At some locations, dust-proof cabins are installed, or machines are encapsulated. All employees contribute to achieving maximum dust reduction.

Small, concrete measures can prevent a great deal of exposure, such as sweeping during periods when there are few people in the factory or sweeping with a water sweeper or vacuum cleaner rather than a broom. We avoid giving gusts of wind free rein in dusty environments. An annual dust audit in all our Dutch and Belgian plants reveals areas where we can still improve.

In addition, a dedicated working group was established in 2020 to reduce dust exposure.

With our 'Safety Steve' campaign, we aim to continue to ensure safety and raise awareness of the safety rules in the coming years. Our goal is zero accidents in the workplace.

Well-being in the workplace also means having room to grow and learn. You will find our training and education initiatives further on in the report, under 'Training and coaching in the workplace'.

Our environment: consistent efforts toward energy efficiency

When it comes to our environment, we have invested heavily in energy savings in our

production processes throughout the years.

In 2020, we installed a new brick kiln in our Tolkamer factory, which will significantly reduce CO₂ emissions for the entire production process. In its first year of operation, it has already achieved a 16.5% reduction in gas consumption and a 17% reduction in electricity consumption.

Several production sites have a combined heat and power unit that, in addition to electricity, also generates heat for our drying process. A portion of the energy reduction is due to residual heat recovery, which ensures that the heat released from the ovens is used optimally in the drying rooms using Delta-T technology.

We will continue to invest heavily in residual heat recovery. We are now investigating how we can gain even greater efficiency from the air discharged by the chimney, as this generally retains a temperature that makes it possible to recover the residual heat.

We can now produce our bricks with much less energy, and we make a point of using green and electrical energy, such as solar panels, as much as possible for the energy we actually need. It is our ambition to further increase the sustainability of the energy used for the production process.

We are continuing to electrify our production process and we are conducting research into

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Imko Jurgens

Plant Manager Hedikhuizen
Employed at Vandersanden for 7 years

"In time, we will be able to heat 100 households with the residual heat from our production process"

"When I started at Vandersanden, there were four factories. Now there are ten. Huge strides have been made in the past decade, not only in terms of volume, but also in terms of sustainability. For example, there are solar panels on all factory roofs, and one third of our energy use is covered by solar energy."

"Our energy ambitions are not limited to the production site; the village of Hedikhuizen also has the ambition to become completely self-sufficient in terms of energy. Vandersanden contributes to this (as yet unrealised) project by making the residual heat from our production process available to a heat distribution network for the heating of 100 households in the village."

"Corporate well-being also means being able to work safely at the Hedikhuizen plant. To this end, we have drawn up rules of conduct, our machines are properly shielded, and we pay close attention to ergonomic optimisation. Another challenge in the factory is dust. We measure the situation continuously, have dust-collection installations and have strict instructions for reducing as much dust as possible. We also keep factory employees closely involved by sharing factory achievements and informing them about future plans."

Helge Behrens

Operations manager Germany

Has been working at the production location of Oberlausitz for 30 years

"A family business thinks not only in terms of the next twelve months, but also of the next decade"

"In my work, innovation cannot be separated from sustainability. All the innovation we do must be sustainable. You can't innovate without including the customer, whose preferences are certainly not insignificant. And those preferences may well differ from country to country. In all markets, the brick is moving towards a more dematerialised version. In Belgium, for example, this is through a thinner brick, in Germany through a brick with holes. We learn from each other, that's the beauty of it."

"For me Collective Wellbeing is about bigger things like health, job security, customer friendliness and sustainability. A very big step towards Collective Wellbeing at work was the Vandersanden Experience in 2018, where we came together with colleagues from all Vandersanden markets. But other events were also very meaningful. At the beginning of last year, I was seriously ill, and literally everyone who works with me sent me wishes for a speedy recovery, flowers, cards, messages and so on. That, too, is Collective Wellbeing for me."

"Our production site was owned by a multinational for almost 20 years. The fact that Vandersanden is a family business and really lives and breathes its family values, is felt in everything. Decisions are taken more quickly and with a longer term perspective. A family business thinks not only in terms of the next twelve months, but also of the next decade."



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alternative energy sources, such as biogas or hydrogen as fuel. With our first wind turbine, which will be operational by mid-2022, we are taking the self-supply of green electricity one step further.

With carbonation technology – where CO₂ is absorbed during production rather than emitted – we are going even further in reducing our CO₂ emissions.

Our environment: using resources sparingly

Collective Well-Being is not limited to energy, but also involves the conscious use of water, packaging, harmful substances, and resources.

Most visible are our efforts to "dematerialise" our bricks, or as our former CEO called it: we are

putting the brick on a diet. We are making narrower bricks, 6 to 7.5 cm deep, or even 1.8 cm (ECObrick slips). Things can be even more sustainable as well. We are currently focusing on the development of hydraulically pressed – or "dry pressed" – slips. Carbonation technology also has a favourable effect on raw materials: 80% of the raw material used is recycled from the metal industry.

With a working group within KNB (Koninklijke Nederlandse Bouwkeramiek), we are striving for a transition to a new standard for paving stones – from 80 millimetres to 70 millimetres. We expect this proposal to be finalised in the third quarter of 2022.

We purify and reuse our water to the greatest extent possible. Where possible, we use rainwater rather than drinking water.

We are improving the sustainability of our packaging. We have made an important step towards reusable covers by using recycled material and using less ink.

Finally, we aim to avoid or phase out the use of harmful substances wherever possible. Specifically, we are investigating whether we can exclude barium carbonate from our production, a raw material that we use today to prevent a white haze on our bricks.

Our surroundings: local residents and other communities

Collective Well-Being does not stop at the factory walls, of course, which is why we do not want only our (end) users and employees to benefit from our activities. The entire community should benefit from our work.

By 2030, we want to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by at least half. Together with several

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Koen Bosmans

Managing Partner CEE

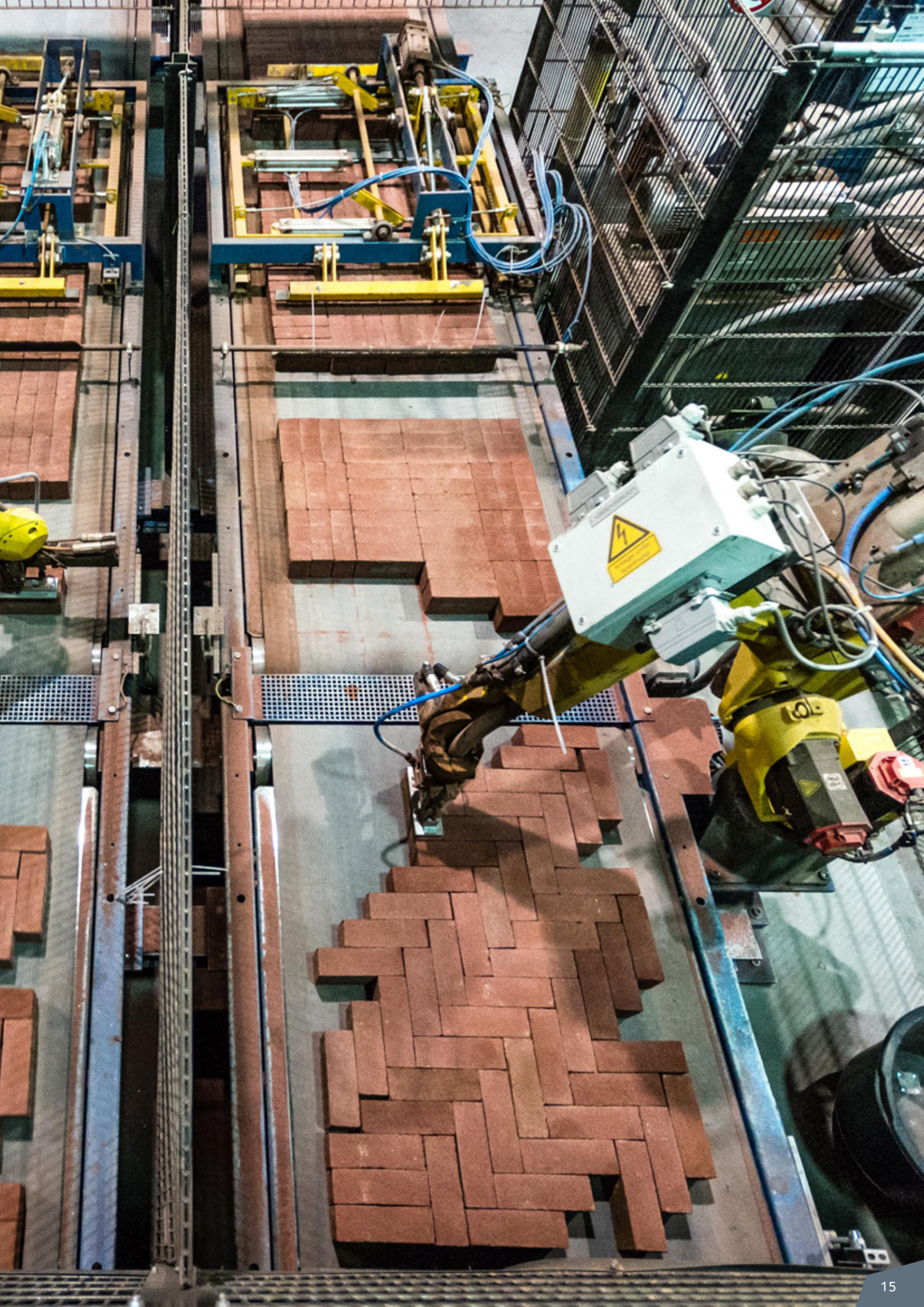
Has been assisting Vandersanden in optimising its energy efficiency for 15 years

"Vandersanden is in the top 5% of progressive industrial players, not only in words but also in deeds"

"I entered Vandersanden for the first time 15 years ago, for a meeting with the then technical director. After chatting for an hour about the visions of both Vandersanden and CEE, the man stepped outside. 'Just a moment,' he said. After less than five minutes, he was in the meeting room again, asking me if I would like to make an agreement with him – an agreement between people with the same vision. More than a decade later, that shared belief is still the basis of our cooperation, not only between that technical director and myself but also between the entire technical team of CEE and various Vandersanden teams across multiple sites and countries."

"At CEE, we pride ourselves on the fact that we need to achieve a better balance between man and nature than has been the case in recent decades. In that respect, the goals of CEE overlap with those of Vandersanden. In fact, Vandersanden is a reference for us. If we want to halve emissions by 2030 or 2050, minor optimisations will not be enough. Vandersanden dares to look further and start from scratch, preparing itself for a great leap forward. This places Vandersanden in the top 5% of progressive industrial players, not only in words but also in deeds."

"In addition, there is a very warm atmosphere in the entire company. You can tell that everyone supports the culture and the belief in Collective Well-being. In short, it's a fantastic company (laughs)."





Peter Van Mierloo

Sales & Business Development at Orbix

Has supported Vandersanden with the development of CO₂-negative bricks since 2017

“Vandersanden dares to take a pioneering role when it comes to sustainability and Collective Well-being”

“Thanks to initiatives such as Fit for 55, almost everyone agrees that we must all reduce our CO₂ emissions in 2022. In 2017, when we first made contact with Vandersanden, the general mindset in society was completely different. When we presented our Carbstone technology, which is based on Carbinox, our recycling product from the steel industry, and suggested using it to produce CO₂-negative bricks, former CEO Pirre was immediately enthusiastic, believing that this could be the pre-eminent technology of the future.”

“That enthusiasm characterises the pioneering role that Vandersanden invariably occupies and has occupied in the field of sustainability and Collective Well-being. Orbix is rather a small company, and our collaboration with Vandersanden is very valuable to us. In the first instance, of course, through Vandersanden’s position in the market but especially through our shared values and drive. Sustainability is in the DNA of both Orbix and Vandersanden.”

“Orbix specialises in the manufacture of circular materials for the construction and steel sectors, and it has built up a great deal of know-how and knowledge over the years. To create real change, we rely on our customers and partners. Only together with them can the patents, after years of research and serious investments, be validated and contribute effectively to making the sector sustainable.”

“That’s what is so great about a family business like Vandersanden – the focus on the future and short lines of communication. The world needs that type of pioneer; idealists who believe in their cause and manage to radiate that belief and inspire others.”



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OF VANDERSANDEN

other brick manufacturers, for example, we are part of the sustainability programme ‘Brick Valley’, in which we are committed to realising an area-specific solution for future-proof energy supply.

We support the “Hedikhuizen Duurzaam” and “Duurzaam Gelders Eiland” projects. These are initiatives by local residents to generate and distribute sustainable energy independently and are closely aligned with our activities in Hedikhuizen and Spijk/Tolkamer.

We also encourage our employees to focus on social initiatives. Our ‘Collective Well-Being in the community’ group offers our employees a say in our support of good causes and ensures that all our employees can remain closely involved in our local work with communities.

The future: further strategic sustainability development

Collective Well-Being is therefore no longer something we do without reflection or simply because it feels good. Collective wellbeing is becoming our *raison d’être*, something we actively strive for and seek. This is the direction we will continue to take in the coming years, in the interests of our people, our environment and our surroundings.



“Collective Well-being is the reason why I came to Vandersanden”

Collective Well-being is very much alive at Vandersanden, everywhere in the organisation. CEO Rudi Peeters noticed this immediately after his remarkable switch from the KBC bank. He wants to continue on the same course and with the same sky-high ambitions. “Now more than ever, I want to play a pioneering role with Vandersanden. As a leader in Collective Well-being, we must motivate our sector to become more sustainable.”

Rudi Peeters took over from Jean-Pierre ‘Pirre’ Wuytack as CEO of Vandersanden on 1 October 2021. He took an extensive tour of all the branches of the family business and became closely acquainted with all the facets of Collective Well-being in the process. “In my first months at Vandersanden, I saw that Collective Well-being is definitely not window dressing,” says Rudi Peeters. “Everyone is aware of it; Collective Well-being is very much alive.”

How did Collective Well-being gain a foothold with you?

“One moment will stay with me forever. I had only just started here when we held our production management team days with representatives from all our factories. When it came to safety in our factories, there was not the slightest discussion about the targets. We want zero incidents. Not a

drop in so many cases or by that percentage, no, simply no more incidents. I immediately noticed that Collective Well-being truly is in the company’s DNA. It’s everywhere in the organisation, at all levels, with all employees.”

In which domains can Vandersanden still make leaps forward in the coming years?

“I am really blown away by the craftsmanship and innovation at Vandersanden. I have a degree in biology; I am a man of science. I am firmly convinced that innovation is the way to massively accelerate the fight against global warming. Vandersanden is a true pioneer in the construction sector, which is responsible for almost 40% of global CO₂ emissions. We have radically opted for dematerialisation, and we have put our bricks on a diet. We are well on the way to producing CO₂-negative bricks, which remove CO₂ from the air.”

“Technically, we can do a lot – much more than I had thought possible before I started working here. We just need to do a better job selling those efforts and investments.

How do you plan to elaborate on this pioneering role?

“We currently have a strong focus on new construction. I also want to pay more attention to important societal evolutions, such as renovation and the circular economy. Isn’t reusing someone else’s home the epitome of circularity? Space is becoming increasingly scarce, raw materials increasingly expensive, and staff increasingly difficult to find. We can help formulate answers to those issues that other players in the sector are struggling with. Manufacturing bricks remains our core business, but I think there are many opportunities to broaden our view. Not only to great products, which we already produce, but also to services.”

Fire and enthusiasm

Just like last year, Vandersanden remains a great place to work. How important is that to you?

“Extremely important. It’s an acknowledgement and confirmation that Collective Well-being starts at work, with a job that challenges people and makes them happy. People find that here. I see the fire and enthusiasm in their eyes every day. People work extremely hard at Vandersanden. Our employees are very driven, but that can also be a pitfall. I want to make sure there’s enough room for new ideas, and I want to monitor the work-life balance. I want people to have time to answer their emails during the day. They shouldn’t have to do that at home in the evening. (laughs) Mind you, that’s still a work in progress for me as well.”

Collective Well-being is also about the communities that Vandersanden is part of.

“Vandersanden has evolved into an international player over the years, but it has never forgotten

where it came from. The company has remained a family business, and that appeals to me. From my very first acquaintance, I felt a connection with the family. We share the same values. As a family business, Vandersanden always has the long term in mind. We think further, much further than the next quarter. That focus on the long term goes hand in hand with a focus on sustainability.”

“Investments in the local community are important to remind us of our own origins and roots. Many Vandersanden employees are active in local associations; they are part of that social fabric. In my spare time, I am a volunteer on the board of Intesa, a Limburg institution that provides care to people with physical or mental disabilities. During my very first conversation with the Vandersanden family, I said that there was no way I would give up that mandate. Fortunately, Vandersanden encourages this kind of commitment. It’s a two-way street. I bring valuable lessons from my volunteer work to Vandersanden. An evolution is taking place in the healthcare sector; everything points towards consolidation and expansion. Institutions realise that they have to join forces. That is how I came to believe in cooperation and co-creation.”

Together we build greatness?

“Absolutely. I’ve always loved that slogan. We must join forces with architects, property developers, contractors, and promising start-ups working on innovative and sustainable techniques. But for me, co-creation is also about solutions that we develop together with our employees. Vandersanden has a great deal of expertise and craftsmanship in house. If there were a Michelin guide for bricks, we would definitely get three stars. Our people have millions more ideas than I do for new products and new services. I come from a completely different world; I cannot bake bricks. I can transform companies and create a context that brings out the best in people and from which innovative ideas emerge. That’s my role.”



**What new focuses will you place
on Collective Well-being?**

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it. I am mainly going to build on all the actions that have already been set in motion in all four areas of Collective Well-being: at work, for the environment, in the sector and for the community. Vandersanden has made tremendous efforts to become greener and more sustainable in recent years. I want to continue that approach. This ranges from baking CO₂-neutral brick to a fully electric fleet, including forklifts. At best, I will deepen and broaden the vision and approach. And speed things up here and there."

"I also think that we can make Collective Well-being even more visible. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every customer received a small bag of clay with every pallet of bricks? The clay that those bricks are made of. This would remind customers that they are dealing with a traditional product. A unique product with a whole history behind it and into which an incredible amount of passion and love has been invested at Vandersanden."



Training and coaching in the workplace



The results of the annual staff survey led to a 'Great Place to Work' label in four countries in 2021.



In the context of Collective Well-being in the workplace, training and coaching occupy a prominent place. Not only because of the motivational nature of personal development but also because of its positive influence on long-term employability, succession planning and multi-employability.

In Vandersanden's CSR management system, the theme 'Training and education' is prioritised and 'Ownership in personal development' has been identified as a critical success factor (CSF).

The annual survey of Vandersanden employees, the result of which led to a 'Great Place to Work' certification in four countries in 2021 with a participation rate of more than 80%, provides a nuanced picture of current employee satisfaction concerning training and coaching. To the statement "I am offered training or education to develop myself professionally", 67% of the employees responded positively. Among office workers, this was 82%. Factory workers still see room for improvement with 53% satisfaction – a clear reason for Vandersanden to shift gears in that area.

It goes without saying that classroom training and the use of modern e-learning tools are easier to organise in an office environment than on the factory floor, especially in a multi-site context. However, this does not stop Vandersanden from investing even more than before in training and coaching for everyone, without exception.

Competence development is a matter of knowing, wanting and being able. In modified forms, the factory environment also lends itself to opportunities for improvement in daily work and being better prepared for the changes that accompany the innovative enterprise that Vandersanden is.

In practice, Vandersanden takes action in the workplace regarding three types of competences:

- Technical competences
- Behavioural competences
- Safety competences

These three components are an integral part of the job profiles. The job profiles form the cornerstone of the competence development process used in progress interviews and assessments.

Technical competences

Technical competences are those competences required for the professional mastery of the various workstations in the factory. A cross-functional working group of enthusiastic colleagues took the initiative in 2021 to set up a pilot project at the Hedikhuizen plant.

The different factory activities and corresponding competences were plotted in a software system. In consultation with the plant manager, a dedicated trainer was appointed to oversee

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Harrie Rek

Practical trainer, responsible for the project on the multi-deployability of employees

Employed at Vandersanden for 10 years

"The relationship between man and machine never ceases to amaze me"

"I have been working at Vandersanden for ten years now, with a short break in between, when I chased an old dream of working on an inland barge. Yet my love for Vandersanden was greater because after a while, I picked up the phone and called my old production manager. 'Are you still looking for people?' I asked. 'Harry,' he said, 'hop in the car and get ready to sign your contract.' Half an hour later everything was sorted. (laughs)"

"I first started out as a machinery operator. In the beginning, I didn't even know where to look: everything here is big, high, and long; some machines are several metres high and wide. It's an ingenious cogwheel: it turns and moves, and everything falls into place nicely."

"Initially I was stationed at the machine that puts bricks on the trolley that goes to the oven, but my manager at the time already felt that everyone should be able to work on every machine. I was his first guinea pig. (laughs) I became the forerunner of the pilot project that I am now working on myself. As a practical trainer, I develop and organise training sessions for the production staff. We determined the necessary competencies and created a competence matrix that is tailored to the different machines in the plant. A training programme consisting of competency-based training courses was then developed.

"The first training courses are currently being tested. In time, we want to extend the training programme to other machines and roll it out to all production staff. The aim is for everyone to be deployable on all machinery."



the development process. He recorded the current knowledge and skills of the employees in the system. This provided a good view of the development opportunities.

The training methodology and tools are currently being finalised to achieve the goals of multi-employability and long-term employability.

The concept, which both COOs fully support, has been presented to the plant managers of other Vandersanden sites and was received enthusiastically to be rolled out further. Each new start-up will be preceded by an analysis, which will adapt the concept to the specific needs of the next plant.

Behavioural competences

“Together we build greatness” is a slogan at Vandersanden that our employees live up to every day. It represents the way our employees treat each other in the workplace. How managers treat their employees and vice versa.

Vandersanden has translated this concept into a unique vision related to leadership and ownership: VDS-M. It is underpinned by a complete set of competences that shape family culture and behaviour every day. Training and coaching are also provided to work with VDS-M effectively and efficiently.

In VDS-M, a distinction is made between Leadership (VDS) and Management (M). The management part contains the competences required to ‘manage’ a factory, a process, a project or yourself. Leadership, on the other hand, focuses on people and is not limited to the behaviour of ‘the leadership’.



At Vandersanden, we believe that our +800 employees influence each other and consequently take on a leading role in the correct, respectful manner. The competences that support VDS behaviour are summarised under the heading Ownership.

VDS stands for:

- Verbinden & innoveren (connect and innovate)
- Dragen & ontwikkelen (carry and develop)
- Sturen & corrigeren (steer and correct)

In 2021 two full-time trainers started working at Vandersanden to translate the vision of VDS-M Leadership and Ownership very concretely to the workplace. The training model they use is deliberately low-threshold and practical in nature. Rather than extensive, theoretical reflections, the emphasis is on application and learning from what you have done.

During a cycle of about three months, groups of six to eight employees are given the theoretical content of the competences underlying their

profile in several one-hour sessions. The emphasis is on the interim one-to-one coaching discussions with the trainer, reflecting on the success and approach of the applications in order to learn from them for the future.

Meanwhile, 14 groups have already completed the VDS-M training cycle. The coach remains available afterwards for support and as a sounding board for further growth. The development of employees also occupies a crucial place in the competence system for managers, especially in the 'Carry & Develop' part.

Both trainers have specialised in the 'Great Place to Work' model and are recognised 'LIFO' licence holders. Due to their knowledge of the 'Life Orientation' behavioural method, they are able to link the preferred behaviour of their internal customers to the VDS-M competence system. By analysing the improvement potential of the annual staff survey, they can coach managers and employees in an even more targeted way.



06

Training and coaching in the workplace

Bart Latet

Health, Safety & Environment Manager
Employed at Vandersanden for five years

*“Collective Well-being is there
for and thanks to everyone”*

“Within my position, I coordinate all actions that contribute to a healthy and safe working environment, both physical and mental, for all employees in consultation with the local plant managers. This is a diverse range of actions, from ergonomics, workload and machine safety to site hygiene, including dust control.”

“Collective Well-being is one of Vandersanden’s strategic objectives. It is not an empty promise but a goal that we work on every day with all our colleagues. Every employee has the opportunity to contribute in their own way.”

“By encouraging everyone to support Collective Well-being, we have achieved a lot. But we are aware of the road ahead. After all, standing still is going backwards. Every day we try to inspire and stimulate each other to grow and advance, also in the area of Collective Well-being.”

“If you look at the family behind Vandersanden, you see that they give priority to Collective Well-being. That family philosophy has always been there – you can hear it in the stories and memories that circulate in the corridors.”

“Vandersanden has grown enormously in recent years, both in the number of employees and number of sites. Although each site has its own individuality, they all have a common vision. Think of it as many beautiful families that form an even more beautiful family together (laughs).”

PEOPLE OF VANDERSANDEN



Safety competences

In general, the personnel are relatively positive about Vandersanden's efforts in the field of safety, giving this a satisfaction score of 77% in the staff survey. It is worth noting that factory workers (67%) are more critical than office workers (87%). Since the risks in the factories are the highest, Vandersanden's management decided to implement an even more intensive and far-reaching project in 2022 as an additional injection in the direction of Collective Well-being at work.

It goes without saying that safety in a highly automated and 'heavy' industry such as the brick sector is a top priority. Safety training and

coaching have been the main focus of the annual programmes of the Group Manager HSE and his team for years. Training and awareness-raising go hand in hand with safety-related investments and actions that proactively eliminate safety risks.

Training sessions in the form of informative toolboxes in the workplace ensure that employees in all the factories are continuously made aware of the do's and don'ts of safe and unsafe behaviour. Supported by the 'Take care of yourself' campaign, this proved successful in the past. The ten safety rules were prominently brought to everyone's attention in 2021 through the 'Safety Steve' campaign.

PEOPLE OF VANDERSANDEN

Guus Slutter

**HR manager for Vandersanden the Netherlands and Germany
Employed at Vandersanden since 2003**

*"Colleagues are spared where they must,
and encouraged where they can"*

"Collective Well-being at work is our translation of Long-term Employability. In concrete terms, colleagues are spared where they must, and encouraged where they can. In this context, we have several programmes running. They range from competence development and coaching to on-the-job training for production staff."

"Our goal is to keep all our employees employable as long as possible. We do this by focusing on health and safety, but also by providing incentives for them to continue to develop."

"We were recently recognised as a 'Great Place to Work'. We are very proud of this but with the necessary modesty. The granting of the certificate shows that we are on the right track, but there is always room for improvement. Of course, we run into some challenges now and then, but that's part of the job and makes it challenging."

"Long-term employability is a familiar concept, but Vandersanden is a trendsetter within our sector in terms of implementation. Peer companies sometimes admire this, and rightly so. This is due in large part to our position as a family business. Vandersanden is a solid company that can, but above all dares to, invest in Collective Well-being."







Collective Well-being in the community: ‘We don’t do this to receive good press’

Every year Vandersanden invests 1.5% of its profits in charities at home and abroad: a tradition that dates back to the time of Constant Vandersanden. Sophie Vangheel (Cunina) and Guy Wauters (Vandersanden) explain how a secondary school in Uganda contributes to Collective Well-being in the community.



“I remember Guy arriving for an introductory meeting; I immediately recognised in him a very warm person. I now know that this is the case for the entire Vandersanden family.”

We are speaking with Sophie Vangheel, founder of Cunina, an independent NGO that invests in charities in Brazil, the Philippines, Haiti, Nepal, Uganda, Peru and South Africa in cooperation with private and corporate sponsors. Cunina and Vandersanden have been collaborating on the construction of a secondary school in Fort Portal, Uganda, since 2019. To this end, she worked closely with Guy Wauters, son-in-law of Constant Vandersanden and, until recently, the Financial Director at Vandersanden.

As CFO, Guy was jointly responsible for Vandersanden’s investments in various charities.

The family business invests 1.5% of its gross operating profit before deductions (EBITDA) in charities in Belgium and abroad every year.

Why is Vandersanden so committed?

Wauters: “My father-in-law Constant started this tradition, and it is now enshrined in our family charter. That’s why we are constantly on the lookout for good partner organisations. One of our customers, Cindy Hustings of Hustings construction group, approached me with a beautiful project to build a secondary school in Uganda in 2019. She suggested that I talk to Sophie.”

Sophie Vangheel: “We have been working together for a few years now, but I dare say we hit it off from the very start (laughs).”

Wauters: “Sophie’s enthusiasm is particularly infectious. She spoke passionately about the project in Uganda and quickly convinced me. Then Sophie travelled to Spouwen to present her proposal to the family. They were quickly on board too, but that did not surprise me.”

Vandersanden attaches great importance to Collective Well-being in the community, including in the vicinity of its branches in Europe. Yet you also invest in projects in Africa.

Wauters: “Prosperity and Collective Well-being do not stop at national borders. Under the heading of Collective Well-being, we do a lot for our employees, the environment, our industry and the communities we are part of. But we must also be aware of how good we have it in Europe. Together with an organisation like Cunina, we also want to make our modest contribution to an increase in international prosperity.”

Vangheel: “What Guy says is true. Well-being often depends on where a person was born. Hence our name; Cunina is the goddess of the cradle.”

Cunina laid the foundation stone of a new school in Uganda in August. Why did you choose this project?

Vangheel: "There wasn't a secondary school in Fort Portal for a long time; the nearest is a three-hour walk away. Many children were en route six hours a day. Thanks to the support of partners like Vandersanden, we can finally offer these children a safe learning environment close to their homes."

Wauters: "We immediately found the construction of a new school a wonderful project. In addition, this school was located in the immediate vicinity of another great project, which we sponsored in 2017 and 2018, where the inhabitants of a small village received a basic income for two years (project 'Eight'). We followed the construction project closely."

PEOPLE OF VANDERSANDEN



Peter Vanpee

**Business Development Manager at KBC Asset Management
38 years old and grandson of Constant Vandersanden**

"I'm honoured to be part of the fourth Vandersanden generation"

"As the grandson of Constant Vandersanden, I literally grew up next to the factory in Lanklaar. During weekends, I would join my father on his factory tour, and from the age of sixteen, I also worked there during the school holidays. After my studies, I started working at KBC. When I heard that Rudi Peeters was joining Vandersanden, I felt everything had come full circle. Rudi was the manager of my department during my first few years at KBC. He was much higher up in the organisation than myself, so I knew him mainly from his appearances on stage during events. (laughs) He was highly respected at KBC and attracting such a strong profile for the new CEO of Vandersanden gives us a lot of confidence in the future."

"My bond with the family and with the company is still very strong. Every two years, we even go on a skiing holiday with the entire family, which, of course, really boosts our family ties. The family council – a kind of shareholders' meeting – manages a list of projects that we want to support financially. They are mainly social projects that aim to sustainably improve living conditions, both locally and internationally. I myself proposed a project that involves planting acacia forests in the Sahel, which has both a social and an ecological impact in the short and long term."

"In addition to my seat on the family council, I help organise sessions to shape the generation transfer in the medium term. The third generation is starting to look more and more to the fourth generation to take the helm in due course, which is why we are getting increasingly involved. I see it as a privilege to be part of Vandersanden, a company that also looks to the future and invests in long-term projects to ensure we will still be around and relevant in 50 years' time."

Katrien Lambrechts

HR Coach / PSS Manager at Eurofins Belgium

35 years old and granddaughter of Constant Vandersanden

“Collective Well-being is in the DNA of both our family and the company”

“When I look at our family, we could not have had any other type of business. Collective Well-being is in our DNA: my grandfather cared about people, and that has carried over both to other family members and to the company.”

“I am not employed by Vandersanden, but together with my other family members, I stay in touch with the company through our Family Forum. During the last edition, Eddy Deconinck, Director of Collective Well-being at Vandersanden, told us more about Vandersanden’s HR vision. I am active in the HR sector and was enormously impressed by how far Vandersanden has come in this field.”

“You feel Collective Well-being in everything the company does: in its products, the way it treats the environment, the community and certainly its own people. The Vandersanden vision of leadership starts from the employees by giving them the opportunity to take their future into their own hands.”

“At Vandersanden, the right people are in the right place to shape and disseminate Collective Well-being. I am immensely proud of that.”



PEOPLE OF VANDERSANDEN

Vangheel: “The school opened for the first time in January 2022, and it goes without saying that Guy had to be there. We believe it is important that our sponsors have a clear view of where their support is going and the positive impact they help to realise.”

As an outsider, how do you look at an idea like Collective Well-being?

Vangheel: “With great admiration. Vandersanden’s vision of Collective Well-being is music to my ears. In fact, every company should be able to say this, but we are not there yet. Although in many conversations with companies, I notice a growing awareness of corporate social responsibility. Thanks to their support, we can make great strides in projects like that in Uganda.”

Wauters: “Collective Well-being is part of our DNA, and it’s passed on from generation to generation through the family. Including our annual investment of 1.5% in the family charter gives us a concrete goal to aim for.”

Was this not the case in the past?

Wauters: “My father-in-law Constant had a huge heart; he couldn’t say no to anyone who asked him for a donation. He didn’t even want people to know about all these investments. Since then, the business has grown, and we are trying to do things differently. We communicate more actively about our support for charities. We want our people to feel involved in these projects. But it must remain authentic. We don’t do this to receive good press.”

Striking achievements

Vandersanden does not think in terms of years, but rather in terms of generations. This applies to all aspects of Collective Well-being. We want to make investments with a sustainable view and a long-term vision, for the environment, at work, for the community and in the sector itself. In 2021, we realised both major and minor steps in these four areas. The continuation of our current projects and also new initiatives are an important part of our objectives.

Collective Well-being for the environment

Clay pavers and facing bricks are timeless and durable products that last for many decades. We innovate to minimise our ecological impact and to increase the sustainability of our products. In doing so, we not only look at our products, but also at broader solutions for façades and streets.

Dematerialisation: ECO Brick Slips

We continue to develop our Eco brick slips. The quality and investment policy at the pioneer plant in Maasmechelen resulted in an increase of more than 50% in production and sales. The brick slips are not sawn from whole bricks, but are formed in special moulds and fired as slips. This results in further reductions with respect to material, raw materials and energy usage. Compared to sawn

slips. ECO Brick slips use 70% less raw materials and 50% less energy. They are increasingly used in housing construction and are ideally suited for prefabricated building elements, in combination with Vandersanden's RoboBrick applications.

Dematerialisation: dry press slips

Vandersanden is taking important steps in the development of hydraulically pressed brick slips strips. In time, these will result in even thinner brick slip products than their ECO counterparts, while retaining the same aesthetics, quality and functionality. At the Lanklaar site, all the necessary facilities for further product and process development were purchased last year and accommodated within a pilot plant. This has already produced impressive results.



Dematerialisation: thinner LF40 bricks

A thinner brick (7.5 cm) was launched in the Hedikhuizen factory with the LF40.

In our other factories, the necessary analyses are being carried out and investment plans developed with a view to the general application of the 7 cm 'diet' brick in the Waal format. A cross-functional working group is preparing the launch, which is scheduled for some time in 2022.

Limitation of harmful raw materials

Now that the Environmental Cost Indicator calculations for each product and factory are entering the final phase, Vandersanden will soon have all the data required to evaluate its raw materials and energy consumption. This allows Vandersanden to systematically take targeted actions in terms of product and process development.

PEOPLE OF VANDERSANDEN



Ron van der Looij

Industry specialist for climate-adaptive pavers
Employed at Vandersanden for 8 years

"We design a good environment for people and nature in the long term with our pavers"

"I deal with pavers at Vandersanden, and you can't really compare that with bricks. You speak to different target groups, there is a different dynamic, and the projects usually have a shorter lead time. I usually consult directly with local authorities, architects or contractors who wish to construct or rebuild a certain aspect of the public space."

"We want to identify the customer's wishes and then find a suitable solution. That's logical because public spaces are not designed in the same way. Vandersanden is a producer of pavers first and foremost, but they are only part of the total solution we offer. Our expertise goes far beyond pavers; we also think about their application, use and maintenance." The focus of my job has changed over the years. Torrential downpours with considerable flooding became more frequent. I started looking into climate adaptive solutions with pavers about eight years ago. That was a good decision because climate change is now one of the greatest challenges in the design of public spaces. We offer solutions for the water that currently accumulates on the streets, but a big challenge is keeping water available when it's needed."

"Working with customers to find sustainable solutions that are good for both nature and people in the long term – that's what we do."



Energy saving: Beek and Tolkamer

The new, environmentally friendly tunnel kiln in Tolkamer, which was commissioned in 2020, reached full efficiency in 2021 with an energy saving of no less than 25%.

For the factory at Beek, the Board of Directors approved the replacement of the old, energy-consuming drying installation. The project aims to make maximum use of the residual heat from the kiln in combination with the elimination of gas co-firing. This electrification process will be rolled out to other factories in a subsequent phase.

Finally, as part of the Carbstone project, the possibility of making maximum use of the available residual heat to dry raw materials is being investigated.

Renewable energy sources: sun and wind

The existing solar panel park (34,000 units) at the Beek plant was expanded by 1,228 units in 2021. The solar panels have an annual output

of 385 MWh and represent 13% of the annual consumption of the plant. Virtually all roofs that are suitable for this have now been fitted with solar panels.

At the end of 2021, the first preparations were made for the installation of the wind turbine in Lanklaar, which will be commissioned in mid-2022. With a tip height of 200 metres and a capacity of 4.5 MW, this installation, along with so many other projects, is testament to Vandersanden's sustainable ambition.

Renewable energy sources: research

In the context of the Brick Valley, Vandersanden and other stakeholders on the Gelders Eiland are investigating the possibilities of using biogas.

In addition, Vandersanden is sponsoring the research project of Prof. Martens of KU Leuven, where hydrogen is generated from solar energy. A subsequent generation of solar panels is now being studied to generate hydrogen directly.



Greenhouse gas mitigation: carbonation

The test facilities that saw the light of day in 2020 allowed us to prepare for the commissioning of a model factory in Lanklaar. The production parameters have been set, the environmental permit has been requested and the first orders for machines have been placed, so that we can be ready by the end of 2022. This model factory already produces 35,000 tonnes of bricks.

CO₂ storage: carbonation

As is well known, this carbonation process is characterised by the fact that CO₂ is absorbed rather than emitted during the production of the bricks. In the first phase, this CO₂ will still be purchased externally. In a long-running project with external research institutes TCKI and VITO, new insights are being gained on a laboratory scale into the storage of flue gases from traditional brick production as a raw material for carbonation.

Environmentally-friendly packaging

The project, which started last year in Tolkamer, has been extended to the other factories. All plastic shrink wrapping already contain 30% recycled materials, resulting in 400,000 kg less in CO₂ emissions annually. We strive for maximum use of recycled materials in the shrink wrapping and in some places a recycling rate of 50% has already been achieved. Moreover, the printing on the shrink wrapping is now limited to 10% of the surface area, making recycling much easier and saving 80% ink.

Collective Well-being at work

At Vandersanden, we attach great importance to a healthy and safe working environment for our 800 plus employees. We also believe it is important that our employees feel inspired and encouraged to develop additional capacities beyond their regular duties and thus help to embody 'Collective Well-being'.

Vandersanden is a Great Place to Work

At the end of 2021, Vandersanden obtained the official Great Place to Work label for Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK, with an overall score of 74% and a participation rate of more than 80%. This is a huge success in the context of the COVID situation and a fantastic achievement by all the staff who have put their shoulders to the wheel in recent years. It also offers a boost in the context of 'employer branding' and the 'war for talent'. It is, however, a milestone rather than an end point. The 26 teams have already started focussing on making further improvements.



Ownership in personal development: VDS-M behavioural competencies

Vandersanden has recruited two trainers to train and coach employees and their managers in the unique VDS-M concept for Leadership and Ownership. By 2021, they will have trained a total of fifteen groups of six to eight people in the behavioural competencies that form the basis for Connecting & Innovating (V),



PEOPLE OF VANDERSANDEN

Sarah Jefferson

UK Technical Advisor

Joined Vandersanden 1.5 years ago

"Being asked to get involved at the beginning of a construction project, that's the biggest privilege"

"As a technical advisor, I provide specialist technical advice to architects and specifiers. As a Chartered Architect, I worked in a private practice for many years before moving to work in the brick industry. That experience and perspective is now invaluable to me in advising architects on technical aspects of brick and brickwork design."

"There is a lot of change in the construction sector at the moment and architects need to keep their knowledge up to date. In my role at Vandersanden, I notice that architects really appreciate technical and design advice on the use of brick."

"I like to get involved as early as possible in the design process to make that advice most beneficial. I consider it a real privilege to advise on proposed drawings and sketches and look forward to seeing some of the completed projects in the future featured in architectural magazines."

"We are also pleased to offer a number of CPD (continuing professional development) seminars on various aspects of brick and brickwork. CPD is an annual commitment for members of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), to maintain their knowledge and keep up to date. We also try to inspire architects as much as possible through podcasts and webinars. During the latter half of 2021, architects were able to follow several webinars on a number of topics, ranging from "How to avoid brick stains and efflorescence" to "Special techniques and innovations".

"I started working at Vandersanden during the pandemic, when I was unable to meet my new colleagues face to face due to the Covid restrictions. Despite the circumstances, I soon felt part of Vandersanden, thanks to the warm welcome and support of the team. Everyone is very accessible and the fact that there is no real hierarchy feels very refreshing."





Carrying & Developing (D), Steering (S) and Managing (M). One-on-one coaching on the shop floor, in particular, has ensured that the training was immediately put into practice, with a view to sustainable application. The two enthusiastic trainers and the employees will continue this trailblazing journey into 2022.

Ownership in personal development: professional competencies

Vandersanden wants to increase the level of retention of its factory employees by providing opportunities to move between roles and sustained employment. In a pilot project in Hedikhuizen, a trainer was appointed to assist both newcomers and experienced employees on the floor in this respect. The aim is to systematically strengthen and broaden professional competencies in the plant. The training methodology and tools for the additional competencies are currently being prepared so that we can implement them soon. The pilot project was enthusiastically received by the other plant managers and is set to be rolled out to the other plants too.

Equal treatment: group bonus

Vandersanden does not grant individual bonuses to employees. True to the philosophy of 'Together we build greatness', all staff members receive a uniform bonus that depends on the result of the whole group. The total amount of this bonus in 2021 was higher than the dividend received by the shareholders.

Management: Best Managed Company

For the fourth time in a row, Vandersanden was chosen by Deloitte as Best Managed Company and obtained the 'golden label'. From the jury's report: 'Very strong focus on CSR. SDGs are embedded in the strategy and identity of Vandersanden. Vandersanden should be seen as a role model in this respect.'

Vandersanden also won the Innovation Award from Voka Limburg with the RoboBrick implementation, where the emphasis lies in the combination of sustainability and innovation. In Belgium, Vandersanden became 'SDG

Laureate' and our company obtained the Charter for Sustainable Business (VCDO). Finally, Vandersanden also won the Family Business Award in 2021.

Equal treatment: employment conditions

At Vandersanden, we attach great importance to equal status for all employees. Vandersanden decided to equalise the number of days of leave, the guaranteed income, the group insurance and the eco cheques for these types of employees. Vandersanden is thus a pioneer in Belgium, not only within the sector but also across all sectors.

A safe working environment: RIE audit

The HSE department has developed a plan to identify all risks in all plants for further improvement using a step-by-step process. In total, some thirty topics will be audited over a period of four years. The improvement potential for the first ten themes (machine safety, chemical agents, ceramic fibres, PPE, workplace inspection, communication, training, risk management, incident management, emergency planning) was identified for the Belgian plants and translated into an action plan together with the plant managers.

Safe and healthy working environment: dust control

Dust control is an important health issue in brickyards. The health and safety department department is currently auditing all plants on eighteen topics related to dust control. Together with the plant managers, the department has set itself the target of achieving at least a 10% improvement in the audited scores after one year.

Workable load: ergonomics

The department conducts an ergonomics audit in all factories with a view to improving wellbeing of employees. The results of workstation analysis

also offer the management (in consultation with the occupational physician) the opportunity to deploy employees in a sustainable way, taking into account injuries and age. In this context, technical measures are implemented and coaching sheets are drawn up for employees.

Collective Well-being for the community

Collective Well-being is also reflected in Vandersanden's close community connection. We focus on projects that generate a long-term sustainable impact in the communities which we are part of. Our commitment is not just limited to sponsorship, but also involves creating a real network of community and future builders together with our employees. Self-sufficiency is very important. For this reason, we are strongly committed to education and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Good causes

As is the case every year, in 2021 Vandersanden selected six charities from a long-list of candidate organisations with a sustainable social purpose in which Vandersanden employees (or their families) are actively involved. The focus is on objectives of a social or ecological nature which also align with one of the Sustainable Development Goals. Last year's charities focussed on work for the homeless, socio-cultural youth work, disabled children, poverty and hunger and animal welfare. These organisations are located in Eindhoven and Spijk (NL), Hasselt and Sint-Truiden (B), Cambridge (UK) and Wiesbaden (D). They each received financial support, partly supported by the staff and partly contributed by Vandersanden.

Community effectiveness

In 2021, the Vandersanden family and the Core Group for Collective Wellbeing for the Community again chose more than 50 organisations and/



or projects whose operation they wanted to financially support, for a total amount of just under EUR 500,000.

The Core Group grew out of Vandersanden's commitment to the local community at the head office. It further fine-tuned the governance structure with regard to community operations at the end of 2021, so that operations can be further decentralised with involvement across all Vandersanden locations. This revised structure provides direction and support to further shape community work at the group, national and local levels. True to the Family Charter, the budget for 2022 will be further increased.

Collective Well-being in the sector

Vandersanden is a reliable partner for projects that promote and initiate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). We constantly and proactively seek constructive partnerships with other players in our sector. In doing so, we consider all steps in the value chain – from the extraction of raw materials to the installation and maintenance of finished products.

We want to lead the way in innovation and sustainability in the sector and try to involve as many partners as possible. It therefore comes as no surprise that our motto is 'Together we build greatness'. Vandersanden is constantly at the forefront, not only in terms of updating the sector and making it more sustainable, but also in guaranteeing fair competition on a global level.

Knowledge sharing and enrichment: Showrooms & Digicafe

The corona pandemic forced Vandersanden to temporarily close its showrooms. We, therefore, increased our focus on digital contact with our customers in 2020. We have huge faith in

digitalisation and therefore continued this push towards digital contact into 2021 and widened and strengthened our geographical reach. We also wish to continue investing in personal contact with our customers all over Europe. In our showrooms, we have the opportunity to meet, inspire, share knowledge with and offer a unique experience to everyone in our industry. The opening of our renovated showrooms in Halluin (FR) and Tolkamer (NL) last year is a good example of this.

Webinars

Of course, we do not keep our in-depth know-how to ourselves, but are happy to share it with the market. Greater knowledge in the market leads to fantastic initiatives, better cooperation and lower (failure) costs.

With the webinars, we give everyone the opportunity to gain knowledge and inspiration in a professional and accessible way. With eleven different themes in ten different countries, we have reached a wide range of professionals in the market.

Laurent Delouvroy

Sales Manager in France
Employed at Vandersanden for one year

"We want to be close to the customer; the renovated showroom in France is the perfect example of this"

"Vandersanden's reputation on the French scene is growing year after year. Our bricks are especially popular in the north of the country, but our brick slips are also gaining popularity, especially in the Paris region."

"Our ECO brick slips and E-Board respond to the French consumer or professional's search for sustainable choices. France has sky-high climate ambitions, and at Vandersanden we want to do our bit by being the reference for sustainable building solutions."

"The absolute highlight of 2021 for Vandersanden in the French market was the reopening of the showroom in Halluin, after a complete renovation. This showroom is now a really inspiring place, where people can meet and think about future projects together. We want to be close to the customer. The pandemic has taught us that human interaction is essential. Thanks to digital tools, we offer our customers a remote virtual visit, accompanied by one of our advisors."

"The atmosphere at Vandersanden is family-oriented and informal. Our employees are given a great deal of autonomy and trust. When I started working at Vandersanden, I was completely immersed in that atmosphere in a very humane and warm way during an integration week in Bilzen."

PEOPLE OF VANDERSANDEN







RIBA certified CPDs

Continuing Professional Development is mandatory for members of the Royal Institute of British Architects RIBA. These seminars are aimed primarily at architects and specifiers and introduce them to new trends, techniques and innovations, further enriching their level of knowledge. In addition to these seminars (delivered as webinars and face to face), we also offer RIBA-certified podcast series, and plan to further focus on both digital pathways.

Training and education

In Belgium and the Netherlands, various collaborations with secondary schools and higher education institutions were set up in 2021.

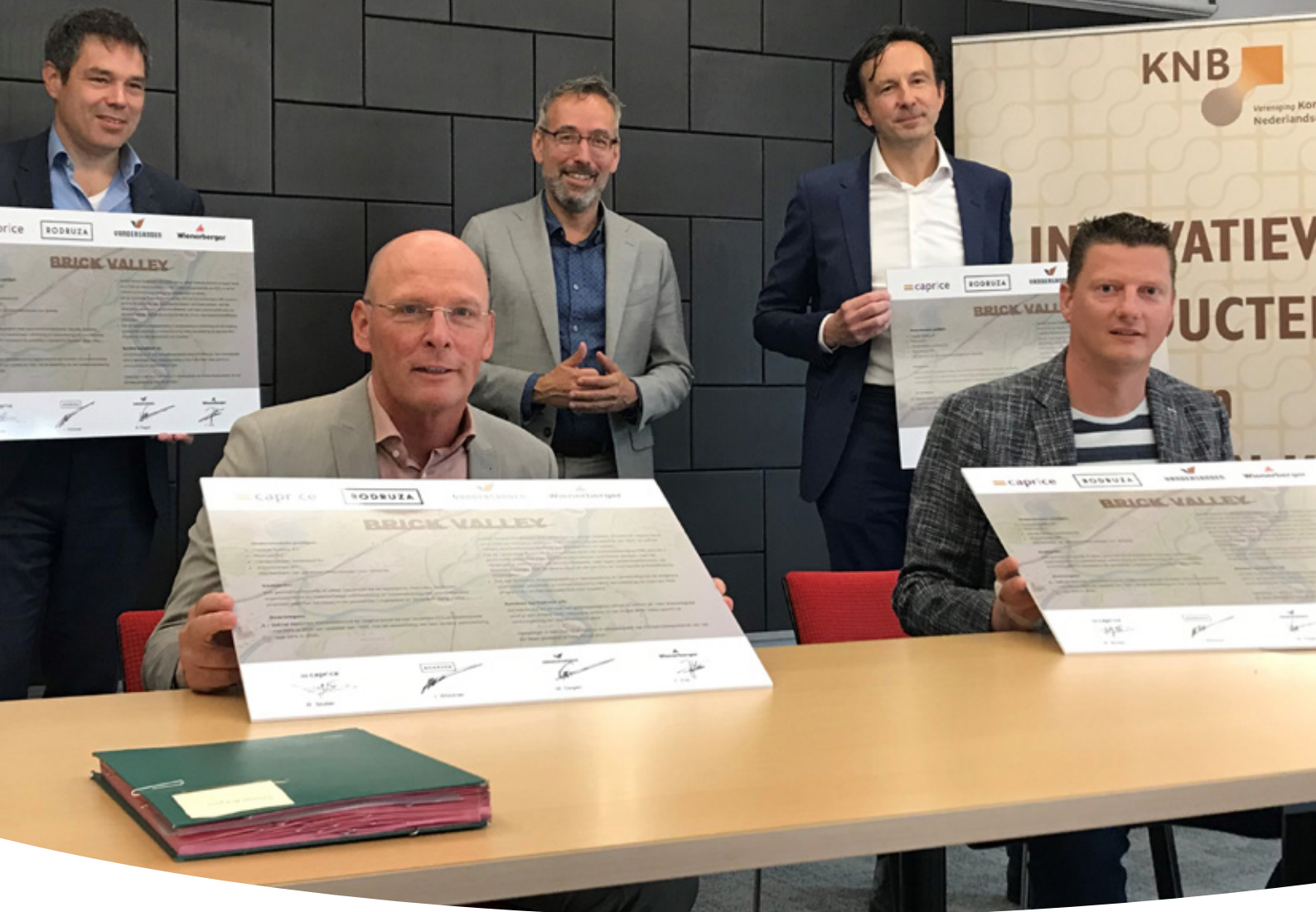
For example, Vandersanden offered training in E-Board, brick slips and pavers at various secondary schools. Construction camps were also organised during school holidays, in cooperation with UCL's Engineering and Science Academy.

Students from various colleges and universities (PXL Hogeschool, UAntwerpen, Universit  de

Lille, etc.) were introduced to Vandersanden via modules in the teaching programme (such as a bricklaying or E-Board workshop), a factory visit, a visit to our physical academy or digital teaching materials.

Cooperation & co-creation RoboBrick® partnerships

RoboBrick® was developed in close cooperation with customers and suppliers. On this technical journey, we collectively formulated answers to the questions we encountered along the way. Since 2020, we have joined forces with an increasing number of different partners. The Dutch prefab-frame producer Spaansen was our first collaborative partner and, in the past few years, we have further strengthened our collaboration and processes, and optimised our products. The combination of Spaansen's Total Solution for Fa ades and RoboBrick®, results in a high-quality product that is realised at a higher construction speed and requires fewer 'hands' on the building site. It is also a sustainable working method, saving 60% in raw materials and energy.



Sustainable cooperation with NL Greenlabel

NL Greenlabel has a broad partner network of organisations that are actively working to make our living environment greener, healthier and more climate-friendly. As a consultancy for sustainable building, NL Greenlabel strongly believes that cooperation is the key for organisations that want to realise their ambitions and build on a biodiverse, green and climate-adaptive living environment. That is exactly what Vandersanden also stands for and therefore the reason why we entered into the collaboration. NL Greenlabel has awarded the NL Product Label A, the highest attainable sustainability label at product level, for Vandersanden's pavers. The awarding body of the independent label assesses the ecological footprint of products.

Participation in 'Brick Valley' sustainability programme

In line with our sustainable vision and strategy, we made a further contribution to our climate neutrality in the Gelderland and De Liemer regions, which are part of our Dutch production regions. With our participation in Brick Valley, a sustainability programme involving four brick manufacturers and the Royal Dutch Building Industry (KNB), we can create an even greater impact on the 'greening' of these regions. The aim of Brick Valley is to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. In Brick Valley, together with the three fellow manufacturers, we are exploring various sustainable technology routes that contribute to a common climate-neutral energy supply. In this context, we are conducting research into new sustainable electricity generation and possibilities for hydrogen production. Furthermore,



a feasibility study is being launched for firing using biogas and the possibilities in the field of Carbon Capture and Storage/Usage are being investigated.

Vandersanden has two brick factories in this area: in Spijk and Tolkamer, right on the Rhine. Ultimately, the programme should lead to climate-neutral brick factories in both regions of Gelderland.

Digital roadmap

Vandersanden has been focusing on the digitalisation of its product range for some time. In recent years, we have digitalised various services for different customer groups. Knowledge-sharing, inspiration and convenience for customers are central to this. By 2021, several digital innovations will have been added to the list.

Texture generator 2.0

The texture generator for facing bricks and brick slips allows professionals and consumers to design a façade online. Thanks to advanced technology, the tool displays façade textures in a highly detailed and lifelike manner. With this online tool, architects and property developers can design a façade by combining different types of bricks and brick slips colours, laying patterns and joint thicknesses, among other things. In total, the texture generator allows more than 1.1 million combinations to be created and compared.

Digital customer platform for merchants

Launched in 2020, the customer platform has experienced a geographical expansion from Germany to Belgium and France in the past year. In addition, the platform is constantly being developed and extended with new functions that respond to the questions and feedback from users in the market.

And finally...



With every new goal we reach, we raise the bar a little higher.



Our first Collective Well-being report in 2021 was the start of a tradition. Each year, we will provide a transparent overview of our efforts and results and share them with you. Meanwhile, we have come to the end of this second edition of the report on Collective Well-being. First of all, we would like to thank you for your interest in the way Vandersanden translates Collective Well-being to our people, the environment, the community and our sector.

In the foreword, our Director of Collective Well-being Eddy Deconinck emphasised how Vandersanden stands for 'values', rather than 'worth'. As the steering committee of Collective Well-being, we can only confirm this and we hope that, after reading this report, you will too.

In recent years, Vandersanden has already taken huge strides in the field of sustainability, in the broadest sense of the word. This is clearly evident in our sustainable innovations: we can boast one of the most energy-efficient kilns in all of Europe, the development of CO₂-neutral bricks, the broadening of our employees' skill development

and our brand new Great Place to Work label. As a true community builder, Vandersanden also invests 1.5% of its profits annually in good causes at home and abroad. After all, Collective Well-being does not stop at national borders.

With every new goal we reach, we raise the bar a little higher. At the same time, it goes without saying that we cannot achieve our ambitions in all areas in one fell swoop. In other words, we still have many initiatives to look forward to, some a little closer than others.

One thing is certain: we and all our Vandersanden colleagues will work with great energy and enthusiasm and look forward to inspiring you again next year with the progress we have made.

See you next year!

The Collective Well-being steering committee:
Bart Latet, Eddy Deconinck, Heleen Grootaers, Lore Wuytack, Michel Degen, Nathali Donatz



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VANDERSANDEN

TOGETHER WE BUILD GREATNESS