



2023

IMPACT REPORT



CO₂-PERFORMANCE LADDER



Enthusiasm is infectious! We notice this daily in our work on the CO₂ Performance Ladder. More and more organisations and governments are becoming familiar with the Ladder and we receive a great deal of positive feedback from users. The CO₂ Performance Ladder is regarded as a goal-oriented and user-friendly instrument that actually helps in reducing CO₂. This is also borne out by the study by research consultants CE Delft, completed in 2023.

Companies and governments that use the Ladder do so with enthusiasm, leading to an increase in the number of users. At the end of last year, there were nearly 1,500 active certificate holders.

Governments and other contracting parties are increasingly obtaining certification themselves. All policy-making ministries are now certified and several ministries have the ambition to achieve a higher level. The same applies to local governments. By 2023, the Municipality of Arnhem will be the first major municipality to achieve Level 5. More municipalities will follow in the near future.

Pilot projects are taking shape abroad. By the end of 2023, five countries were actively implementing or preparing tenders with the CO₂ Performance Ladder. It is great to see how enthusiastically the Ladder is being used abroad.

It is also nice to experience the high level of ambition among our users. We see from the Measures list that both more measures and more ambitious measures are being taken. And we also notice this in the conversations we are having about the follow-on development of version 4.0 of the CO₂ Performance Ladder. Together with many other parties, we have been working on this new version for

almost two years and it is almost ready. The new version will reflect external developments better, such as those regarding the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), and will also be more ambitious and challenge organisations to take further concrete steps on the path to net zero or nearly net zero.

It is very rewarding to see more and more organisations and governments embracing the CO₂ Performance Ladder and committing to a sustainable future. These developments allow us to make a joint contribution to reducing carbon emissions and achieving climate goals. We are proud of the developments in the past year and are happy to recount them in our impact report.

We think it is important to let our users have their say about their experiences with the CO₂ Performance Ladder. After all, our goal is to make companies aware of their CO₂ emissions and help them reduce them. For this very reason, it is interesting to see what concrete actions the certificate holders are taking to reduce their CO₂ footprint. In this impact report we therefore encourage our users to let us know how they have been able to reduce their CO₂ emissions using the CO₂ Performance Ladder.

In conclusion, SKAO is proud of the CO₂ Performance Ladder and pleased with the impact of the instrument. All SKAO employees worked extremely hard again this year to make this possible. As a Manager at SKAO, I am really proud of our team! That also needs to be included in this impact report as far as I am concerned.

Pascal Budding
Manager SKAO

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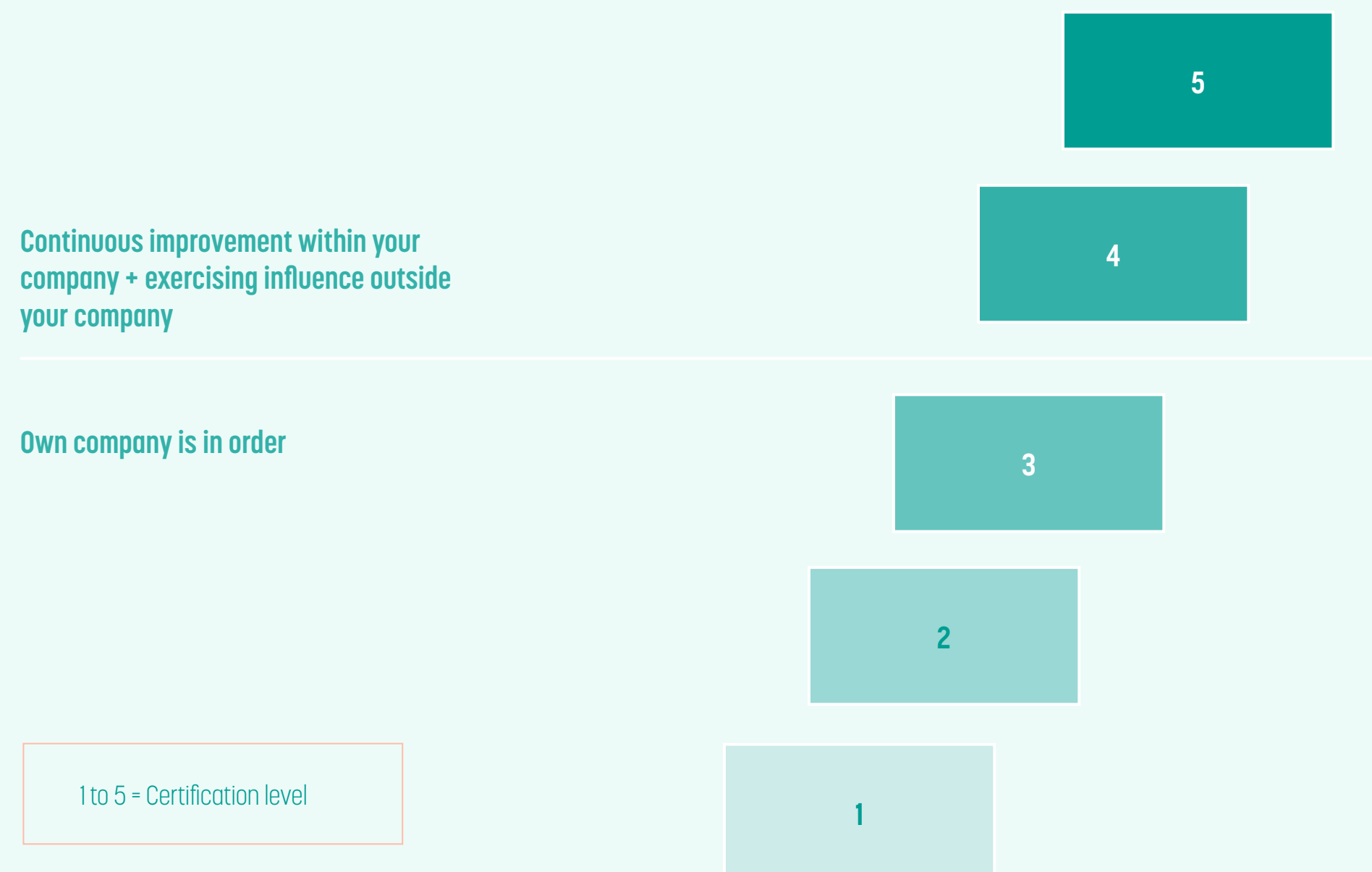
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The CO₂ Performance Ladder System

The CO₂ Performance Ladder is the sustainability instrument of the Netherlands that helps companies and governments reduce CO₂ and costs. This involves a reduction in operational management, in projects, and the value chain. The Ladder is used as a CO₂ management system and as a procurement instrument.

Organisations certified according to the Ladder will see this investment immediately pay off in terms of lower energy costs, material savings and innovation gains.



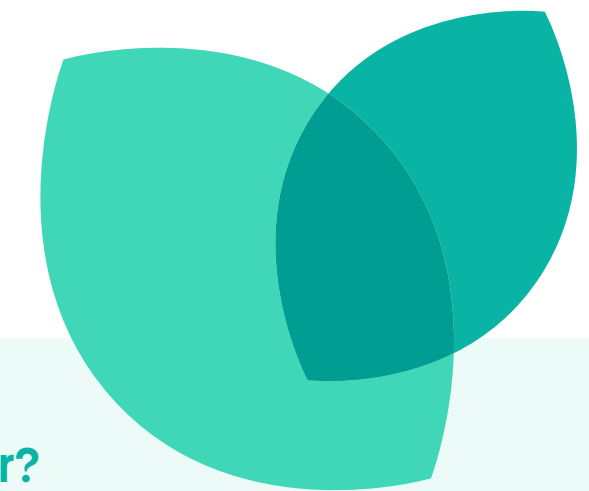
The CO₂ Performance Ladder is a CO₂ management system comprising of 5 levels. Up to and including Level 3, an organisation works on the emissions of its own organisation (and all projects). As of Levels 4 and 5, work also occurs on CO₂ emissions in the chain and sector. A certified organisation meets the requirements of the CO₂ Performance Ladder at a certain level (and all underlying levels). These requirements come from four different angles:

- 1. Insight:** Determining the energy flows and the CO₂ footprint;
- 2. Reduction:** developing ambitious targets for CO₂ reduction;
- 3. Transparency:** Structural communication about the CO₂ policy;
- 4. Participation:** Participation in sector initiatives in the field of CO₂ reduction.

Each certified organisation is audited annually by an independent and accredited Certification body (CI). So, a certified organisation is guaranteed a working CO₂ management system for the organisation and the projects. This is tested annually on ambitions, reduction and continuous improvement.

Tender advantage

Certified companies receive a discount on the tender price in the procurement process. Companies on the Ladder are rewarded with a concrete award advantage in the tender process. The higher the step, the higher the discount. The contracting authority or commissioning party determines the award advantage per Ladder level.



How does the award advantage work with the CO₂ Performance Ladder?

Organisation	Tender price	Ladder level	Fictitious advantage	Fictitious price	Tender awarded
A	€ 9.7 million	not	0%	€ 9.7 million	NO
B	€ 10 million	3	4%	€ 9.6 million	NO
C	€ 10.3 million	4	7%	€ 9.58 million	YES: € 10.3 million

'This is an example - the actual amount of the fictitious benefit is determined by the commissioning party in a tender.'

The impact of the 2023 Measure List in figures

Organisations set ambitious CO₂ reduction objectives for the CO₂ Performance Ladder and define reduction measures. Organisations can use the Measure List to compare themselves with industry peers with similar business operations. When organisations start out with the CO₂ Performance Ladder, the list can also provide ideas about possible measures to take.

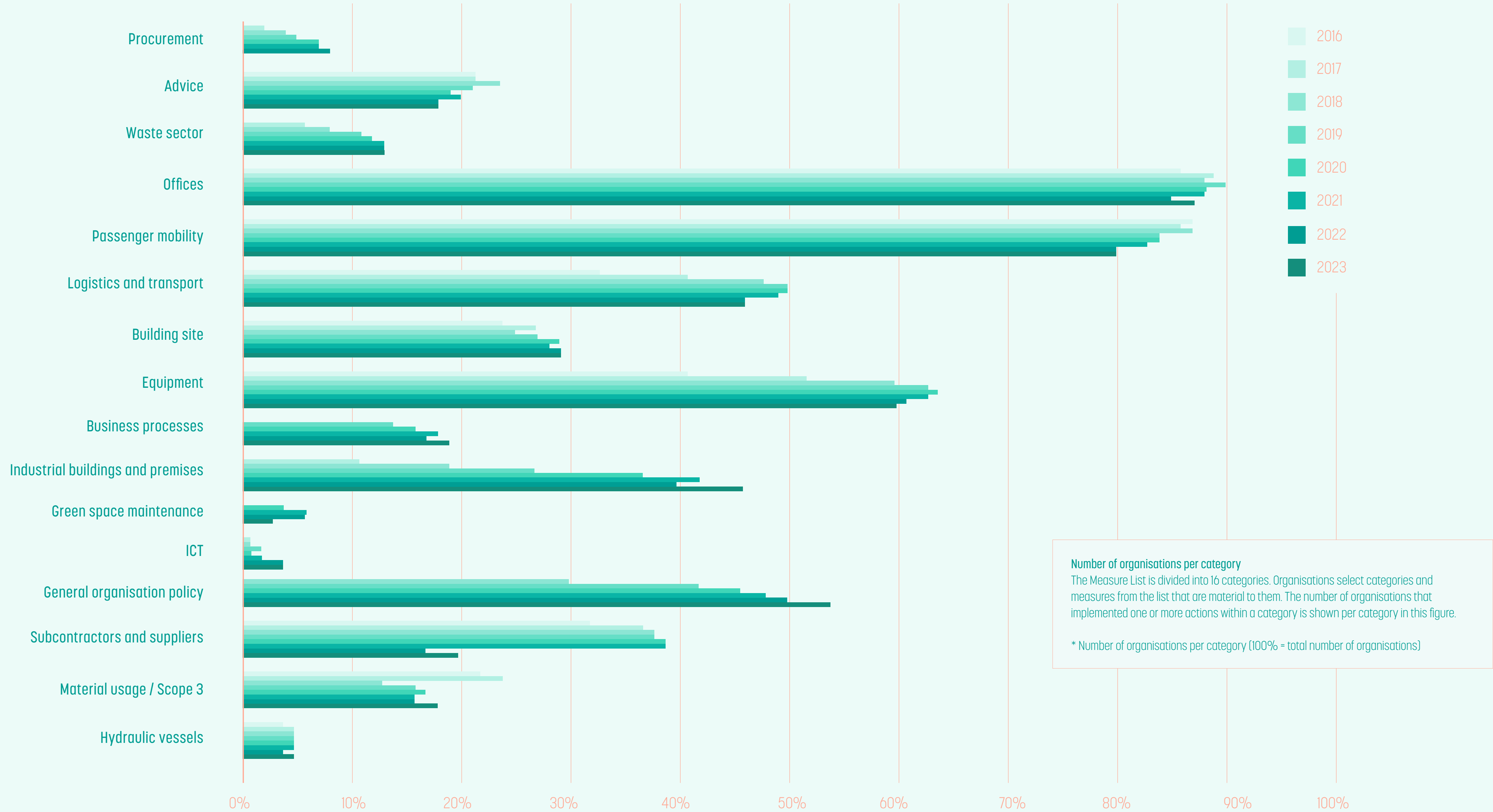
Measure list in figures

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Number of organisations that completed the Action List	1464	1321	1175	1044	945	880	839	722
Implemented measures (with corrections)	22023	19621	17970	15042	13560	11403	10010	6033
Planned actions	12006	11011	10223	8282	7175	6095	4749	3259
NEWLY added actions	697	743	582	466	528	382	603	850
Measures implemented per organisation	17.0	16.7	17.3	16.2	16.4	14.9	13.6	9.4
Measures planned per organisation	8.2	8.3	8.7	7.9	7.6	6.9	5.7	4.5
Measures NEWLY added per organisation	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.7	1.2

Most implemented measures



Number of organisations per category



Municipalities have put out tenders for more than 400 projects worth 2 billion euros since 2020

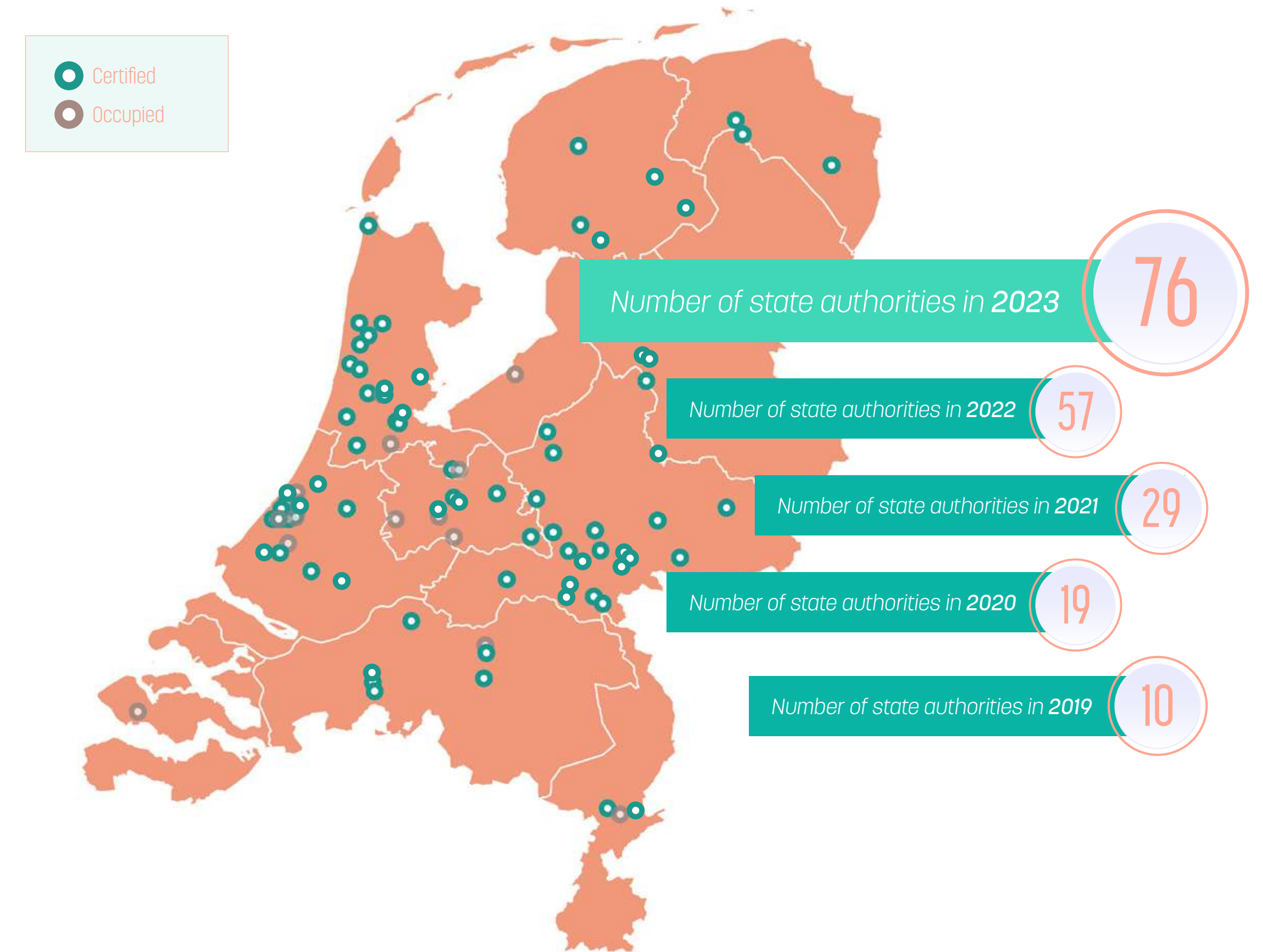
About one-third of all municipalities have put out to tender at least once using the CO₂ Performance Ladder

Certificate holders by turnover/category	Number of certificate holders
Sole proprietor	6
Small (<5 million)	462
Medium-small (5-15 million)	391
Medium (15-35 million)	225
Medium size (35-100 million)	173
Large (100-200 million)	72
Largest (>500 million)	33
Very large (200-500 million)	49
Ministries	11
Provinces	3
Water board	12
Municipalities	28
Other authorities	13
Total	1476

FACTS AND FIGURES

Number of certified authorities

Number of state authorities





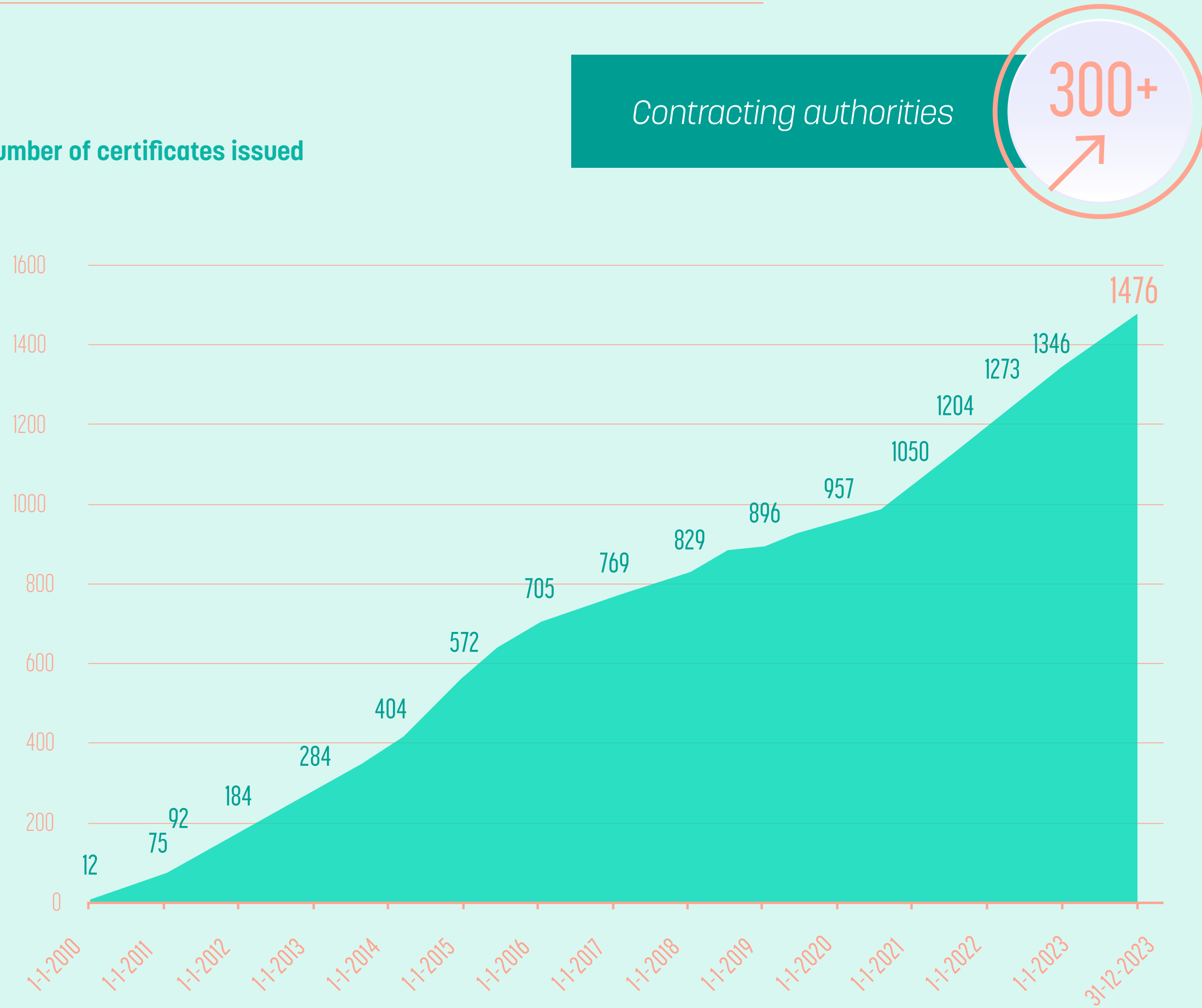
CO₂ Performance Ladder:

Selection of certified organisations 2023

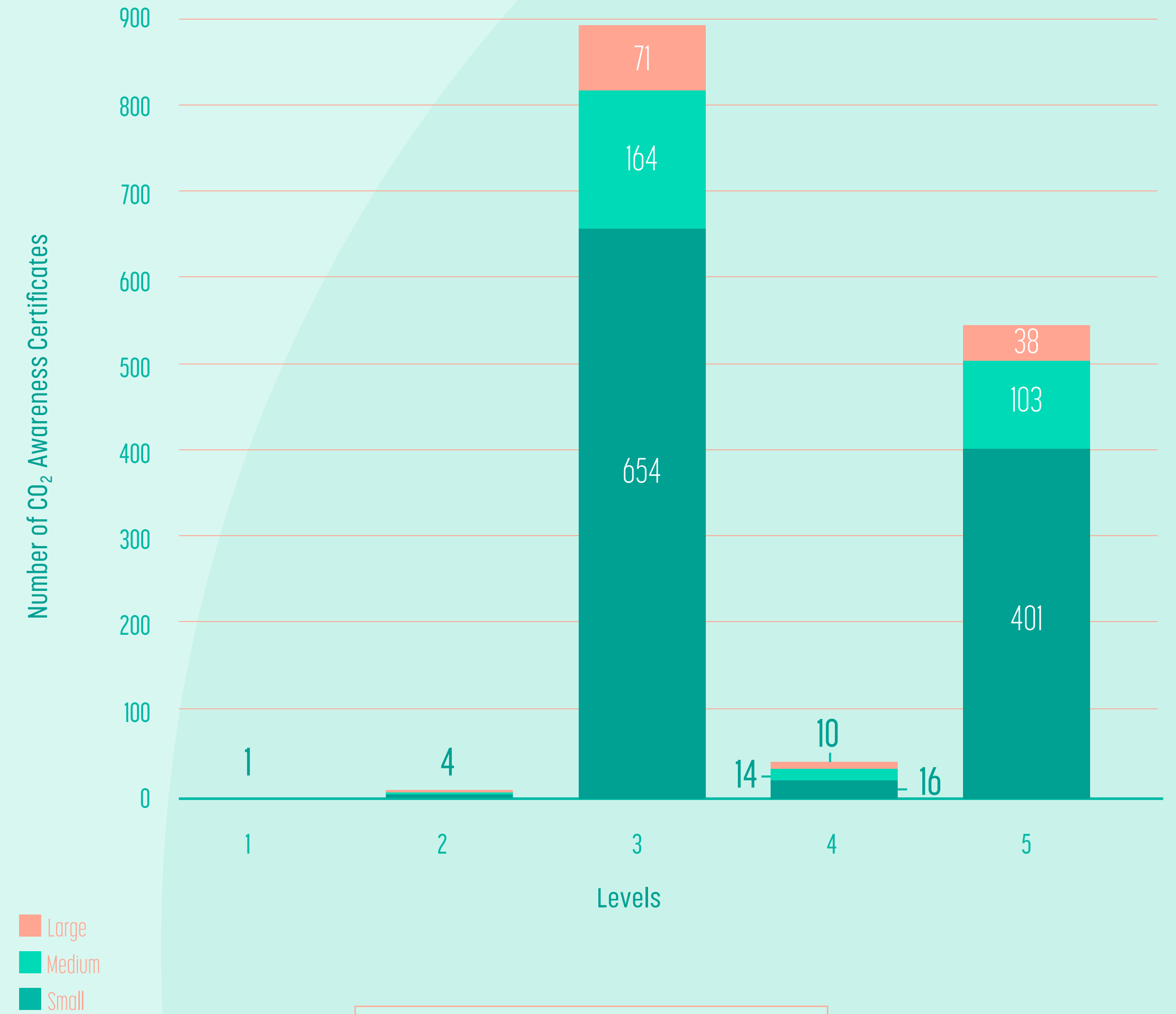


Overview of the certificate holders

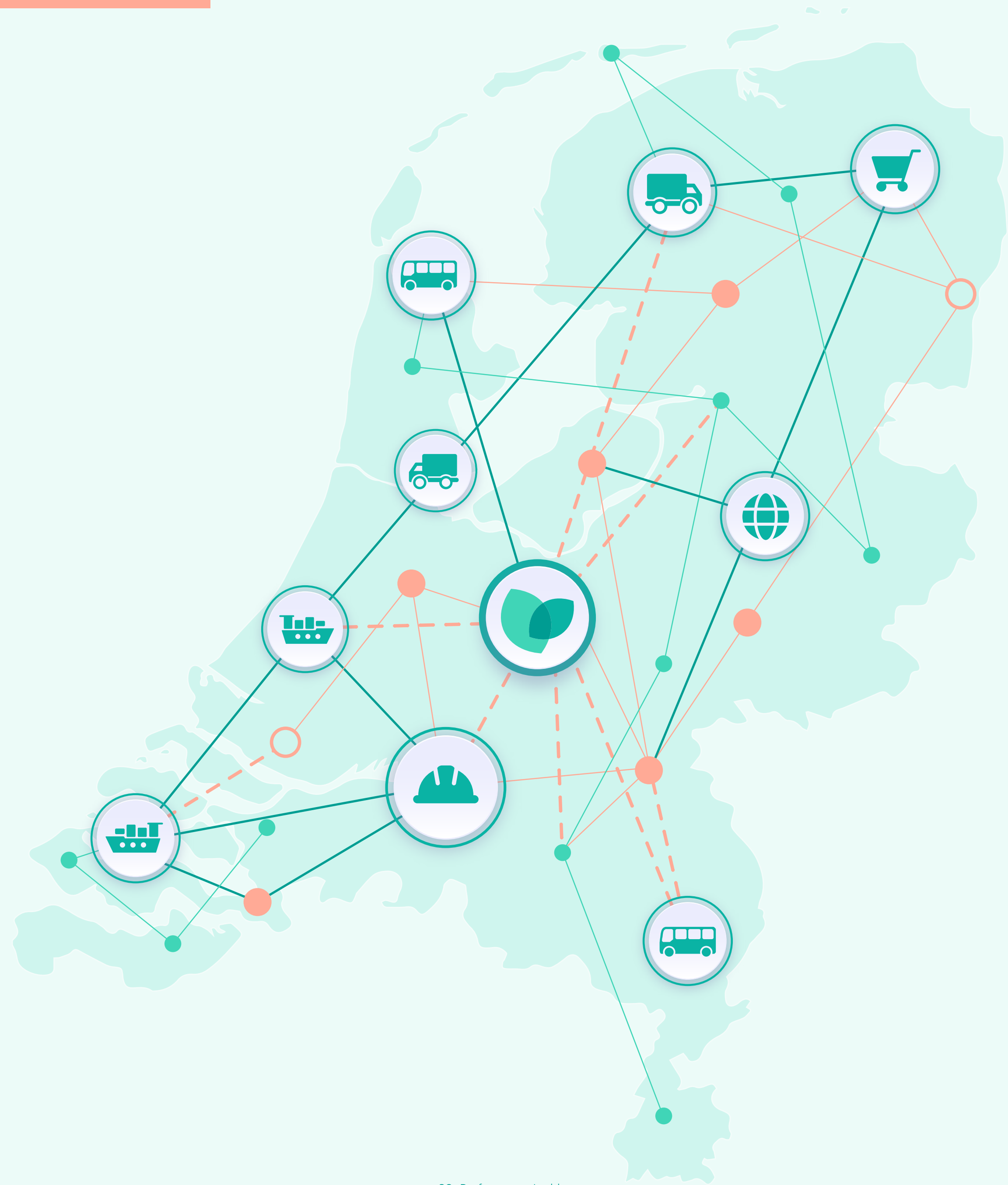
Number of certificates issued



Number of certificates per level



Projects with award advantage: 2237



CE Delft study: the CO₂ Performance Ladder, a proven tool for CO₂ reduction

The CO₂ Performance Ladder is an effective tool for helping organisations reduce their CO₂ emissions. This sustainability tool helps organisations understand their CO₂ emissions and embed reduction measures. The CO₂ Performance Ladder offers the most added value for companies and governments with little understanding of their CO₂ emissions. This is according to a **study** by research consultants CE Delft commissioned by The IKEA Foundation.

CO₂ emissions in the organisation and in the chain
Organisations certified on the CO₂ Performance Ladder take more CO₂ reduction measures than non-certified organisations. The use of the CO₂ Performance Ladder leads to additional annual CO₂ reductions for Scope 1 (CO₂ emissions caused by our own organisations) and Scope 2 (CO₂ emissions caused by the purchase of consumed electricity or heat). Virtually all certified organisations have implemented CO₂ reduction measures that they would not have taken without the CO₂ Performance Ladder, such as buying green power from their own country and electrifying their vehicle fleet. The CO₂ Performance Ladder also provides insight into the main indirect CO₂ emissions caused by other organisations in the chain, also known as Scope 3 emissions. Cooperation between certified organisations and value chain partners leads to procurement of more sustainable materials with a lower climate impact.

Changing behaviour and culture
Most organisations indicate that the CO₂ Performance Ladder contributes to changing the culture within an organisation. The CO₂ Performance Ladder raises awareness and also serves as a tool to get everyone on the same page. Organisations communicate internally about the use of the CO₂ Performance Ladder. For example, communication about the targets and the CO₂ reduction achieved.

Motivation for CO₂-Performance Ladder certification
The main reasons for organisations to be certified on the CO₂ Performance Ladder are the award advantage that certified organisations receive in tenders, to gain insight into their own CO₂ emissions, to implement a CO₂ management system or to comply with Dutch or European regulations.

“If you really want to achieve something in terms of sustainability, this is a great tool”

Sustainability is a catch-all term; an awful lot is covered by that umbrella. As a company, where do you start? And how do you do that? “It is good that the CO₂ Performance Ladder has one clear focus: reducing CO₂,” explains René van der Boon. He is the Director of Leertouwer in Barneveld.

“We have had solar panels on our roof for almost 25 years and we do a lot in the area of sustainability,” Van der Boon says. The family business has existed for almost 95 years and today it is a renowned system integrator in electrical engineering, climate control systems and ICT. “Yet our sustainability efforts were not reflected anywhere. Our CO₂ Performance Ladder certificate does show our score on CO₂ emissions. We are happy with this as we also want to show our sustainability ambitions and achievements to the outside world very clearly. In my experience, that doesn’t happen often enough.”

Vehicle fleet

The goal of the CO₂ Performance Ladder is to create insight into your own emissions. Van der Boon: “For us, that is mainly the energy consumption of our building and our vehicle fleet. We have started switching to electric transport. We have around one hundred commercial vehicles and won’t be able to do that overnight, but we have made a start and are steadily moving forward.

Another example: when our central heating boiler needed replacing, we opted for a combination of gas and a heat pump. That reduces both our gas consumption and CO₂ emissions. We have also installed extra solar panels on the roof with which we generate our own green energy for the heat pump.”

Four core values

Nieko Versteeg, Marketing Manager: “The CO₂ Performance Ladder can be compared to ISO certification. There is a certification process that concludes with obtaining a certificate. Sustainability is truly one of our four core values. We have been working on this for a long time, both in our business operations and in the construction chain. The CO₂ Performance Ladder offered us the opportunity to validate these activities. The Ladder brings together many aspects. It is practical, measurable and transparent for the companies and state authorities we work for.”

The CO₂ Performance Ladder certificate provides benefits in state tenders. Van der Boon explains: “The moment you submit a tender you receive a fictitious discount. You subscribe to a lower price, so to speak. That price component creates a different value in the tender. For state authorities, the CO₂ Performance Ladder is a great tool, because it ensures that everyone is measured by the same yardstick. The sustainability performance of tendering companies can be seen at a glance. This means that sustainability is easily included in the weighting and award.”

Van der Boon believes that if more companies join this system, it will contribute to a sustainable future. “For us, participation at the moment certainly does not outweigh the costs of setting up and maintaining an improvement cycle. But I am convinced that as a company, you really have to want this. And by the way: as a company, the tender discount provides some compensation for the investments you make to reduce your carbon emissions.”



Good example

“It’s very difficult to change people’s behaviour,” states Versteeg. With the CO₂ Performance Ladder, we as a company are taking the lead and setting a good example, as it were. We hope that we inspire our colleagues to reduce their own CO₂ emissions. That would be a wonderful added bonus. It is about seemingly small things like checking tyre pressure. That saves fuel. And if you do that not only with your company bus but also with your family car, then that really adds up.”

Van der Boon adds: “You see it reflected in current legislation: on 1-1-2024, the normative regulation Work-Related Mobility of Persons (Werkgebonden personenmobiliteit) will take effect. Companies with more than one hundred employees will have to report annually to the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (Rijksdienst Voor Ondernemend Nederland, RVO) about the CO₂ emissions of business traffic and the commuting of the employees. This includes, for example, the number of kilometres travelled by car, broken down by type of fuel. Because we have this CO₂ Performance Ladder, we already have insight into this and it takes relatively little work to supply that data.”

Level 3

Leertouwer is now at Level 3 and is very happy with that. Versteeg: “Level 3 relates to your own processes; things we have a grip on ourselves. At Levels 4 and 5 it goes much further, also involving processes in the chain. Of course we do take certain follow-up steps, but it is not necessarily our ambition to get higher up the ladder. The bigger you are as a company, the more impact you have. For us, Level 3 is fine right now. It means that we have to report semi-annually on what we are doing and that we communicate transparently about our goals. We have included it on our website. We hope by doing this we can inspire other installers and value chain partners. Our main goal at the moment is to reduce our CO₂ emissions.”

Greenwashing

Should certification, such as the CO₂ Performance Ladder, be an obligation? Or is it more of a responsibility for companies individually? René van der Boon has doubts about an obligation, but thinks that it is certainly a good way for the government to acquire insight into quality and sustainability. “I would recommend it to other companies as well. If you really want to achieve something in the field of sustainability, this is a great tool. The audit made it clear to us how serious this label is; your company structure is also scrutinised making it impossible to channel a few extra diesel cars into a private limited company, so to speak.” Versteeg, laughing: “The term greenwashing disappears completely from your vocabulary.”

From dozens of measures to a targeted plan towards zero emissions

Since the 2016 introduction of the Measure list, more than 22,000 measures have been implemented and some 12,000 are planned. Those are significant numbers. Moreover, the trend in the measures taken increasingly reveals the energy transition right before our eyes. Nevertheless, To achieve zero emissions by 2050, we need something that binds these measures together: the climate transition plan.

By Gijs Termeer

Energy transition visible in measures taken

Previously, the focus of organisations was on purchasing green power and reducing fuel consumption. By contrast, certificate holders are now shifting their attention to the electrification of mobility and large equipment and to increasingly generating their own power through solar panels. In fact, we see a 40% increase in the number of organisations that have at least one piece of zero-emission mobile equipment in operation. In 2023, there is also strong growth in measures that respond to grid congestion by aligning supply and demand. That came about after those measures were added to the Measure list in 2022 by a number of certificate holders. For example, we can already see that 26 organisations implemented the measure ‘Usage simultaneity based on electricity supply and demand’.

Individual measures remain individual steps

But now to the climate transition plan. All of the following have a role to play in the energy transition: electrification, flexibilisation, energy conservation, self-generation of renewable energy, use of materials with lower environmental impact, commitment to circularity, smart design and good commissioning practices. The Measure list has

touched on these issues for years, but fulfilling a list of measures is not enough for an organisation to reach zero emissions by 2050. Each individual measure is just a step. And individual steps say very little in the long run without a coherent idea of an organisation’s impact, reduction opportunities and constraints. This is why Handbook 4.0 will introduce the ‘Climate Transition Plan’.

Strategic, structured and systematic work toward zero emissions by 2050 or sooner

With the [Climate Transition Plan](#) in Handbook 4.0, we ask organisations to work in a strategic, structured and systematic manner to achieve zero emissions by 2050 or sooner. It includes medium-term goals for the medium term (e.g. 2030) and short-term goals tied to the three-year certification period. The short-term programme includes the action plan already in place and a schedule of measures to be taken. Moreover, the organisation will seek out and work on supporting innovations and collaborations to remove barriers or develop processes and technologies. Parties are asked to discuss their climate transition plan with their suppliers and customers so they can address the challenges together.



Want to know more about the Climate Transition Plan? Read the article: [Handbook 4.0 commits to the long term: organisations to be climate neutral by 2050 at the latest](#)

The Climate Transition Plan aligns with the ambition of organisations

Currently, 50 organisations listed in the Measure list indicate their ambition to move toward zero emissions by 2050. In general, formulating a net zero target is not a CO₂ reduction measure in itself. Nevertheless, at SKAO, we wholeheartedly welcome it, especially as the new Handbook 4.0 means all parties will soon collaborate to implement their Climate Transition Plan. In turn, that means the thousands of measures will increasingly become a single cohesive movement toward zero CO₂ emissions.

Over 50% of Cumela companies benefit from a CO₂ Performance Ladder certificate



Research by Cumela, a Dutch trade for green, soil and infra, among companies participating in the sector initiative 'Focus on CO₂', shows that more than half gain an advantage in a tender through their certification on the CO₂ Performance Ladder. This emerged this spring during the workshop series of this sector initiative to which over 200 companies are affiliated.

Advantage in procurement

In the survey conducted during the workshops of the sector initiative 'Focus on CO₂', over 50% of the members indicated that they benefited from their CO₂ Performance Ladder certification and their practices. The number of measures that member companies have taken over the years is considerable.

CO₂ saving measures

Examples of the measures taken or to be taken include training in 'The New Operation', a start/stop system, electric cars and buses and electric hand tools, cleaner fuels, electrification, use of solar panels, limiting tractors to 40 kilometres, proper tyre pressure, holding regular toolbox meetings, using the latest machines, providing insight into the consumption per machine and person, taking action against long idling, a construction power connection, an electric mowing boat, no warm-up, starting quietly and green generators.

Over 200 certified Cumela companies

Since 2014, Cumela has organised the sector initiative 'Focus on CO₂', with informative meetings and interactive workshops. Companies in the landscaping, groundwork and infrastructure sector that are certified or nearly certified for the CO₂ Performance Ladder can participate in the workshops of the sector initiative. There are now over 200 of them, as many as 75% of them participate in the workshops.

By participating in the sector initiative 'Focus on CO₂' and its workshops, companies are better able to reduce their CO₂ emissions and can easily extend their certificate.



Riwald Recycling is a pioneer in the recycling of metal products and was recently certified at Level 5 of the CO₂ Performance Ladder. Sustainability Manager, Ömer Avci: "In our sector there are really only two sustainability certificates that really matter if you really want to show that you take CO₂ reduction seriously: an ISO certificate and the CO₂ Performance Ladder."

Recycling metal and CO₂ savings go hand in hand at Riwald Recycling

Riwald Recycling in Almelo processes some 700 to 1,000 tonnes of material per day, ranging from white goods to production waste and even aircraft. The company in Almelo employs around 40 people. Since recycling is a complex process, Riwald could not rely on an external consultant to support them in the certification on the CO₂ Performance Ladder. They had to develop the knowledge in-house and that was successful.

Continuing to grow to the highest level

For the Level 3 emissions inventory, this was easily achievable, as Riwald's footprint consists of two material streams: emissions from the use of diesel and electricity. Ömer: "Once we committed to continuing to grow to Level 5, things changed. At that time, we also had to include scope 3 emissions included in the inventory. On top of that, the more material we process into high-value raw materials, the higher our own emissions become because of the energy consumption required to do that. However, the companies that use our products actually avoid emissions with them. This initially felt contradictory, but Riwald found a way to deal with it."

Ömer continues: "We therefore decided to link the objectives for Scope 1 and 2 to the tonnages of material we process. For transport, for example, our target for 2024 (compared to the reference year 2020), is an 18% CO₂ reduction per tonne of material processed. This will allow us to recycle more material and still continue to monitor our performance and achieve targets." Riwald Recycling recently introduced another new measure to reduce emissions from transportation: lightweight containers. The trucks that deliver and pick up material can only carry a maximum number of kilograms. If the container carrying the material is lighter, the truck can carry more material each trip, reducing emissions per kilogram of material. Simple but effective.

High-tech metal recycling

Riwald has a unique metal processing machine that can separate ferrous from non-ferrous metals. (A 'ferrous metal' is a material in which iron is the main component). Because of its innovative operation, the granulator with its associated waste separation plant can separate the remaining waste from the incoming metals so that

practically all raw materials are suitable for 100% reuse. This provides clean end products with 'End-of-waste' status, which in turn brings higher yields. It also has the advantage that the finished products can be offered directly to manufacturing companies, smelters and end processors for reuse. Recycling metals partly avoids the production of metals from primary raw materials (ores). This leads to savings in CO₂ emissions compared to the production of primary metals. With this, Riwald Recycling contributes to the de-carbonisation of the metal industry, which is in line with CO₂ Performance Ladder Level 5.

Making our own site sustainable

The necessary measures are also being taken at the Riwald site. For example, the company has invested in electric cranes and grab arms to replace the outdated diesels. "This is very valuable for us, especially in these uncertain times when fuels have become considerably more expensive. We also want to start investing in solar energy and battery technology to store that energy," says Ömer looking ahead. The extracted materials can be used for many purposes: new phones, producing steel or even on Riwald's own site: "On our site, we delineate different zones for materials using concrete blocks. From the materials we process, we can build circular blocks and we don't have to buy new concrete blocks."

Challenges in metal recycling

When asked what the biggest sustainable challenge is for Riwald Recycling, Ömer replied: "I hope we can set up our processes so that eventually we can process 100% of the products we receive for reuse and we can achieve a 100% recycling rate. We are moving in the right direction in that regard, but we have not always been entirely successful as yet. It is mainly the complex products that are difficult to separate. Fortunately, industrial designers are increasingly likely to find us. We are noticing that much more consideration is already being given in the design phase of new products to what will happen to the product when the consumer no longer uses it. Seeking that cooperation with manufacturers is very valuable for us to collectively achieve the design for recyclability."



Arnhem, the first municipality with a Level 5 certificate on the CO₂ Performance Ladder



On its way to climate neutrality, the Municipality of Arnhem was the first municipality to achieve the highest level on the CO₂ Performance Ladder. We spoke to Alderman Maurits van de Geijn to gain insight into the significance of obtaining a Level 5 certificate. “If we ask Arnhem residents to lead by example, we also have to be an example ourselves.”

“It’s our ambition to achieve a sustainable and climate neutral Arnhem,” says Van de Geijn. “If we want to do that, there has to be a transition from fossil to clean energy. If we ask Arnhem residents to lead by example, we also have to be an example ourselves. So it is extremely logical that we want to reduce our carbon footprint, within the organisation but also in our value supply chain. The goal is to achieve CO₂ reduction together with our partners, such as suppliers in the value supply chain. The CO₂ Performance Ladder helps us reduce CO₂ and costs.”

Support base for CO₂ reduction

Van de Geijn emphasises the broad support base within the organisation: “We started to reduce our carbon footprint over ten years ago, together with all of our colleagues in the organisation, from real estate to infra. The CO₂ Performance Ladder is a good tool for this and gives us insight into what is feasible and realistic. Last but not least, it ensures that we show our ambition. Of course, it helps enormously that many colleagues are motivated to take action on this issue. There has always been broad support base for getting started with CO₂ reduction and that we have an exemplary role in that.”

Concrete measures

In recent years, the Municipality of Arnhem has made several buildings more sustainable to reduce natural gas consumption. The Alderman explained: “What we are proud of is that our recycling centre is completely natural gas-free. At the recycling centre, heat pumps and solar panels provide the heat and energy, making it energy neutral. We are also trying to make our Valkenhuizen swimming pool natural gas-free.”

The municipality also conducted a value chain analysis at the highest levels of the CO₂ Performance Ladder. With the preparation of a value chain analysis, reduction targets are defined and the progress of CO₂ reduction in the chain is monitored. “We have done so in the Civil Engineering (Grond, Weg en Waterbouw, GWW) sector for our public spaces, among other things. For this value chain analysis, we identified the main features of the entire CO₂ emissions. We then identified our most substantial and relevant emissions, one of which is asphalt, for example.” As part of this value chain analysis, the municipality defines the types and quantities of materials they apply in public spaces.

Tenders with the CO₂ Performance Ladder

The CO₂ Performance Ladder can be used by state authorities as a CO₂ management system and as a tendering instrument. Van De Geijn indicated that Arnhem also uses the Ladder in tenders: “If we issue a tender in the Civil Engineering sector then we usually use the CO₂ Performance Ladder as an award criterion. As the client, we want to be clear about what we require or wish in terms of sustainability and how we will assess these tenders.”

Van de Geijn continues: “The influence of the municipality is greatest when it comes to GWW procurement, because of its position as a client of the municipality. A lot of heavy machinery is used in projects. For these projects we try to focus on CO₂. This is why we also encourage the use of electric equipment wherever possible. Projects in the Civil Engineering sector are increasingly looking at CO₂ savings by using less environmentally damaging raw materials and working more with zero emissions.’ The CO₂ Performance Ladder is one of the criteria they use in tenders. Van de Geijn: “We wish to procure locally as much as possible, consider circularity an important theme and also look at the social return. And that must also be of good quality and at a low price. As a client, we find it important to create a level

playing field for our contractors. This is part of the reason why we recently signed the Clean and Emission-Free Construction Covenant. We want to explore with market participants how we can realize more and more Civil Engineering projects emission-free.”

Ambition

The municipality prepared a climate plan in which we published the goals set for the coming years. Van de Geijn: “This document is updated periodically so that we can also add new goals if necessary. In the climate plan you can also find our value chain analyses. We draw up our footprint every six months and elaborate on it in a progress report that also assesses whether it is on track with those goals. We are very transparent about that.”

Arnhem is resolutely looking ahead to a sustainable and climate-neutral future: “Moreover, our efforts do not end here,” Van de Geijn said. “By 2026, as an organisation, we want to have a carbon reduction of 60 percent compared to 2018. At this moment we are already at 57 percent, so we are well on our way. And of course, it doesn’t stop here. Next year we will be setting a new reduction target that we want to meet by 2030.”

Regional Safety Organisations are putting CO₂ reduction on the agenda with the CO₂ Performance Ladder

The Flevoland and Gooi and Vechtstreek Regional Safety Organisations have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into reducing CO₂. Deputy Director of Operations, Onno Hensen talks about their intrinsic motivation to be at the forefront of sustainability, the search for practical solutions and how they have embraced the CO₂ Performance Ladder as a concrete tool to achieve CO₂ reduction targets.



Why did you start working with the CO₂ Performance Ladder?

Onno Hensen: “The topic of ‘CO₂ reduction’ was high on the agenda of the Flevoland and Gooi and Vecht Regional Safety Organisations for some time. Yet our organisation struggled with how to incorporate it in our policies. Although the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were decided quickly, it was clear that not all 17 goals and subgoals were directly relevant to our situation. I was quick to suggest that our focus should be on sustainability, since we can lead the way as a regional safety organisation. This gave rise to the need for practical tools to actually integrate CO₂ reduction into our way of working. We wanted a practical sustainability tool that would allow us to actually reduce CO₂. We also wanted to avoid our sustainable ambitions going no further than individual ideas raised in informal conversations. We wanted to get started with an accredited system audited by a certifying body. That’s how we ended up with the CO₂ Performance Ladder. This ladder provides concrete insights that can be used to achieve CO₂ reduction targets. It helps us focus on CO₂ reduction in our operations, projects and in the chain. In addition, the ladder forces us to continuously show ambition in our carbon reduction efforts.”

The safety region started with a small project team, consisting of colleagues from various departments such as materials and logistics, facilities and finance.

Onno: “After establishing a ‘baseline measurement’, we tried to involve the entire organisation. We asked our employees to help think about CO₂ reduction measures. There was clear motivation to make sustainable choices, especially with regard to business transport. For example, we have plans to switch completely to hybrid and electric passenger transport.”

“What I was most struck by was the enthusiasm for new sustainable measures. Our project team received many suggestions from all corners of the organisation. We try to encourage this by showing what we are working on and even have an e-mail address where colleagues can send their ideas. This makes the threshold for involvement low. We communicate all measures taken through our intranet and website.”

What measures have you taken so far?

Onno: “IJsselland Regional Safety Organisation preceded us in the certification process and had conducted research into their largest emission sources. We also mainly have to deal with office buildings, cars and fire engines. We started with the most obvious measures with which we

could get quick results. Diesel emissions proved to be our largest source of emissions, mainly caused by fire engines. It seemed logical to switch to renewable diesel, such as HVO 100, extracted from frying fat. Of course, questions arose, such as what happens when vehicles are idling for a long time? In doing so, we were able to learn from the study that the IJsselland Regional Safety Organisation had already conducted. Switching to HVO 100 led to a CO₂ reduction of as much as 90% compared to our current diesel emissions. For fire engines, unfortunately, there is no reliable electric alternative yet, partly because of their limited range. In terms of our office use, we have agreed that all new pool cars we purchase will be fully electric.”

That is not all. “Currently, we are also actively working on making our barracks gas-free. In Hilversum, where our largest barracks are located, we recently issued a tender to fit the roof of the barracks with 270 solar panels. This enables us to generate about a third of our electricity consumption through solar power.

Even our rescue tools, such as car cutting and spreading equipment, are fully electric, as are our chainsaws. While they are not the largest source of emissions for us, all efforts contribute to achieving our ambitions. Besides, it saves a lot of noise.”

What advice would you give to other organisations that want to implement the CO₂ Performance Ladder?

“Initially, there was some reluctance on our part because it felt like a standard obligation. The response from our colleagues was also: ‘Oh no, this is sure to involve a lot of administration.’ Fortunately, that was not as bad as expected, partly because our financial records were in good order; we had 90% of the required data quickly available. Organisations starting on the CO₂ Performance Ladder should not be intimidated by the administrative effort; it is really not that much. But it does require active commitment to actually work on CO₂ reduction. The ladder does not prescribe what measures you have to take; you have a lot of freedom as an organisation. You also control the speed of the certification process. My advice is to just get on with it!”

SKAO signs the Clean and Emission-Free Construction Covenant

SKAO and forty-four other parties signed the Clean and Emission-Free Construction Covenant (SEB) in 2023. Sector and network organisations in the construction industry, water boards, provinces, municipalities, major clients in construction and ministries want to make the construction industry cleaner, healthier and quieter in the coming years. The covenant and its roadmap apply to thousands of companies in the Netherlands. The roadmap explains step by step how and at what pace construction equipment will be replaced with less polluting equipment over the next few years in order to eventually switch to clean or emission-free variants. Lighter equipment is more likely to become emission-free than heavier or specialised equipment.

Fewer emissions

Clean and Emission-Free Construction Covenant contributes to the government's goals for nature, climate and health from the Climate Agreement, the Clean Air Agreement and the Nitrogen Approach and requires major investments and innovative capacity from entrepreneurs and clients. The central government is making more than one billion euros available until 2030 for emission-reducing measures in construction targeting work, vehicles and vessels. The agreements to use more clean and emission-free construction equipment will reduce emissions and have positive effects on nature (nitrogen), climate (CO₂) and health (particulate matter and nitrogen).

The Ministry of Infrastructure, Water Management and Public Works (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat) supports construction operators with the Clean and Emission-free Construction Equipment Subsidy Scheme (Subsidieregeling Schoon en Emissieloos Bouwmaterieel, SSEB) to switch to more sustainable construction equipment. A Specific Allowance (Specifieke Uitkering, SPUK) scheme, with a sum of €180 million, will ensure that co-governments signing the covenant receive a partial subsidy for the additional costs of emission-free procurement. For the same reason, part of the funds also go to central government procurement organisations and ProRail. Finally, the central government supports the development of 'working smarter' knowledge through process measures, prefabs and other tools.



One example is better cooperation in logistics, reducing the need for transport movements.

Taking steps together

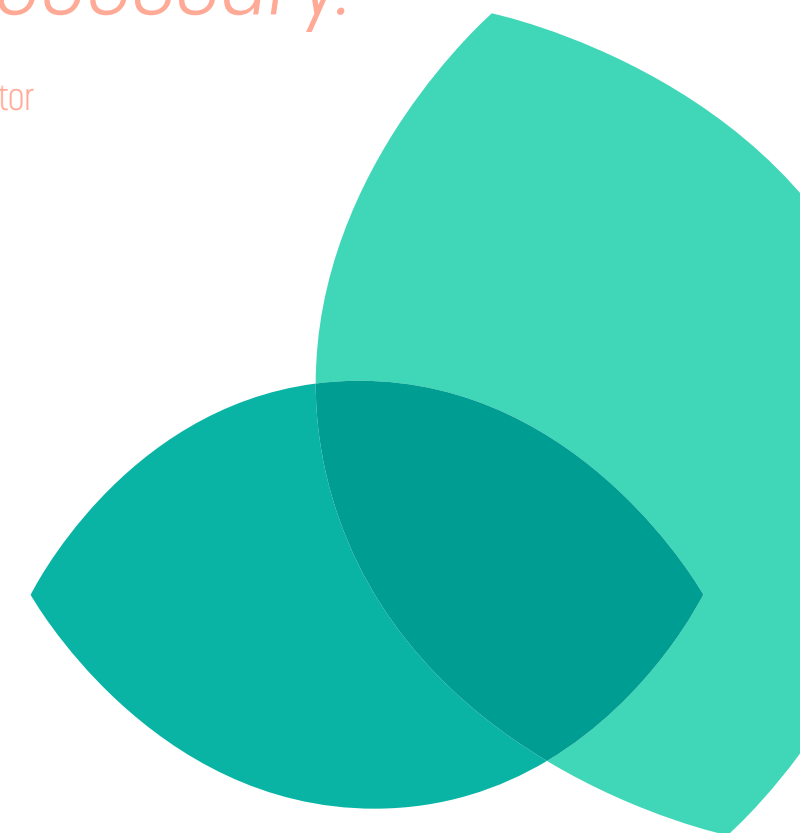
State Secretary of the Ministry of Infrastructure Water Management and Public Works, Vivianne Heijnen: "A successful transition to clean and zero-emission construction can only be achieved by working effectively with parties involved in construction. That is why it is great that we agreed to do this at our conference on sustainable urban mobility. This covenant has a significant impact on thousands of companies across the country. The nitrogen issue makes it extra important to take steps towards sustainability in the construction sector. This agreement gives the industry a picture of what to expect in the coming years, allowing them to prepare. We are already seeing the first results: more and more construction projects are zero-emission and are using cleaner equipment. Construction companies are innovative and contribute in an innovative way to the major housing task, the (replacement) infrastructure task, energy transition and reducing emissions."

National Conference on Sustainable Mobility

The Clean and Emission-Free Construction Covenant was signed, together with two other covenants on the National Charging Infrastructure Agenda and a Central Clearing House for Zero Emission Zones, at the National Conference on Sustainable Mobility, an initiative of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

"With the CO₂ Performance Ladder, we have been supporting the transition to a CO₂ emission-free construction site for years. By participating in this covenant, we can put our knowledge and experience of focusing on emissions and procurement to work towards further accelerating this transition, which is necessary."

- Gijs Termeer, SKAO Director



The highlights of 2023 from our employees



Gijs Termeer
Director

CE Delft's study published in early 2023 once again demonstrated the effectiveness of the CO₂-Performance Ladder. This is despite the increased focus on climate change since the 2015 Paris Agreement and the increased numbers of initiatives from the EU and the Netherlands to get organisations on a carbon reduction path. Truly something to build on.



Demi van Laaren
Office manager

"I am extremely proud of the national and international successes we have achieved this year. I am happy to be part of our resilient and dedicated team!"



George Thurley
CO₂ Performance Ladder in Europe

"The very best part of 2023 was the launch of the first official pilot with the CO₂ Performance Ladder outside the Netherlands and Belgium, and right away, for the first tender - Ireland took the honours! It's great to see how fast the Ladder is growing and how much impact it has abroad."



Elisabeth van Loon-Muller
CO₂ Performance Ladder in Europe

"The CO₂ Performance Ladder was officially launched in France, with speeches by both the Dutch State Secretary for Infrastructure, Water Management and Public Works, as well as its Director General. During the event, the CO₂ Performance Ladder was officially handed over to France, in the presence of French government representatives and a number of major French contracting authorities that are using the ladder to get started, including La Poste, UGAP and RTE. The event showcased the impact the CO₂ Performance Ladder is having, both in the Netherlands and across borders."



Brian Heikamp
Marketing and Communication

"Nothing speaks louder than the real stories behind the CO₂ Performance Ladder. By exploring the story behind the Ladder we have collected valuable lessons in the form of 'testimonials'. The Testimonials consist not only of success stories, but are also building blocks of inspiration and motivation for others to get started with the CO₂ Performance Ladder."



Christiaan van der Spijk
Policy and development

"The Project Impact Dashboard (PID) makes tracking project records and calculating a footprint a lot easier. It not only enables organisations to manage their data, but also facilitate a dialogue with the contracting authority and effectively monitor what contributes to achieving their sustainability goals. A significant step towards an integrated and sustainable approach to projects for all parties involved."



Thijs Wenting
CO₂ Performance Ladder in Europe

"During a visit to Dortmund, the Head of Procurement of the Municipality of Dortmund enthusiastically exclaimed: 'This is what we need in Germany!' Since then, preparations have been made to introduce the first tender with the CO₂ Performance Ladder on the local German market as part of a pilot project. A huge step forward towards a broad implementation of the Ladder in Europe!"



Tijmen de Groot
Policy and development

"For me, last year was primarily dominated by writing and improving text proposals for Handbook 4.0. I am most pleased with the ongoing strong commitment of the CCvD to making the new Handbook a success. Without this commitment, we would never have got this far and I am confident that when we finalise the Handbook later this year, we will be proud of the final result."



Joleen Zuidema
Marketing and communication

"An attractive website where everyone can find what they need: so incredibly important! Especially now that more and more organisations at home and abroad are using the CO₂ Performance Ladder. Behind the scenes, we have already taken many steps over the past year to meet the needs of our website visitors even better. In the coming year, we will reap the benefits of that extensive work."



Maud Vastbinder
CO₂ Performance Ladder in Europe

"The CO₂ Performance Ladder is gaining a foothold in Europe. In Belgium, the CO₂ Performance Ladder is being structurally deployed after a successful pilot phase. Several pilot projects have been launched in Ireland and France. So, 2023 became the year of the international implementation of the CO₂ Performance Ladder!"



Ghislaine Duvalois
Government Programme Manager

"Last year, we proudly launched the Community of Practice for municipalities, an initiative where we share our knowledge and experiences to reduce carbon emissions. This unites our existing Communities of Practice for Water Boards and Ministries, with which we have a long cooperation to promote sustainability. It is a milestone that the first municipality is now certified at Level 5 of the CO₂ Performance Ladder. This proves that our joint efforts are paying off. By working together and exchanging knowledge, we can make an impact on structurally monitoring and steering CO₂ emissions."

Essential elements to successfully implement the Ladder



What explains the success of the Ladder in the Netherlands and Belgium? What can we learn about implementing the CO₂PL in new sectors and countries? The Foundation for Climate-Friendly Procurement and Business (SKAO, the owner and manager of the CO₂PL) and CO₂logic (coordinator of the pilot in Belgium), combined their experiences to identify the most important factors for the successful implementation of the CO₂PL in new sectors, regions and countries. Our aim was to gain a clear insight into the crucial and enabling factors to facilitate the effective and impactful implementation of the CO₂PL in new contexts.

BUILDING BLOCKS AND ACCELERATORS TO MAKE IMPACT WITH THE CO₂ PERFORMANCE LADDER

On the basis of our analysis, we have identified:

- **10 'building blocks'** - factors that are necessary to implement the CO₂ Performance Ladder in a new geographical area or sector, based on our experiences in the Netherlands and Belgium.
- **3 'accelerators'**: factors that are useful but not crucial, as they lead to an acceleration in adoption and scaling-up of the use of the tool

BUILDING BLOCKS

01 FIRST PROCURING AUTHORITY

The theory of change of the CO₂PL is based on the 'Power of Procurement.' In this way, public authorities initiate and stimulate the decarbonisation of companies, their supply chains and heavy industries by using the CO₂PL as an award criteria in their tendering process. This also motivates companies to get certified. Therefore, to implement the CO₂ Performance Ladder, at least one public authority is required.

To achieve higher emission reductions and to send a stronger signal to market parties, however, it is highly recommended to include multiple procuring authorities in implementation (see accelerator 1 below).

03 UNDERSTANDING THE CO₂ PERFORMANCE LADDER

It is crucial that key (future) users of the CO₂PL, primarily the procuring authorities, companies and the auditors, understand the tool and how to use it. SKAO has published many documents and videos explaining how to apply the CO₂PL. It is useful to make these materials available in the local language and adapting the information so that it reflects the local context (policy priorities, procurement regulations, etc.).

02 NATIONAL COORDINATING ORGANISATION

To stimulate local ownership and coordinate effective stakeholder engagement (see building block 6, multi-stakeholder approach), a national coordinating organisation is needed to coordinate the implementation of the CO₂PL in new country contexts. This organisation should ideally be active in relevant networks and sectors, and familiar with the local language, culture and procurement context. Bringing all stakeholders together and liaising with SKAO is an important building block during the pilot phase and beyond, as demonstrated in Belgium.

04 CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNICATION

Engaging with (future) stakeholders is important, as our experience shows that publishing documents and guidelines about the CO₂PL is not enough to ensure awareness and knowledge of the tool. In order to effectively inform and stimulate current and future users, capacity building activities such as (peer-to-peer) events, communities of practice, trainings, preferably in the local language, should be organised on a regular basis. Procuring authorities should also ensure to communicate their plans for implementing the Ladder clearly, to give market parties adequate time to understand and prepare for system implementation.

Furthermore, publishing examples and case studies can illustrate the wide range of applications of the CO₂PL. Collaborating in these activities with stakeholders like industry federations, knowledge institutes, governments and NGOs will ensure maximum and effective outreach. Industry associations have been particularly important in spreading knowledge and broaden support for the CO₂PL.

05 LEGAL ASSESSMENT

The CO₂ Performance Ladder is aligned with the 2014 EU Procurement Directive, and has a strong track record in implementation in the Netherlands and in Belgium, with no legal challenges across the CO₂PL's near 15-year existence.

Yet, public procurement is a strongly regulated field and many public procurers hesitate to take risks when implementing new GPP instruments. To overcome potential concerns in new pilot projects, it is recommended to conduct a review of legal considerations about the alignment of the CO₂ Performance Ladder with EU, national and local procurement regulations. Such a legal assessment could be carried out by legal experts, as in France, or through a working group of experts, as in Belgium. Stakeholders can already draw from multiple resources, such as the Procurement Guide, Answers to Legal Questions and Belgian Tender Model Clauses.

06 MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH

For successful implementation of the Ladder in a specific country context, a multi-stakeholder approach is crucial. Structures bringing together all relevant stakeholder groups serve to collect input, broaden support as well as address relevant substantive and practical issues. Relevant stakeholders include for instance procuring authorities, procurement policy authorities, certification and accreditation bodies, industry associations and companies, research and civil society organizations. Key considerations for such groups during implementation are to make sure they ensure appropriate representation of the different users of the CO₂PL, and offer possibilities to gather input and experiences to effectively direct implementation.

For example, SKAO is guided by various committees and groups, covering a broad cross-section of representatives from all stakeholders. In Belgium, a steering committee, coordinated by CO₂Logic brings together contracting

authorities, businesses and certifying bodies, while three working groups address more specific issues.

07 ADEQUATE CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

To create ownership and to ensure long-term financial stability of the CO₂ Performance Ladder, all stakeholders need adequate capacities and resources. Even though the instrument is relatively easy to use for procurers, implementing it in a new country or sector requires upfront efforts from participating organisations, particularly national coordinating organisation(s), and procuring parties. For example in Belgium, the Walloon and Flemish governments provided a subsidy to the coordinating partner for the duration of the pilot period.

08 LEADERSHIP

Key figures who champion sustainable procurement, and the implementation of the Ladder both internally and externally have been essential players in the development and evolution of the Ladder. In the implementation of the CO₂PL in new contexts, brave sustainability leaders will be required to navigate the challenges and to advocate for green public procurement. These individual leaders understand the need to act now, make impact, and see more opportunities than barriers, and have the mandate to create momentum internally and/or externally. Such leaders within contracting authorities are especially important.

09 ONE TOOL ONE APPROACH

The fact that the CO₂ Performance Ladder certificate is based on a consistent norm - the CO₂ Performance Ladder Handbook - means that one certificate can be used everywhere the CO₂ Performance Ladder is implemented. This ensures that there is no fragmentation across various regions or countries. We believe this increases the overall impact of the system and provides a stronger incentive for organisations to get certified. Therefore, it is essential to ensure the national implementation of the CO₂PL does not affect the interoperability of CO₂PL certificates or lead to divergences across borders. In this way compatibility with international standards and methods can be assured.

10 SUFFICIENT CERTIFICATION BODIES

To effectively assure third party verification sufficient capacity for certification should be available in the market. There should be sufficient certification bodies in a country/region able to carry out Ladder assessments.

ACCELERATORS

01 THE MORE CONTRACTING AUTHORITIES THE BETTER

At least one contracting authority is needed to start a pilot, but the more contracting authorities that are active in a specific sector implementing the CO₂PL, the more momentum is created, and the stronger the signal to industry. For instance, the uptake of the tool the Netherlands grew rapidly once more organisations, such as the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, joined ProRail in using the CO₂PL in their infrastructure and construction procurement.

02 INFLUENCE AND MARKET SHARE

If the contracting authorities and organisations participating in the pilot are large and important players with a large spend in the market, they have more influence in the supply chain and the CO₂ Performance Ladder can spread faster. Some of the earliest adopters of the CO₂ Performance Ladder in the Netherlands are some of the most significant: ProRail and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management have a large influence over the Dutch public infrastructure market, while Royal BAM Group is a significant player in the infrastructure sector.

03 POLITICAL SUPPORT AND CONDUCIVE POLICY CONTEXT

If the CO₂ Performance Ladder is integrated within broader net-zero strategies and GPP policies, and is seen as a way to concretely implement them, this boosts the impact of the tool. For example, the Sustainable Public Market initiative in Wallonia and the Green Deal Sustainable civil engineering works (DGWW) in the Netherlands led to a broader adoption and increased impact.

The CO₂ Performance Ladder in Belgium: time for structural implementation

Belgium was the first country after the Netherlands to adopt the CO₂ Performance Ladder. Between 2019 and 2023, 24 pilot projects were launched in the three regions implementing the Ladder. The results can be read in the report on the successful pilot period. The findings are positive among both participating companies and contracting authorities. Now that the time has come to map out the integration and scale-up of the system in Belgium, several actors have come together for a roundtable discussion.

A step towards a more sustainable construction sector

Construction companies praise the clarity and simplicity of the Ladder. Jan Van Steirteghem, COO of construction company BESIX: “It is not overly complicated.

That offers two advantages. First of all, the initial investment is easily recouped. Secondly, it is possible to spend more time on achieving the carbon reduction target the certificate envisages than on the administration for obtaining the certificate. That is important, especially for the young generation who really want to make an impact.”

In addition, the Ladder really puts the topic of CO₂ reduction on the map within the construction industry and companies. “It provides focus, unlike all the other things that come our way such as the CSRD,” Van Steirteghem said. “We started in the Netherlands at Level 3 and a year later we achieved Level 5. We see experts at our major infrastructure works who are happy to walk around the site looking for carbon reduction opportunities.” For Brice Duchêne, in charge of environment and sustainable development at Duchêne, the Ladder provides a framework to develop an action plan. Philippe Goblet, CEO of Duchêne joined in: “We got into this to reduce our carbon footprint.

That’s the example we want to set as a bigger player. After all, it still takes a lot of work to create awareness among our colleagues. But those of us who are using the Ladder are very positive about how easy it is to use.”

Unburdening the contracting authorities

Initially there was some reluctance among contracting authorities, but during the pilot period the popularity of the CO₂ Performance Ladder grew, resulting in its wider acceptance and application. Integration into public procurement involves little extra work.

Dirk van Troyen, Road Measurement Engineer at the Agency for Roads and Traffic (Agentschap Wegen en Verkeer, AWV) notes that it is easy to integrate the CO₂ Performance Ladder into technical specifications. “The technical specification clauses can be found online. There are no additional costs involved and it does not create much more work for the civil servants.” Alexander Lemmens, a lawyer at the Facility Management Department, refers to the positive experience in the public contract for the renovation of the Martelaar Square buildings: “Integration into the assignment documents requires little extra effort.

Inspections and audits are carried out by accredited certifying bodies, which issue a certificate to the contractor in the case of a positive result. This means that the procurer does not need to carry out detailed checks itself, but only to check that the contractor has a valid certificate at the appropriate level. This will relieve the executive authorities, which is certainly also relevant for the lower levels. The CO₂ Performance Ladder provides insight into the way things are done and creates a clear framework for all involved.”

There are also positive signs in the Walloon region. Sylvie Loutz, Sustainable Development Project Manager at the Walloon Public Service (SPW), says that people recognise the usefulness of using the Ladder. It is easy to verify the goals. According to her, it is one of the tools that can help meet Europe’s climate goals.

Call for structural implementation

Now that it is time to outline the next steps, the industry wants a commitment from the government to start working with the CO₂ Performance Ladder and to have it structurally implemented in public procurement.

According to Philippe Goblet, the issue is a discussion point in the market, but government action is needed. “Even though many see the benefit of it, there are still some doubts. You can compare it to the introduction of the ISO9001 standard. It is there, but it takes years to

implement and when it comes to sustainability, we don’t have that much time. We need to take action together now. It is up to the government to take the lead, taking into account the resources and capabilities of all companies.”

Need for green premium support

While companies are convinced of the added value of the Ladder, they want the government to also pay attention to the costs involved. This is another reason why commitment from the government is needed. This would make the playing field level for all players. Jan Van Steirteghem points out that green alternatives come at a higher cost. He asks who will pay for the Green Premium: “In the Netherlands, subsidies are given for purchasing sustainable construction equipment. If you can demonstrate a 50 per cent reduction in carbon emissions and a 10 per cent increase in cost, you can win the tender. In Belgium, this is unthinkable and government authorities still only focus on price. The CO₂ Performance Ladder can be a catalyst to directly define in the technical specifications which sustainable alternatives should be used.” Alexander Lemmens says that awareness is growing in the government. He says the fictitious discounts for the CO₂ Performance Ladder are already a shift in focus towards quality.



The Flanders approach vs the Wallonia approach

Several government agencies, such as the Flanders Public Waste Agency (OVAM) and the Agency for Roads and Traffic and the Flemish Waterway, both part of the policy area Mobility and Public Works (MOW), have already decided to implement the Ladder structurally. Other bodies in Wallonia, such as the Wallonian Water Company (SWDE) and the Wallonia Airports Company (SOWAER), are in favour of further integration.

Sylvie Loutz argues that the differences between Wallonia and Flanders should be taken into account. Currently, there are consultations with colleagues on Ladder integration, but nothing has been decided yet. If Wallonia integrates a sustainability tool into public procurement, it will of course be the same as in neighbouring countries and Flanders. However, it will still require some work to convince companies in Wallonia.

The management of the Mobility and Public Works (MOW) policy area of the Flemish government has already approved the implementation of the CO₂ Performance Ladder.

“From 1 January 2025, we will include the Ladder in technical specifications for infra works from five million euros and up, and will make gradual progress.”

- Dirk van Troyen.

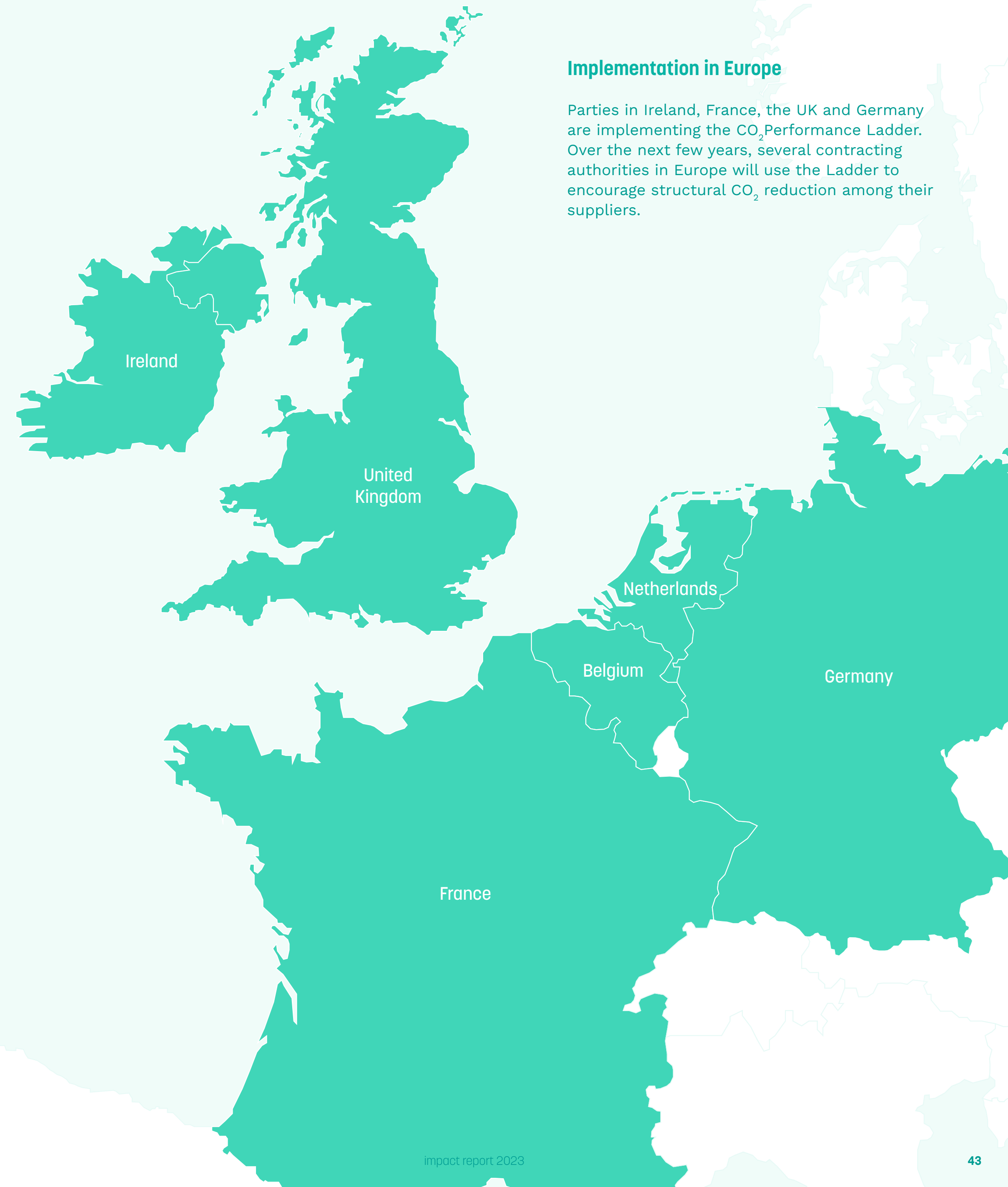
Finally, BESIX and Duchêne highlight the importance of raising awareness among subcontractors. Jan van Steirteghem: “We need to get them on board with us. We often need data for our Ladder, but that data is sometimes hard to come by. Other sectors, such as concrete, steel and aluminium, also need to take responsibility. That’s where the biggest impact is. We need to cooperate across national borders and impose conditions. We need a Coalition of the Willing where governments take the lead.”

Ireland also working on the CO₂ Performance Ladder

The Irish Green Building Council (IGBC) has launched a pilot of the CO₂ Performance Ladder in Ireland. The first tender has been published by the government agency, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). Other contracting authorities expect to start using the CO₂ Performance Ladder in the coming months. Ireland’s annual government purchases account for 10% to 12% of the country’s GDP.

Implementation in Europe

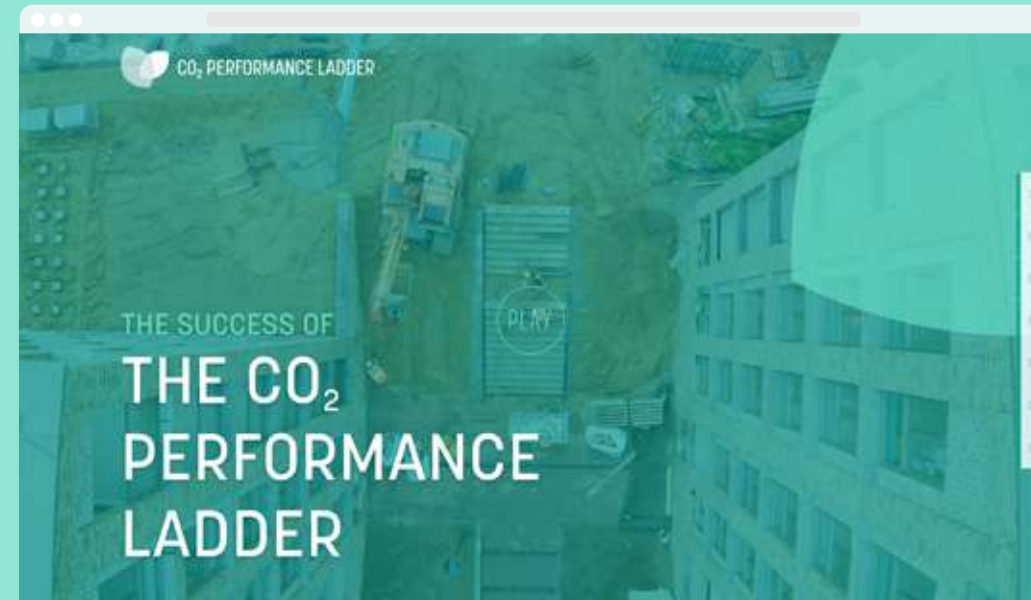
Parties in Ireland, France, the UK and Germany are implementing the CO₂ Performance Ladder. Over the next few years, several contracting authorities in Europe will use the Ladder to encourage structural CO₂ reduction among their suppliers.



Testimonials

To support the implementation of the CO₂ Performance Ladder across Europe, a selection has been made of stories and examples from the Ladder's history since 2009. The lessons learned have been collected: what is needed to successfully implement the Ladder and what benefits does it provide?

Click here to see the Testimonials



Over the last 14 years, the CO₂ Performance Ladder has developed into a key Green Public Procurement (GPP) tool and the number one CO₂ management system in the Netherlands and Belgium.

To support the implementation of the CO₂ Performance Ladder across Europe, these testimonials represent a selection of stories and examples from the history of the Ladder since 2009. They collect the lessons we have learned: what is needed to successfully implement the Ladder, and what benefits does it bring?

IT STARTS WITH LEADERSHIP



THE START OF THE CO₂ PERFORMANCE LADDER

The early initiator - Patrick Baak (Rijkswaterstaat, Jan Hendrik Dronkers, Director of Infrastructure and Water Management) and Henk de Vries (Rijkswaterstaat) reflect on the development of the Ladder. What are the key success factors and what is required to successfully implement the CO₂ Performance Ladder?



'WE HAD THE WIND AT OUR BACKS'. START OF THE CO₂ PERFORMANCE LADDER



THE ARRIVAL OF THE LADDER IN BELGIUM. 'WE WERE IMMEDIATELY INTERESTED'



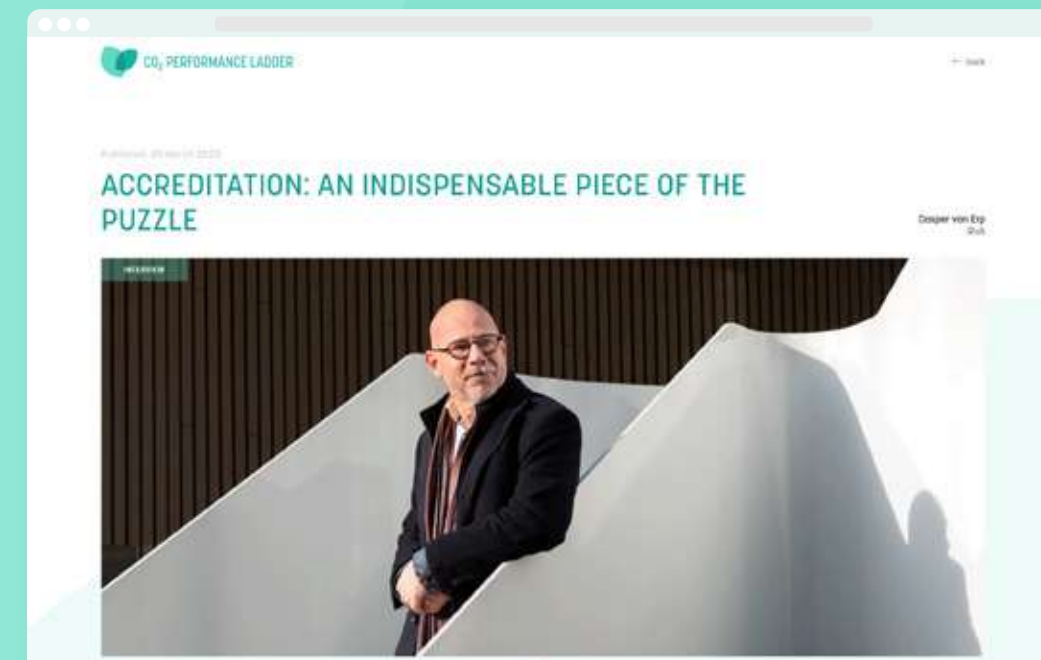
When ProRail introduced the CO₂ Performance Ladder in 2009, Dura Vermeer immediately had itself certified at the highest level. In other words, few companies have as much experience with the Ladder as Dura Vermeer. What can we learn from the construction company?

Emissions to zero, reuse as much as possible and work greener and healthier. These are Dura Vermeer's sustainable ambitions in a nutshell. The construction company has been going substance to these goals for years now and the sustainable achievements do not lie. From extensive use of electric equipment and experiments with bio-based materials to the construction of a 100 percent circular road.



Independence and continuity are the main goals of family business Dura Vermeer. It is therefore important for Dura Vermeer to be constantly working on sustainability. The CO₂ Performance Ladder has been helping the construction company with this for years, says Baggeman.

"THE LADDER PROVIDES AN INSIGHT INTO YOUR OWN CO₂ FOOTPRINT, OFFERS MEASURES TO REDUCE IT AND ENCOURAGES COOPERATION WITH OTHERS"



An indispensable piece of the CO₂ Performance Ladder's success is accreditation. This is because it ensures that companies are certified properly and fairly. In the Netherlands, the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) takes care of that. But what exactly does accreditation entail? And why is it important for successful implementation of the CO₂ Performance Ladder?

The Netherlands has countless organizations that conduct market surveillance in one way or another. Think of laboratories that test products, or inspection companies that check whether materials and installations meet the safety requirements specified. But also certification bodies, which assess whether companies receive a certain certificate. These are all organizations that look at companies, processes and products with an impartial view and also assess them. Supervisors, in other words.



But who supervises the supervisors? That is why accreditation bodies were created. European laws and regulations stipulate that each country must have one accreditation body. In the Netherlands, this is the RvA. "His monitor (among other things) the independence, competence and consistency of market supervisors," explains Casper van Eijl, head of accreditation at the RvA. "Do they do the same thing for every company? Do they do it independently? Do they account for it? And can everyone appeal to the conclusions they draw? If everything is in order, the RvA issues an accreditation, for example, to a certification body," he continues.

"THAT SHOWS THAT THE BODY IN QUESTION MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS AND IS ALLOWED TO CERTIFY FOR A CERTAIN SCOPE"

ACCREDITATION AND THE CO₂ PERFORMANCE LADDER
The RvA therefore also plays an important role for the CO₂ Performance Ladder. After all, it accredits the institutions that award certificates on the Ladder. The Foundation for Climate Friendly Procurement and Business (MAB) in Dutch, the manager and owner of the Ladder and the RvA therefore worked closely together from the beginning. "It was a logical choice by MAB to outsource supervision of certifying bodies to the RvA," said Van Eijl. "We can do that more efficiently and effectively because we are used to it and have a lot of experience with it."



(The article below is about the pilot phase in Belgium. This phase has now been successfully completed and the CO₂ Performance Ladder is being implemented structurally in the country)

Belgium is the first country outside Dutch borders to deploy the CO₂ Performance Ladder. Belgian stakeholders are currently busy experimenting in a pilot phase. What is involved in successful implementation of a procurement tool like the CO₂ Performance Ladder? Steven Declercq of Embuild Vlaanderen, trade association for the Belgian construction sector, shares his opinion with us.

"Sustainability and CO₂ neutrality are prominent on the agenda in Belgium these days," says Declercq. "That is underlying where we are heading, also in the construction sector." Declercq is an environmental law and environmental policy advisor at [VDS Vanderstraeten](#), which represents some 6,000 companies in the Belgian construction sector.

"In relation to the CO₂ Performance Ladder, we mainly take on an educational role. We make the procurement requirements known to our supporters and inform them about it," Declercq adds. Last year, for instance, Embuild co-organized a webinar series on the Ladder, which attracted around 150 procurement authorities and contractors.



A PROMISING INSTRUMENT

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