2019 | SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

WIENERBERGER BELGIUM

"Durability is in the DNA of our company, and it is our tangible ambition. Our culture is based on strong values, with a distinct responsability for the generations to come, and with respect for the environment. A lot of our investments and innovations take place within that durable framework.

Also in 2019, we have realised numerous projects, and we continue to focus on the major themes that are decarbonisation, circular economy and biodiversity."

Caroline Van de Velde - CEO Wienerberger Belgium

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This is how Wienerberger Beerse contributes to more biodiversity

Wienerberger is increasing biodiversity on its sites through many projects... The result? Certain animal and plant species can settle in an area where they belong. The transformation of our site in Beerse is a great example of this.

Buffer between industry and nature

Some time ago, Wienerberger Beerse created a sand dune and ecological canal. The green infrastructure created by this is crucial as the natural connection for plants and animals. Today the dune also functions as a buffer between industry and nature and helps maintain the ecosystem. More specifically, at Wienerberger's site borders on the Absheide, the nature park and nearby Het Blak are part of the Natura 2000 network, the European network of protected nature parks that are connected to each other. It includes all the areas that have been assigned based on the European Bird Directive and Habitat guideline. In total, Wienerberger is responsible for as much as 1.1 hectares of extra nature in function of maximum biodiversity!

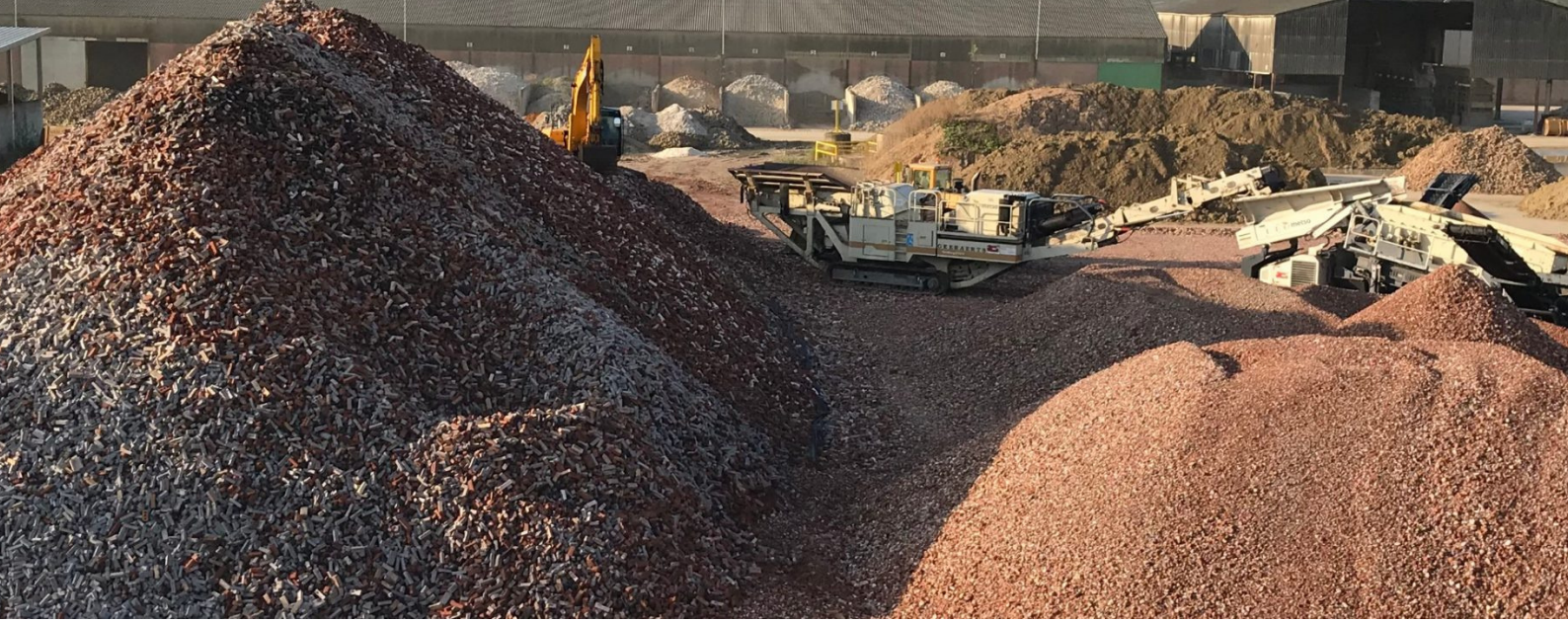
This is how we did it

How exactly did we realise this project? First, we removed the Japanese knotweed, an invasive, introduced species. After that we built up the dune. Then we covered the dune with a layer of sand over the entire surface and grafted it with heather

clippings. This is how we were able to bring a heather biotope with open, dry vegetation to life.

There are now other heather species, such as the Viviparous lizard, the Lestes virens and the great green bush cricket thriving there. The ecological canal at the foot of the dune buffers the rainwater making the excess water available for re-use. In addition, the canal ensures the presence of wet biotopes, which are good for pool frogs and palmate newts.

In summary: this extra nature area creates habitats for species that are important to the area. Today, the site is still being managed with a view of further development of nature!



Circular production: how Wienerberger focuses on recovery and recycling

Our sector is focusing more and more on circular production. This is nothing new for Wienerberger, however, as we already have zero discharge of production water, we are constantly evaluating how we can make our production processes even more sustainable. For example, we not only use materials with a long lifespan, we also focus on the recovery and recycling of our end products and waste flows during the production process.

A transparent vision of circular construction

Wienerberger considers itself an important player in the circular construction industry. We only develop products that are and will remain reliable. We do all we can to limit the use of raw materials, reduce CO2 emissions and limit the negative environmental impact. Our vision of circular construction is based on three pillars:

1. The reusing of building materials and end products
2. The application of circular building systems and processes
3. The minimisation and recovery of bin waste.

Want to find out more? See the details of each pillar from a to z below.

#1 The reuse of building materials and end products

For Wienerberger, building materials must be sustainable, have a long lifespan and require minimal maintenance. The longer their lifespan, the better suited the products are for reuse and the more cycles they can endure.

If we look at the reuse for façade covering and roofing materials, for example, clay tiles are ideal. They have a long lifespan without losing their functional and aesthetic features. The same is true for clay bricks: thanks to their special composition, they will last for 125 years! They are colourfast and stay that way through the years.

For façade brickwork we generally use ceramic covering, such as façade bricks. Our brick collections have a robust character and a substantial lifespan.

In addition, all our roof tiles and bricks are made from local raw materials such as clay, sand and water.

#2 The application of circular construction systems and processes

To be able to really build in a circular way, we work primarily with dismountable systems. This enables us to reuse the building materials the right way. Both clay tiles and bricks are suitable for such dismountable installation! It is entirely possible to remove them later and give them a new purpose. Thanks to standard dimensions, old and new ceramic materials are all seamlessly combinable.

The construction project of Wonen Regio Kortrijk – Lieven Degroote by Tetra and MAKER architects.

For façade brickwork, lime mortars are ideal. This was an important aspect of our circular construction project for subsidised housing society Wonen Regio Kortrijk, specifically in the Tuighuisstraat in Kortrijk. For this project, 100-year-old façade bricks and clay roof tiles were recovered as much as possible and used for the new residential units in combination with new ceramic products.

Thanks to the use of lime mortar, the façade bricks remain perfectly recoverable in new brickwork for possible use at a later date. This has advantages for all parties involved in the construction process. Contractors can continue to process the familiar ceramic products in the familiar way, while clients and designers can keep their freedom of choice. More proof that circular construction does not impact the cost price, the quality or the aesthetic opportunities.

There is also the Wienerberger ClickBrick, our own circular dismountable construction system.

#3 Minimisation of bin waste: the recovery of rubble

Limiting ceramic waste is important. For aesthetic or technical reasons, not all bricks and tiles make it to the market. A growing machining department also causes an increase in ceramic rubble. In the past, we would use such rubble for external applications, such as building new roads or tennis courts, however we have recently decided to choose the more sustainable option: the recovery of rubble and grinding dust!

The good news? This does not need to be at the expense of the environment or our sustainability efforts. On the contrary; several lab experiments and industrial tests have taught us that broken and sifted ceramic waste is perfectly usable in our own clay mix. In addition to enhancing the value of our own construction waste, this also helps us to use less primary raw materials.

Our grinding campaigns in Kortemark and Beerse.

The first recoveries happened at our sites in Kortemark and Zonnebeke. At the beginning of 2019 we set up a grinding campaign in Beerse. We ground the entire volume there and were able to recover 100% of the ceramic waste. By doing this, we not only limited the number of loads, we are also closing the waste cycle according to the cradle-to-cradle principle.

The result: a substantial decrease in freight traffic and a positive impact on the environment. Both locally (by reducing emissions of fine dust and noise pollution) and globally (by reducing CO2 emissions) and of course, this fits in seamlessly with our sustainability vision. Plus, we are saving a lot on costs, a win-win situation!

A sustainable innovation of Wienerberger: the award-winning success of the circular shrink film

In collaboration with various partners, Wienerberger has created a circular shrink film! This smart piece of innovation came about thanks to a multi-disciplinary collaboration in which Wienerberger acted as a knowledge facilitator. The result? More sustainability in the construction sector and the Packaging Award from Ufemat. More about this in this article.

From Clean Site Circular to combined powers

The seed for a circular shrink film was planted during the Clean Site Circular project, initiated by recycling partner Valipac. Valipac has its own collection system for films for construction sites at wholesalers, and it set the recycling of this in motion. Most of the films were recycled in China but when China imposed the waste ban in 2018, the construction sector had to find an alternative, so research into recycling options in Europe was intensified. The goal? To create a closed recycling chain in construction films.

Soon, the idea of recycling shrink film came up. The big challenge: re-using it could not be at the expense of the strong performance of the film. To translate the concept into reality, Valipac combined forces with various experts, which of course included Wienerberger!

Teamwork ensures success

Morssinkhof Rymoplast – a leading plastics recycling specialist collaborated closely with Total Polymers, who are responsible for the research component. By mixing a special 'booster' with the recycled plastic, the new film met the specifications that Wienerberger had set. After this, several tests were performed at our site in Beerse. By doing this, we were able to evaluate the possible impact of the packaging on the façade bricks as well as the performance during transport. Oerlemans Plastic covered the expense of the final production. FEMA, the Belgian federation of construction material dealers and Go4circle, the Belgian federation for the waste and recycling sector also offered support. The circular shrink film, unprecedented in the construction sector, was born!

The circular shrink film is half recycled plastic and still has the required qualities for the intended application and transport. The sector can significantly decrease the volume of 40,000 tonnes of packaging material this way. This innovation in the segment of packaging for construction materials contribute to making the sector more sustainable.

Winner of the Packaging Award

Ufemat, the European association of national federations of construction material dealers and producers also appreciated the shrink film. In October 2019, it awarded the shrink film with the very first Packaging Award! Prior, Ufemat had some strict evaluation criteria, based on four critical questions:

1. Was the packaging material designed in such a way that it can be recycled easily? Limited printing of the shrink film is one of the requirements, but emptying the packaging must also be easy.

2. How circular is the packaging really? The use of recycled materials is crucial, as is the reusability of the packaging as a whole. The degree of nitiative to increase the portion of recycled material is also important.

3. Is the amount of waste sufficiently limited? On the one hand, Ufemat looks at the efforts made to avoid unnecessary packaging material. On the other hand, a clear system is needed to collect the used material afterwards.

4. How innovative is this realisation exactly? This is specifically about the smart ways in which the shrink film answers the need for more sustainability in the sector.

From now on, Wienerberger will of course be using the shrink films in its own production processes. One thing is indisputable: with smart collaborations we can build a sustainable sector even faster.

This is how Wienerberger is contributing to a cross-border nature connection

Wienerberger operates a brick factory in Lanaken, right on the border with Maastricht, where with Leembank we also dig up lime for the production of bricks. This is done in a quarry area just north of the brickyard, wedged between the Albert Canal and the Dutch border. The quarry is of limited duration and after the project is completed, the area will be set up as a water-related industrial site at the Albert Canal.

Project Albertknoop

The spatial development on both sides of the border must be aligned with each other. This is why the municipalities of Maastricht and Lanaken, the provinces of Dutch and Belgian Limburg, NV De Vlaamse Waterweg, Wienerberger and the Leembank are cooperating closely for the Albertknoop project.

Due to the development of the new industrial site, valuable nature aspects on the shore would be lost and for this reason, the partners have created the cross-border Zouwdal aan. This is now a dry valley surrounded by herb-rich grasslands, which will grow into thicket and forest.

Execution of the project was based on plans by nature and landscape experts. Creating a bridge between the shores of the Albert Canal and the Meuse Valley and the Dutch Zuid-Willemsvaart.

Focus on humans and nature

Badgers, bats, birds, butterflies such as the Glanville Fritillary, viviparous lizards and natterjack toads and more, are once again finding a habitat in the Zouwdal. They can now move freely between nature areas which until recently had been separated from each other.

Wienerberger and its partners not only had to think about wildlife, they also had to take people into consideration. In the the midst of the greenery a cycle and walking path has been built which connects the sites. Along this route, the municipality of Lanaken and the Dutch province of Limburg, installed the Archeo monument Fort on the Zouw. It is a reference to the traces of a unique Carolingian fort which we discovered during the preparations for the quarry. It is a wonderful landmark for pedestrians and cyclists!

There are of course residents in the densely populated district of Malberg. They looked out over the future industrial site but were also affected by the noise from the brick factory. A sound barrier could have provided some relief but would score low in terms of aesthetics. In consultation with the residents and the municipalities of Maastricht and Lanaken, another solution was found: an embankment that would be aligned with the Zouwdal both in terms of scenery and ecologically. Wienerberger built the wall around its factory premises.

The result? It's a win-win situation, an 8 metre tall scenic embankment which the residents overlook and Wienerberger has found a solution for the noise pollution and nature's ecological network is being strengthened.

We were able to achieve the ecological construction of the embankment and the Maastricht territory thanks to the financing by Interreg project 2B Connect!

New facilities

And there is more: Wienerberger recently built a kestrel house and a bee hotel on the embankment. Our employees can now take their breaks at the picnic table in the midst of the greenery, with the sheep providing natural maintenance.

Local quarrying and repurposing: sustainable production in De Kempen

A sustainable production process includes a range of factors, including in the construction material sector. In addition to recycling, recovery and re-use, Wienerberger is also pursuing the repurposing of the quarried areas. Our efforts at the Kempen sites is a good example of that.

Archaeological survey: the first step

Before starting any quarry works, Wienerberger always conducts an archaeological survey first. How does that generally work? First, we scan the terrain comprehensivel with a magnetometer. By doing this we can search for any clusters of archaeological traces that may be there, which will enable the follow-up survey to be more focused.

For information: magnetronics is a non-destructive method, in which minor variations of magnetic characteristics of soil materials are detected. In places with previous human activity, remnants of charcoal, ceramic or metal are usually found. Because those materials have a different magnetic signal than the natural soil, archaeological sites can easily be detected. The great advantage of magnetronics and similar geographical techniques is that we do not have to dig to be able to scan large areas! In the spring of 2013, we conducted an archaeological survey in an area

in Rijkevorsel. We wanted to quarry that area, because a previous survey had shown that it contained good clay. Clay is a sustainable raw material that Wienerberger uses for the production of bricks.

Sustainable use of local raw materials

After the completion of the archaeological survey at the quarry in Rijkevorsel, we put the topsoil aside and were able to carry away over 100,000 m³ of clay to the nearby brick factory in Beerse. With this, we made over 50 million interior bricks!

The local facet plays a crucial role in this. Not only do we use raw materials like clay from our own soil as much as possible, we also work primarily with local sales markets. This way we avoid extra transport and we maintain our strong roots in the Belgian regions.

Repurposing as agricultural land

Once the clay has been quarried, the pit needs to be filled back in to return the land to agriculture. Wienerberger hires a contractor for this. The clay pit is filled back up with uncontaminated fill from other sites. For the top two metres, extra attention is paid to the texture of the fill: it cannot be too clayey, to prevent the soil from becoming too dense and to ensure that water will be absorbed optimally.

The topsoil that had earlier been set aside was put on top. To prevent puddles, the ground was positioned with a slight slope towards the edges. A moat was dug all around the terrain. At the southern edge we planted a row of oak trees, the characteristic trees of the Kemp landscape and we returned the property back to the farmer in the autumn of 2018, neatly finished. He has been working it again as a field and meadow ever since.

Discover Passaqua, our water-permeable clay paver

A Clay paver that allows the infiltration of rainwater? In the market of high-end paving materials there has been a demand for this for some time, which is why Wienerberger developed Passaqua, a water-permeable clay paver. It ensures that water can infiltrate into the soil locally.

The importance of Passaqua

14.4% of the Flemish ground is paved and that portion keeps increasing. Unfortunately, no rainwater can infiltrate into the soil through the paved areas. The result is that the soil can no longer store water, so it drains away through the sewage system. Our sewers are not prepared for this increased water flow. There may also be water shortages when there is a drought as the groundwater has been insufficiently topped up.

If we want to avoid major floods and water shortages, this is the time for action. There is a clear need for regional and urban planning regulations to catch and use rainwater, or to let it infiltrate into the ground. Did you know that Flemish legislation makes it mandatory for parcels of 250 m² and larger to have infiltration systems? That applies to anyone that builds a building, extension or patio exceeding 40 m².

Our Passaqua clay pavers are the simplest solution. Thanks to these water-permeable clay pavers, rainwater infiltrates into the ground naturally. This maintains the groundwater supply and limits the chance of flooding.

Three advantages: versatile, sustainable and environmentally-friendly

And here are the details: Passaqua is an extrusion press clay paver that provides 6 mm-wide joints. The clay paver itself does not allow water to seep through, but it lets it in through the wider joints. The joint portion of a paving project with Passaqua is about 10% of the total surface. This is the minimum requirement for water-permeable paving and thanks to the water-permeable joint, the water drains away quickly.

The Passaqua is also very versatile. It is suitable for patios and driveways of private homes. Passaqua is also used as a paving material for real estate developments and paved evacuation roads for the fire department. It can also be used for paving public spaces, for example parking lots, squares or pedestrian and cycling paths.

Aesthetically pleasing

Last but not least: the Passaqua also has aesthetic advantages! Our water-permeable clay paver is available in 4 colours. Like our standard counterparts, Passaqua also has an authentic look, its appearance improves every year. We call it Innovation in an aesthetic jacket!

What results have our energy teams already achieved?

At Wienerberger, we believe in the added value of combined strengths. We work with various energy teams, comprising of colleagues from various departments. From production and maintenance to management: together, they work on more sustainable processes in our organisation. We would like to show you the great results they have already achieved at various Wienerberger branches!

Péruwelz drying kiln: decrease in specific electrical consumption for our fans

When drying the bricks, it is important for the hot air to be directed to the bricks. The friction in the air inside the installation affects the electricity consumption of our fans. This is exactly where the energy team of our division in Péruwelz realised a 17.6% reduction in the entire drying kiln's consumption!

300 MWh/year or 120 tonnes of CO2

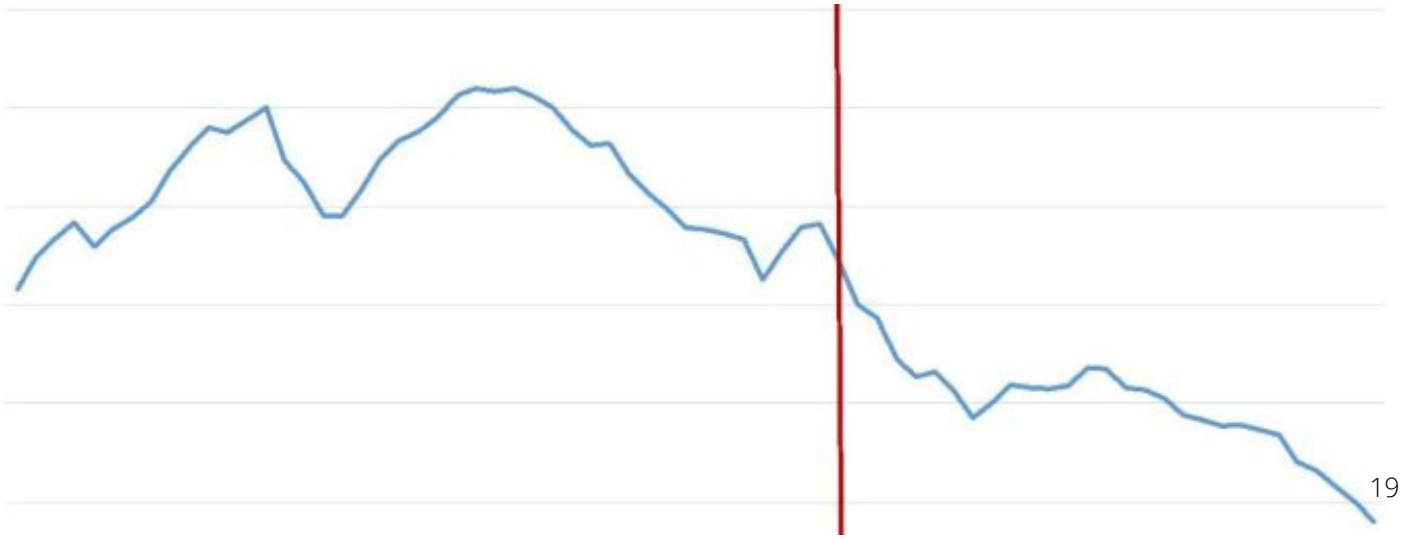
Lanaken drying kiln: decrease in specific thermal consumption

At the beginning of 2019, Wienerberger increased the kiln capacity of its factory in Lanaken. Our energy teams made some important adjustments on the installation for this. The absolute focus of this project? Energy efficiency! The first results are already very positive: the specific energy consumption has decreased by 10%!



Rumst steam system: decreased specific thermal consumption

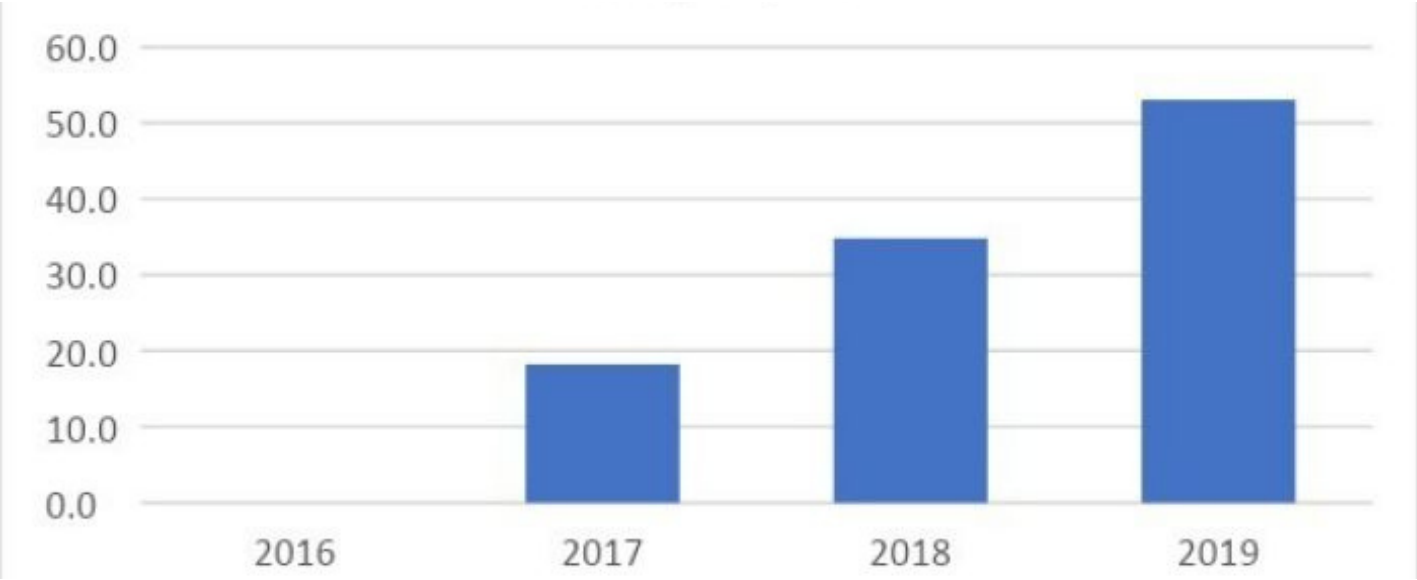
At our branch in Rumst we installed a heat exchanger on our existing steam system. A CUSUM analysis is already showing that our steam production is a lot more efficient! In the diagram below, you can see the current consumption as compared to the average from 2018. Since the adaptation, there is a strongly declining trend in the curve!



Pottelberg drying kiln for roof tiles: decreased thermal consumption

Thanks to new management, the energy team in Pottelberg was able to decrease the thermal consumption in the kiln by 53%, which also immediately reduced the gas consumption!

Decrease in specific energy consumption for drying kiln in %



The 'WaW' effect of our employer branding campaign

In November of 2019, we launched our brand-new employer branding campaign. We thought, after our successful clay brick campaign it was time for something new but we knew it would not be easy to create another 'WaW' effect. That was how the idea of the WaW campaign began!

We Are Wienerberger

WaW is an acronym for 'We Are Wienerberger'. The slogan relates to the fact that from now on, we will be working not only for Wienerberger Building Solutions, but also for Wienerberger Piping Solutions (Steinzeug-Keramo, Pipelife and Preflex). We also want to highlight the friendly work atmosphere at Wienerberger as our employees are just as WaW as our products!

But what exactly does Wienerberger mean to them? Time to organise a fun campaign! We collected all kinds of online testimonials from colleagues whose experience at Wienerberger is totally WaW. We then selected a few of the stories which we want to use in our new campaign, both on the websites and on social media! Those that are selected will receive a cartoon of themselves. Even better, an enlarged version of each of the cartoons will be displayed at the factory! After all, that fits in perfectly with the theme of the campaign, right?

More and more visibility

The WaW campaign is gradually gaining more visibility. Our new sports T-shirts were worn at Warmathon by the athletic official staff, who were supporting De Warmste Week. Our new fluorescent jackets showed that safety is very important to us. We also incorporated new promotional material for job fairs and for our external partners into the campaign. Staying top-of-mind is important!

Of course, the WaW campaign also has a digital extension. We shared various actions on our job website and on social media. What actions? For example, testimonials from employees, but also a close collaboration with schools. The Erasmus+ project with coworkers from Austria is a great example of that.

What will the future bring?

During the coming months you will see more of the WaW campaign. We are planning for new signage on the company vehicles, we will soon be amending the footers in our emails and much more. We are also updating our career website and the texts for our job opportunities. What about our employees? They will be even more in our focus with videos about their roles and we would like to thank everyone for being so WaW!

Wienerberger supports the 'De Warmste Week' (the hottest week) on behalf of 'Kom op tegen Kanker' (fight against cancer)

Every year many Wienerberger employees participate in this good cause. 2019 was all about Kom op tegen Kanker. We were also part of the Warmste Week, the solidarity event that takes place every December.

Heart for humanity and society

The human aspect may be the beating heart of Wienerberger. That is why there are diversity teams at every Wienerberger office. The goal? To increase the psychological wellbeing of our employees.

At the same time, we want to give back to society as a company. What if we could combine the solidarity and added social value?

Kom op tegen Kanker

Every year, we support one specific organization. Based on an internal survey, we chose Kom op tegen Kanker in 2019. Not insignificant, because every hour five Flemish people unfortunately get diagnosed with cancer.

This is why Kom op tegen Kanker has been fighting for a cancer-free world for over 30 years. They don't just prevent, fight and soften cancer, they also actively work on a better policy around this protracted disease. The non-profit organisation rallies as many people as possible to fight together.

Warm(est) (re)actions

With this good cause in mind, Wienerberger set up various actions throughout the year. At the beginning of 2019, we celebrated Wienerberger's 200-year anniversary. We did this with a tombola, which generated a nice amount of money. In spring we sold Easter eggs, organised a hyacinth planting event and unmasked The Mole together. In the summer we enjoyed ice cream, and in autumn we enjoyed a delicious Halloween risotto.

De Warmste Dag took place in November; it was celebrated in all Wienerberger branches in the whole country! Croque-monsieurs, pancakes, kebab and Boules de Berlin: various delicacies literally sold like hotcakes, also not forgetting the Sinterklaas breakfast and the December Christmas drink. We finished that same month with the Warmathon! Several Wienerberger colleagues showed their most sporty side and put their best foot forward.

In addition to many positive reactions and close ties, we were able to raise a total of 10,000 Euros. Our colleagues personally went and handed over the proceeds to the team of the Warmste Week and thus also to Kom op tegen Kanker. So satisfying!

Sustainability and humanity: two peas in a pod

For Wienerberger, sustainability means focus on people and the environment. Let's look more closely at that first pillar. It relates to our clients, our suppliers, sub-contractors and of course, our employees. This requires some explanation.

Healthy culture of safety

In the broad sense of the word, health means people's wellbeing. Internally, we do various things to maintain a healthy culture of safety:

- Develop a sustainable personnel policy: supervisors play a crucial role in this. That is why both management and team leaders will receive specific leadership training.
- Systematically improve working conditions: occupational safety is a must in every department and always comes first.
- Monitor for other risks: even though we work hard to avoid all risks, we will, unfortunately, never be completely risk-free. Whether it is about equipment, working methods or ergonomics, we always adapt our behaviour to the circumstances. The supervisors and employees with key roles play a crucial role in this - they are an example for everyone in the company.

Measuring is the key to knowledge

The data is always right. That is why we recently carried out a culture measurement in each of our factories. Together with Mizo (Stepstones For Safety), we were able to determine the 'measured position'. A few months later, during the summer of 2019, our management defined the vision and ambition for the coming year. In this way, we continue to evolve and that includes our safety culture!

Creating an ecological space for animals? We do that with temporary nature

Giving attention to nature is an essential aspect of sustainability. Wienerberger therefore invests a lot in temporary nature. This allows us to provide a habitat to many plants and animals during active quarrying. But what exactly is 'temporary nature' and how does it work?

The importance of temporary nature

Protected animal and plant species often spontaneously settle into our quarries. They are used to the very nutrient-poor and dynamic living conditions that are characteristic of our quarries. This is exactly where temporary nature has an essential function. In other words, we do not take any measures to keep protected species out of quarry areas, rather, we create an ecological space. Temporary nature provides a range of advantages*:

- Creating a suitable biotope for pioneers and early species. The favourable conditions are fully used, while populations strengthen.
- Offering a suitable habitat and therefore the survival of various species. This is certainly important for rare animal species that otherwise cannot find a suitable habitat or any at all.

- Sustainable conservation of the genetic variety of a population. Due to a strong growth of the population in temporary nature, the first population is strengthened in number, or the genetic diversity decreases less quickly and the population becomes less vulnerable to changes.

Repurposing

What then? The particular duration of this type of nature development is very important. Every quarry is temporary by definition, and therefore so is the natural habitat that comes into existence in that area, but the positive effect on nature is permanent. After every operation, we at Wienerberger always undertake a repurposing. In most cases this is as a nature or agricultural area.

Before the definitive set-up of the re-designation, an inventory is carried out of the property and where possible, less mobile species are relocated. The repurposing is done outside of mating season to prevent mating animals from being disturbed.

Practical examples highlighted

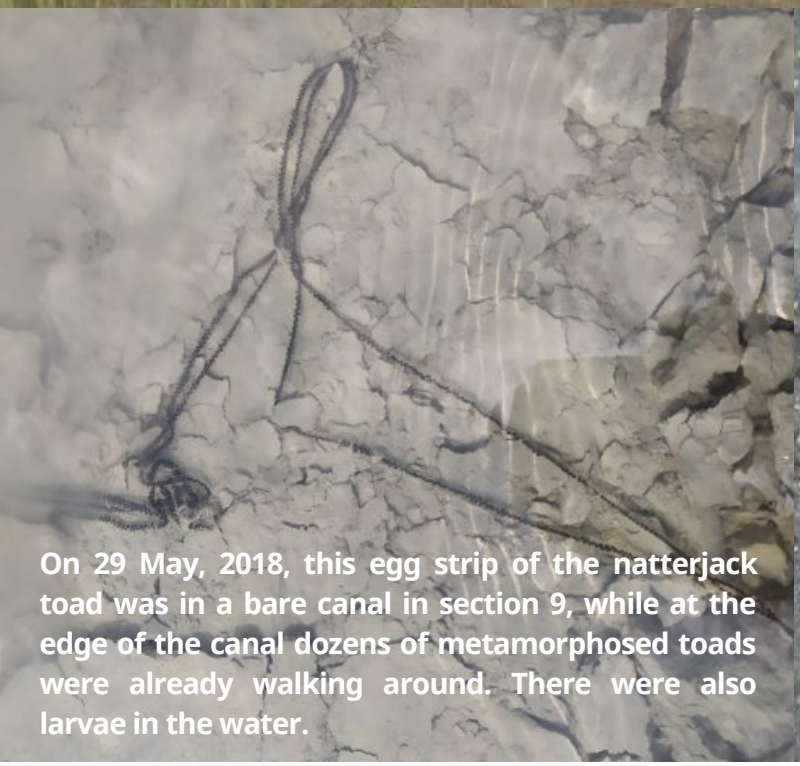
Recently, Wienerberger was one of the first Flemish businesses to obtain a permit for temporary nature development at its quarry in Rollegem. We were guided in this by the environmental consultancy company Corridor. In this way, we offered a temporary habitat to many animals as their habitat is often under pressure.

Natterjack toads in Wienerberger's active clay quarry in Rumst

For the temporary nature development in Rumst, Wienerberger collaborated closely with ANB (Agency for Nature And Forest), Natuurpunt, Antwerp and the municipalities of Boom and Rumst. What measures did we take, exactly? To support the natterjack toad, we have temporarily created several ponds. We did this in Wienerberger's active quarry, indicated below in zones 1 through 9.

A view of the work to create depressions for the natterjack toad.

Pond 3 is looking good at 29 May, 2018. No larvae were found in the water at this time, but there were dozens of just metamorphosed natterjack toads moving around the edge!



On 29 May, 2018, this egg strip of the natterjack toad was in a bare canal in section 9, while at the edge of the canal dozens of metamorphosed toads were already walking around. There were also larvae in the water.

In several places, natterjack toad larvae had already metamorphosed into juvenile natterjack toads. They are only 5 to 10 mm in size! They walk around at the edge of the water during the day and in this way we ensure a successful reproduction.

In function of the advancing front of the quarry and the filling, the locations of the ponds move along in time and space. The annual monitoring by Natuurpunt and ANB provides a clear picture of the results. Taking into account the evolution of the number of natterjack toads as well as the conditions of the ponds and based on the advice of the above mentioned supervisory group, we regularly perform optimisation work. Where possible, we also create new ponds.

It is clear with many ecological development opportunities and the guarantee for a smooth execution of the work, both nature and Wienerberger are winners.

**The advantages provided were originally presented by Lieve Vriens*

Wienerberger is committed to supporting more employment in Africa and access to toilet facilities in Uganda

At Wienerberger, we actively invest in corporate social responsibility. We consciously choose projects where sustainability, education, entrepreneurship and the use of sustainable materials are the focus. Through the non-profit Ondernemers voor Ondernemers (Entrepreneurs for Entrepreneurs) (OVO) we directly support local entrepreneurs in Africa. The NGO Join for Water is building eco-friendly toilets in Uganda thanks to our support.

Potential and determination

According to the figures of the World Bank, 41% of the South African population lives in poverty. Nearly half have to survive on less than $1.25 a day.

Ondernemers voor Ondernemers' (OVO) philosophy is that people in low and middle-income countries have the potential and determination to develop themselves. Economic development and entrepreneurship are essential in this. After all, employment provides an income, more and longer education, perspective, motivation and a better social fabric!

The power of entrepreneurship

OVO supports local entrepreneurship in Africa exactly from that perspective. It involves non-profit organisations in Belgium such as Wienerberger in this. Every organisation is impacted by and has an impact on the developments in poor and developing countries!

Currently, OVO selects African start-ups with a story, with local partners. They look for coaching and financing for business projects with a social and environmentally friendly impact. They can then be introduced to Belgian companies, who in turn can offer support. This can be done through a gift to the OVO Acceleration Fund (a rolling fund that converts these gifts into social loans) or through direct social loans. In addition, mutual sharing of knowledge is very important to OVO. OVO always strives to set up international and equality-based partnerships.

OVO is a unique platform for collaboration between Belgian companies, contractors and African business initiatives. As a core member of the organisation, Wienerberger has supported OVO's operations since 2006!

Sustainable provisions and more: support from Wienerberger

OVO is also looking for additional support through several carefully selected Belgian NGO partners; this involves the basic conditions that make entrepreneurship possible. For example, Wienerberger contacted the only Belgian water NGO.

Since 2019, Wienerberger has supported the development of sustainable sanitary provisions in Uganda through Join for Water. The construction and distribution of these toilets is based on an adapted business model. This model allows young local entrepreneurs to generate an income. It also uses alternative and environmentally friendly building methods. The eco-toilets in Uganda, launched under the brand name Flower Toilets, are a great example of this. Interesting fact: this type of toilet consists of a solidly built raised seat, in which urine and excrement are drained

separately into a closed compartment. This prevents the risk of contamination and the spread of disease is drastically reduced. Additionally, the toilets are designed not to need any rinse water. An extra advantage: the dehydrated feces can be used as fertiliser after a certain amount of time!

Why is the focus on the sanitary aspect so relevant? Well, in some villages, very few people own a toilet. The toilets that some households do have are often not built properly and do not last long. The lack of good sanitary facilities leads to pollution of the soil and surface water and therefore also affecting the nearby rivers and lakes.

In summary: with this support, Wienerberger directly contributes to better health, lower child mortality and a clean living environment in the region. At the same time, we are investing in motivated African entrepreneurs through OVO .

Recent developments in focus

How did the Flower Toilets project evolve in the past few months? Below is a list of milestones and some great testimonies from 2019:

- 43,560 pressed bricks were produced for the construction of Flower Toilets in the Ugandan regions Nyakira, Kabambiro and Karangura.
- 10 villages were mobilised for the promotion of the EcoSan technology.
- 288 families were visited and informed about a possible improvement of the sanitary and hygienic situations.
- With 30 interested families we looked at how their own acquisition (~20%) could become a reality.
- 36 families were introduced to and trained in the use of the Flower Toilets.
- 64 toilets were built for families.
- 4 sanitary blocks were built at schools: each one has 4 toilets for boys with handwashing facility. For the girls, 4 toilets with handwashing facility and an extra wash place.

Nanyazi Hope in Nyakira – *"Since recently, I have an Ecosan toilet. I can use the fertiliser for my vegetable garden. It took a little getting used to this this system, but thanks to the instructions from, Join For Water and their local partner, I learned fast. I'm very happy with it! We used to go to the bathroom in the bushes, but now we have a proper, sustainable, odourless toilet."*

Mjanwe – *"The construction of the toilets is fast, so we can produce a lot every day. With eight wheelbarrows of sand, muram and a bag of cement, we can make 150 to 200 bricks. For every toilet we need about 800 bricks!"*

We are looking forward to seeing how this project will evolve in the coming years!