

# IDEA Consult Impact Report 2025



June, 2026

# Our first impact report

**IDEA Consult is proud to present its first impact report. With this report, we aim to share insights on our efforts to strengthen our positive impact and our aim to be sustainability leaders .**

Becoming a sustainable company is a verb. It requires persistent action, commitment, honest reflection and acceleration. We are well aware that change is rarely straightforward: it can feel uncomfortable, it can disrupt routines, and it can force you to question longstanding ways of working.

That is the spirit in which this report was written. We want to report on our journey and do so in interest of transparency: not as a finished story, but as work in progress.

*"The choice to be a sustainable organization is one of the employees themselves. The actions and drive comes very strongly from within the organization. So big thanks to all the colleagues and especially to our sustainability team"*

**Bart van Herck,**  
Managing Director at IDEA Consult



# Navigating this report



You do not necessarily need to read this report from front to back. Depending on what you are looking for, you can jump straight to the chapter that matters most to you.

## **Curious about IDEA Consult as a company?**

Discover who we are, what we do and who we work for.

→ See Chapter 1 (p4-11).

## **Looking for our impact?**

Discover our 5 impact domains and how our projects contribute to these.

→ See Chapter 2 (p12-25).

## **Interested in how we act behind the scenes?**

Discover how we care for our people and organise our work internally.

→ See Chapter 3 (p26-35).

## **Ready for what comes next?**

Discover the actions we planned for the coming year(s).

→ See Chapter 4 (p36-38).

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# Chapter 1

## Meet IDEA Consult

In this chapter, we introduce who we are, what we stand for, what we do, and who we work for. We close this chapter with an overview of our sustainability journey since 2020.

It's all in our baseline

# Moving Society

The IDEA Consult **Manifesto** captures our philosophy in five pillars defining who we are and what sets us apart.

## We are IDEA Consult



We are independent and professional. We help our clients to make evidence-based decisions, today and tomorrow.

## We empower



We take good care of our people, and they take care of our clients. Realising our credo 'Moving society' requires that human touch.

## We connect minds



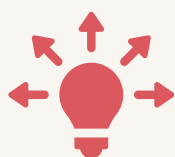
We co-create with our clients and their stakeholders. The result is always more: more insights and more engagement.

## Sustainable impact, that's our goal



With our insights, we inspire our clients and their stakeholders to help shape a new and sustainable tomorrow.

## We think ahead



Where others stop, we dig further. We use the latest findings in research and technology to provide new insights, inspiring strategies and effective solutions.



# Our services

Our services cover the full policy cycle: from analysis to evaluation.



## Better insights

We start with the facts: what is happening, why it matters, and what the data tells us.

Data analysis, forecasting, benchmarking, feasibility studies, sector analysis...



## Get inspired



We explore new perspectives: shaping direction and turning challenges into opportunities.

Strategic planning, new perspectives for societal challenges, SDG & ESG - strategies



We turn direction into action through concrete plans, partnerships and financing.

Business plans, roadmaps, partnership models & coordination, funding mix/subsidies, transition management



We help clients track progress, learn from results and improve their impact.

KPI's and evaluation dashboards, impact assessment, policy & program evaluation



## Be more effective

## Just do it





# Eight domains of expertise

The unique strength of IDEA is our combined expertise in eight domains to design innovative and cross-sectoral solutions for societal challenges. See how this comes to life in our project work in Chapter 2 - Our Impact.

Culture, creative sectors,  
heritage, and tourism

Research, innovation, and  
competitiveness

Sustainable real estate, and  
territorial development

Digital and data analytics

Labour market, learning, and  
social policy

Sustainability strategies and  
services

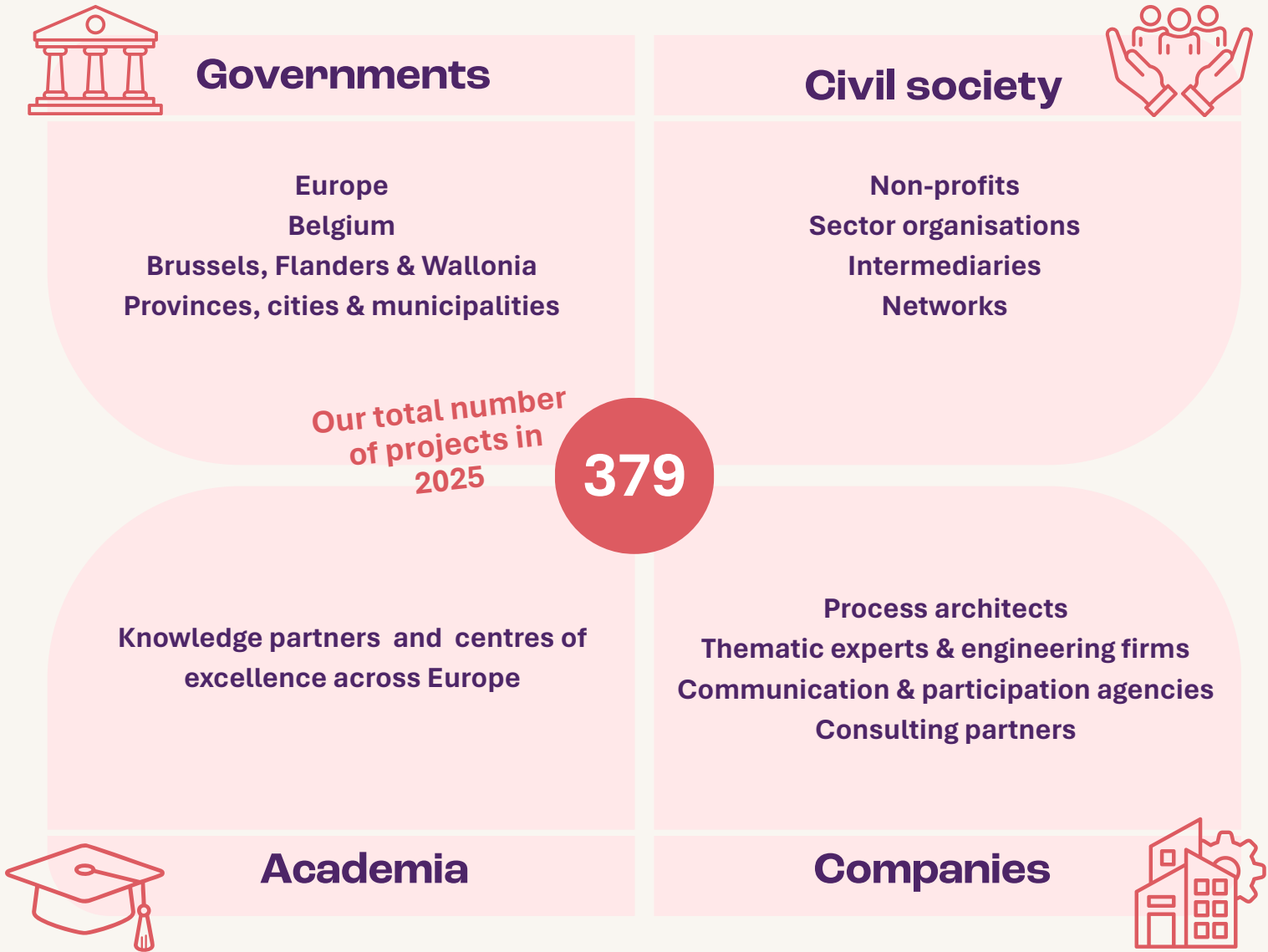
Subsidy management

Regional and local  
governance

# Our clients and partners in the focus

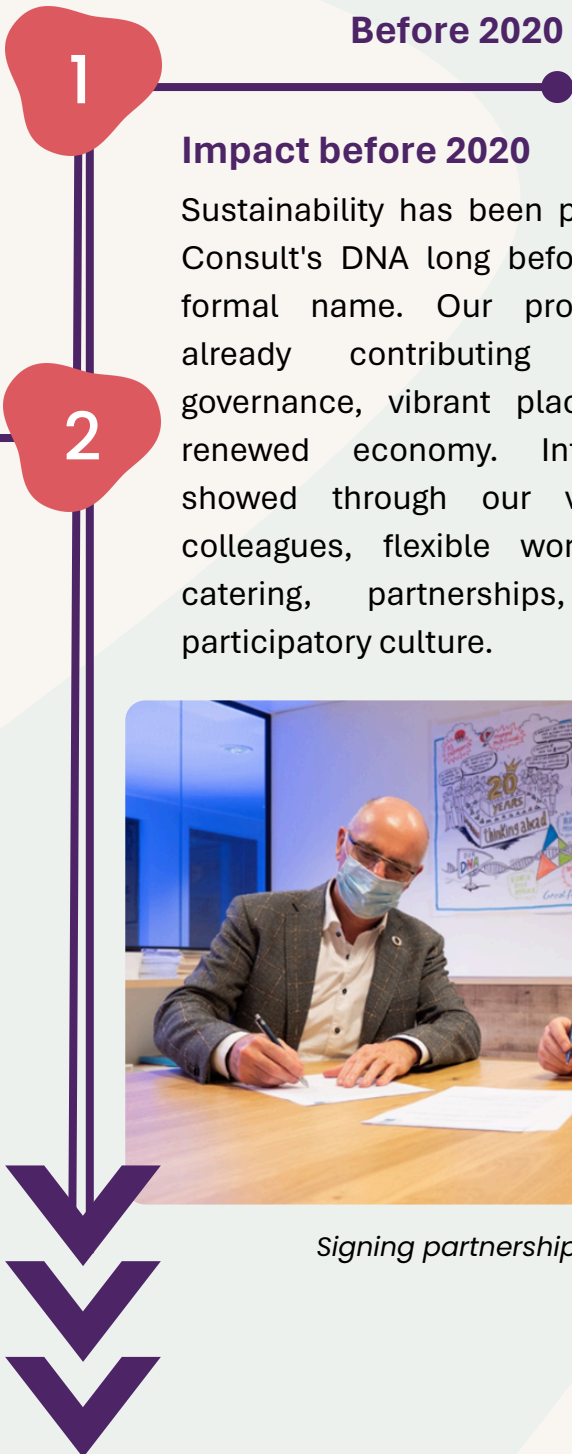
IDEA Consult works for a broad range of public, semi-public and private organisations. In addition, we are the trusted partner of numerous knowledge institutions, intermediary and umbrella organisations and networks.

In 2025, we completed 379 projects for our clients.



# Our Journey

Our sustainability journey grew gradually — from the values of our people, the nature of our work, and a growing conviction that how we operate matters as much as what we deliver. The timeline below traces that journey: from an informal engagement to a well-structured strategy.



## Before 2020

### Impact before 2020

Sustainability has been part of IDEA Consult's DNA long before it had a formal name. Our projects were already contributing to good governance, vibrant places, and a renewed economy. Internally, it showed through our value-driven colleagues, flexible working, local catering, partnerships, and a participatory culture.

## 2020-2022

### Partnering with CIFAL Brussels for more impact

In late 2020, we took our first structured steps. By partnering with CIFAL Brussels — the Flemish UNITAR-linked hub for sustainable development and the SDGs — and launching the PCA2030 Pioneer trajectory, sustainability gained a clear internal framework. We established a dedicated sustainability team and launched our first action plan: reducing our footprint, making greener choices in mobility and procurement, strengthening local engagement, and more actively embedding sustainability across both our projects and our organisation.



Signing partnership with CIFAL Brussels on 20/10/2020

2023

3

### Becoming an SDG-Pioneer

In November 2023, IDEA Consult was certified as an SDG-Pioneer by CIFAL. This marked an important milestone in our sustainability journey and a commitment to take the next step towards SDG Champion by 2026.



2024

4

### More strategy for more impact

In 2024, we sharpened our strategy through a double materiality analysis. This helped us identify where IDEA can have the greatest impact and which external developments matter most to our work. Based on this dual perspective, we defined five impact domains:

- Social and economic innovation
- Sustainable and socio-economic development
- Labour market and careers
- Data and digitalisation
- Partnership and stakeholder engagement

2025 - ...

5

### Going for SDG-Champion

In 2025, we involved all teams in turning these impact domains into concrete actions. From 2026 onwards, the focus is on putting our ambitions into practice and becoming an SDG-Champion. Curious about what that looks like in practice? Head to Chapter 4 — Just do it.





*“Through diverse initiatives, the IDEA-sustainability team encourage colleagues to reflect on how their daily choices can contribute to a more sustainable workplace.”*

**Evi Emmer**  
Sustainability Ambassador



## Chapter 2

# Our Impact

In this chapter, we describe our impact. Our greatest impact comes through our project work and through the actions our clients take based on our advice. We structure and present this impact across our five impact domains, showing how our work contributes to meaningful change.

# IDEA's Impact domains

In defining our sustainability strategy, we identified five impact domains that reflect both the societal impact we create through our work and the external forces shaping our organisation. Together, they form the foundation of our sustainability efforts.

These domains are relevant across all eight of our areas of expertise. Whether we are working on governance, innovation, real estate, or the labour market, they help us connect our day-to-day projects to the broader sustainability challenges IDEA Consult wants to contribute to.

This chapter shows how our five impact domains came to life in our project work in 2025. We know that listing projects is not the same as measuring real change and that is exactly why, before we dive into the five domains, we start with Impact domain 0: a reflection on what impact actually means in our context. Understanding what clients can do with our advice is where it all begins.



**1**  
Social and economic  
innovation



**2**  
Sustainable socio-  
economic development



**3**  
Labour market &  
careers



**4**  
Data &  
digitalization



**5**  
Partnerships & stakeholder  
engagement

# Impact domain 0

## Zooming in our impact

**For a consultancy firm, impact is rarely direct or fully visible. We advise, challenge and support, but the real change happens in what clients do with our work afterwards. That makes impact both powerful and difficult: powerful, because good advice can shape decisions, policies, investments and long-term direction; difficult, because the final outcome is never fully in our hands.**

**We know our work can influence important decisions.** Through our projects, we can help clients move further in the sustainable transition, align choices with social and climate goals, strengthen good governance and turn long-term ambitions into concrete action. In other words, we have influence: and we believe we can use that influence more consciously.

**A second challenge is measurement.** We are experts in evaluation, monitoring and impact assessment in the projects we carry out for others, yet we find it difficult to measure our own impact in a meaningful way.

It's feasible to look at the projects we delivered and the advice we gave, but not at what was ultimately done with that advice. We also want to approach this in a sensible way. We do not want to overload clients with surveys or extra administration after every project. At the same time, we know there are better ways to learn from what happens after delivery, in ways that create value for both our clients and ourselves. This is still work in progress, but it is an important part of how we want to grow.

What this means for us is clear: if we want to increase our impact, we need to look not only at the quality of our advice, but also at its direction and its afterlife. Is our work understandable? Can it be reused? Does it help clients take the next step? Does it continue to create value after a project ends? And are we sufficiently critical about which assignments we take on in the first place?

# Impact domain 0

## Zooming in our impact

From 2026 onwards, we want to focus on several priorities to increase and measure our impact:

With these actions, we want to make sure that we take on the right projects and strengthen their impact throughout their execution.

### Making our work visible, usable and lasting

We aim to make our work more visible, understandable and reusable, so that it can continue to have value beyond the moment of delivery.

### Sustainability by default

We aim to integrate sustainability more consistently into all our offers and projects. In practice, this means that for every new assignment, we will consciously ask how the project can contribute to the sustainable transition. For example by supporting social inclusion, strengthening governance, reducing environmental impact or creating long-term economic value.

### An impactful portfolio

We aim to look more critically at our portfolio as a whole. This means assessing whether the projects and clients we work with are sufficiently aligned with IDEA's sustainability principles. Not every assignment has the same potential to contribute to positive change, and we want to become more explicit about that.

### Impact follow-up

We aim to stay closer to our clients beyond project delivery and improve how we monitor the impact of our work, in ways that are useful, proportionate and mutually valuable.

# Impact domain 1

## New ideas and innovation paving the way to change



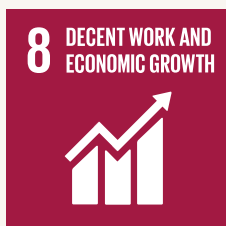
Our first impact domain focuses on social and economic innovation. Society is changing fast: new technologies are emerging, demographic trends are shifting, climate pressure is increasing and economic systems are evolving. In that context, innovation is a necessity.

For us, social and economic innovation means helping governments and organisations find new ways to create value. Not just through ideas, but through practical tools, partnerships and investment models that can be applied in the real world.

### Lessons learned and 2026 priorities

Working on social and economic innovation also means accepting uncertainty. Not every recommendation is taken up, not every ecosystem evolves as expected, and not every promising idea grows into lasting change. The gap between strategy and real-world impact can be large. For us, credibility lies in uptake and durability of effective innovations.

From 2026 on, we want to build on that. We will further develop and scale up practical tools that help clients turn innovation into action — from automated tools to map economic demand, to stronger sustainable tourism tools in Flanders and beyond, and further implementation the TAKSO framework in our culture after its pilot.



# Impact domain 1

## New ideas and innovation paving the way to change

### Cross-innovation in the cultural sector

Advancing innovation in the cultural and creative industries through the EKIP EU platform by delivering a policy lab on cross-innovation with the performing arts sector.

### LifeSaver - Gamechanging tech for mothers to be

Contributing to safer medicines for pregnant and breastfeeding women through the [LifeSaver project](#) by translating a breakthrough biodigital placenta model into a practical policy toolkit that can guide future testing standards.

### Stronger regional innovation across Europe

Helping regions across Europe — from Budapest and Barcelona to Bologna and Rimini — strengthen smart specialisation strategies and build new industrial value chains. In Helsinki, this work also fed into high-level dialogue on research–business collaboration in Finland, contributing to discussions on how to strengthen the country’s Research, Development and Innovation system.

### Preparing tomorrow’s industrial ecosystems

Supporting the development of VOKA’s Future Plan 2035, to be launched in mid-2026, by identifying the potential of eight industrial ecosystems in Flanders together with KU Leuven. This research helps inform a growth path to boost productivity, safeguard prosperity and respond to challenges such as an ageing population.



Impact stories 2025



# Impact domain 2

## Responsible growth



**Our second impact domain is about sustainable socio-economic development.**

Sustainability is no longer an add on or a side topic. It increasingly shapes the decisions that governments, businesses and organisations need to make. The question is no longer whether it matters, but how to translate it into choices that are credible, workable and fair. That often leads to difficult but very practical questions: how to create economic value without increasing environmental pressure? How to weigh short-term gains against long-term costs? How to make sure development strengthens communities rather than deepens inequality?

This is where we position ourselves: as a partner in shaping development within clear social and ecological boundaries.



### Lessons learned and 2026 priorities

Working on responsible growth is not always straightforward. We work on contractual basis, based on a client's specific question. But even when sustainability is not explicitly part of that question, a project may still have social or eco-logical implications. In those cases, we need to find the right balance between responding to the client's needs and bringing in the broader perspective we believe is needed.

This links directly to Part 0 of this chapter. If we want our advice to create real value, we need to look beyond the immediate delivery of a project and reflect on the change it can help enable. That also means considering the wider effects a project may have, and how we can help shape it towards sustainable.

These are important discussions within IDEA, and from 2026 on we want to take a next step. We want to make sustainability more visible in how we take on projects, shape our advice and support clients, so that responsible growth becomes a stronger and more consistent part of our work.

# Impact domain 2

## Responsible growth

### A renewed vision for rural Flanders

Supporting the Flemish Rural Pact in developing a long-term, multi-level framework that brings together policymakers and stakeholders to advance a shared vision for a resilient rural Flanders.

### Smarter use of economic space

With the aim of avoiding further net loss of open space by limiting new land take and making better use of land that is already developed, IDEA helped regions and policymakers to use economic space in the best possible way in the future.

### Stronger local plans through the SDGs

Supporting local authorities in preparing their multi-annual plans (2026–2031), using our [SDG Monitor](#) (developed with Dr Samuel Standaert, associate professor at United Nations University – CRISS) to assess and strengthen their contribution to the SDGs and sustainable development.

### Regenerative tourism in the Westhoek

Developing the Westhoek tourism policy plan 2026–2032, in which tourism is approached not merely as a volume-driven activity, but as a regenerative force that strengthens local identity and history, supports healthy economic activity, and enhances ecosystems, communities and landscapes rather than merely preserving them.

### Sustainability in de Conference sector

Working with the Flanders Convention Bureau to develop a structural sustainability strategy for the MICE sector. The strategy supports the transition towards conferences and events with a lower environmental impact, greater social value and stronger accountability.

Impact stories 2025



# Impact domain 3

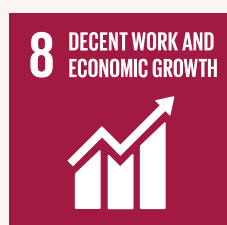
## Work, skills and careers in transition



Our third impact domain focuses on labour market and careers.

Skills shortages, changing career paths and new expectations around work make labour market activation, reskilling and sustainable careers urgent priorities for governments. For employers, the challenge is to attract and retain talent while building resilient organisations.

At IDEA, we address this transition externally by supporting public authorities and sector organisations on labour market and education policy, skills strategies and future-oriented career policies. Internally, we face the same dynamics: attracting and retaining colleagues depends on meaningful work, growth opportunities and a supportive workplace culture.



### Lessons learned and 2026 priorities

Employment, skills, and social inclusion drive the work of a dedicated team of 15, working across employment, education and training, inclusion, wellbeing and sustainable careers.

2025 made clear how these themes are deeply interconnected. Supporting people in changing labour markets requires engaging the full ecosystem around work: education and training systems, employers, public services, and local actors alongside the conditions that make careers sustainable and inclusive.

From 2026, we will deepen this integrated approach, advancing sustainable careers, skills, lifelong learning, and social inclusion while strengthening links with wellbeing, innovation, sustainable growth, and digital transitions. Internally, we will keep investing in team dynamics, coaching, communication, and networks — applying the same principles of development and resilience to ourselves.

# Impact domain 3

## Work, skills and careers in transition

### Strengthening local activation policies

IDEA Consult identified four levers for stronger local labour market activation policies, helping Flemish local authorities prepare for a rising number of welfare clients needing support towards work. Our contribution focused on how municipalities can better use their proximity to both citizens and employers, with attention to organisation, strong activation pathways, collaboration with partners and closer ties with local employers.

### Learning ecosystems in practice

Learning ecosystems bring together local actors such as libraries, museums, youth centres, care organisations, sports clubs and technology clubs to create more opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. In this way, children, young people and adults can explore and develop their talents in contexts that connect with their interests, passions and everyday lives.

Based on an evaluation of five pilot projects in Limburg and the Westhoek, IDEA Consult and Antwerp Management School advised the Flemish government on how learning ecosystems can be successfully developed in Flanders.

### Making nursing more attractive

Addressing one of Belgium’s most pressing labour market challenges by supporting the FPS Public Health with advice on how to make nursing more attractive, with a focus on job satisfaction, retention and sustainable careers in a sector under structural pressure.

Impact stories 2025



# Impact domain 4

## Digitalization for more public value



**Impact domain 4 focuses on data and digitalisation.**

Data and digital tools increasingly shape how societies function and how governments make decisions. But their value does not lie in technology alone. The real challenge is to use them in ways that are useful, responsible and fair — with attention to quality, ethics, privacy and real added value.

In that sense, data and digitalisation are not goals in themselves, but tools to support better policy, greater transparency and smarter governance.

At IDEA Consult, our role is to help governments and organisations move from digital ambition to practical application. This means translating technological possibilities into policy-relevant tools, ensuring ethical and transparent data use, and strengthening digital literacy where needed. It also means recognising that not every problem requires a technological solution and that digital tools only create value when embedded in sound governance frameworks.

### Lessons learned and 2026 priorities

As our digital work grows, so do our responsibilities. This means staying realistic about what technology can and cannot solve, being transparent about data quality, methodological limits and ethical implications, and making sure our own digital practices reflect the public value we want to create.

Linked to this we aim to better connect our digital teams and project teams, so they can work more closely together and better understand each other's expertise. We also aim to set up a monitor for digital policy developments, so that we can strengthen our advice to clients with more up-to-date and coordinated digital knowledge.



# Impact domain 4 Digitalization for more public value

## Large-scale AI evaluation

For the 16-year evaluation of the European Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) programme, our digital team combined AI, data science and expert judgement to analyse more than 30,000 documents and deliver a robust evaluation report. The project showed how AI can support large-scale assessment while remaining anchored in human interpretation.

## Monitoring Europe's industrial resilience

At European level, we contribute to the European Monitor of Industrial Ecosystems, the European Commission's dashboard for tracking the resilience and competitiveness of the European economy.

## Shaping Belgium's AI position

AI infrastructure is essential for driving scientific breakthroughs and enhancing economic competitiveness, as evidenced by the recent decision to host an AI Antenna in Belgium.

In this context, BELSPO (Belgium's Federal Public Service for Scientific Policy) recently commissioned two reports on AI infrastructure, with IDEA Consult providing expert guidance throughout the process, one explores the business case for the Belgian AI Factory and one examining the feasibility and benefits of Belgium's involvement in the European AI Gigafactories (AIGF) initiative.

IDEA Consult delivered the reports within very short deadlines, with hand-on guidance, thereby shaping BELSPO's strategic stance on these critical initiatives.



*Belgium selected as AI Factory Antenna*



# Impact domain 5

## Collaboration for more impact



**Domain 5 is about partnerships and stakeholder engagement.**

Complex societal challenges rarely sit within one organisation, one sector or one level of government. Climate adaptation, circular value chains, regional development and social cohesion all require different actors to align their ambitions, resources and responsibilities. Lasting change only happens when the wider ecosystem moves with them. That is why partnerships and stakeholder engagement are not an optional extra, but often essential to making progress.

At IDEA Consult, we increasingly see our role not only as researcher or advisors, but as facilitators of collaboration. We help structure conversations, identify shared ground and translate dialogue into workable agreements. This involves working across policy domains, administrative levels, sectors and accepting that progress is often gradual and negotiated.

### Lessons learned and 2026 priorities

Aligning stakeholders takes time, and co-creation can risk to remain symbolic without clear commitments.

In 2026, we want to strengthen collaboration within our project work by integrating more systems thinking, making sure the stakeholders that shape a system are genuinely brought around the table.

This collaboration commitment also applies internally. We will intensify cross-team learning by systematically sharing insights from ongoing projects, expand IDEA's presence in key EU networks (such as No Net Land Take).



# Impact domain 5

## Collaboration for more impact

### A circular local wood value chain

After the Green Deal Sports Grounds (2021–2024), IDEA Consult supported the Belgian Wood Federation, the Forest Groups, ANB and Fedustria in setting up a Green Deal Local Wood. The collaboration was launched on 26 September 2025 in the presence of Minister Jo Brouns.

From the outset, the initiative already brought together 80 participants. The partners are working jointly on a circular local wood value chain, covering the full chain from management and processing to the use of wood as a raw material.

The societal added value is multiple, creating benefits for both businesses and the environment.

### New governance models for swimming pools

For Dienstverlenende Vereniging Midwest, conducting a strategic research trajectory with 15 local authorities and 8 public swimming pools, resulting in practical governance models that help municipalities collaborate through different formats and prepare for upcoming legislation.

### Joining the New European Bauhaus

In 2025, IDEA became a member of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) community. Through this European initiative, we strengthen our network around sustainable and inclusive spatial development and become part of a broader community working to make living environments more sustainable, attractive and accessible for all.



Official signing of the Green Deal Local Wood - 26/09/2025





## Chapter 3

# Walking the talk

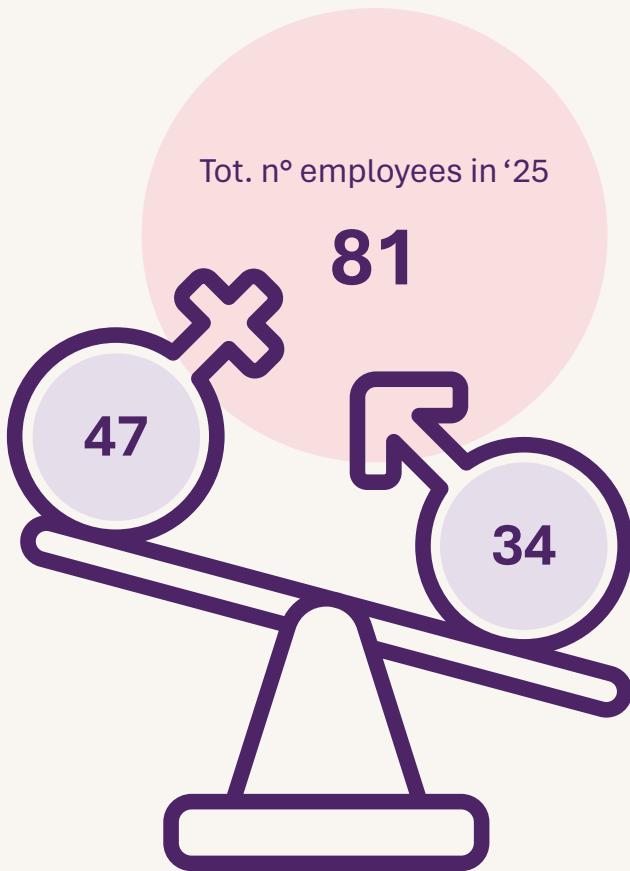
On daily basis, IDEA advises organisations on sustainable development. Consequently, we hold ourselves to the same standard.

This chapter is a transparent review on how we care for our people, how we keep learning and how we build a workplace that reflects the values we stand for.

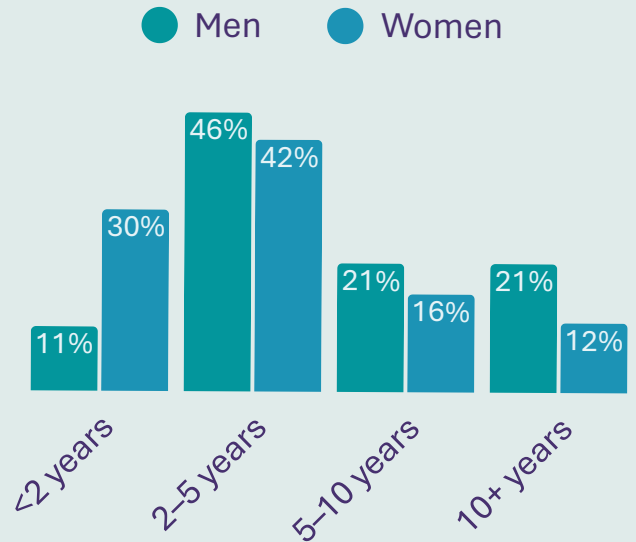
# Our people in numbers

Behind our projects are the people who make them happen. They are our biggest asset — and they deserve a place where they can flourish, feel at home and connect.

In 2025, IDEA Consult counted a total of 81 employees. Our team includes 47 women (60.6%) and 34 men (39.4%).



## Length of service breakdown



Looking at how long people have been with IDEA, an interesting pattern emerges. Women are more concentrated among recent hires — 30% have been with IDEA for less than two years, compared to just 11% of men. Men, on the other hand, are more represented among employees who have been with IDEA for longer, with 21% having ten or more years of service compared to 12% of women. This is a cohort effect: it reflects when people joined rather than how long they stay. As our newer female colleagues grow into more senior roles, we expect this gap to narrow naturally over time.

# Our people Satisfaction

Every year, we ask our people how they are doing. 65 colleagues shared their feedback anonymously looking back at the year 2025.

## What is working well

Flexibility remains a core strength, hybrid working scores 100% and flexible working conditions 95%. Engagement is strong: motivation (95%), team cooperation (92%) and knowing who to turn to for support (92%) all score high. People find their work meaningful and challenging, and feel a clear sense of strategic direction. Together, these results show an IDEA with a strong foundation, motivated people, effective teams, and a clear sense of purpose, giving us a solid base to address the challenges ahead.

## Where we can improve

Work-life balance is the top concern at 48% satisfaction. Feedback culture also needs strengthening, with peer feedback (60%) and project lead feedback (61%) rated only moderately. Internal communication scores well (81%), though access to clear organisational information lags (68%). Physical working conditions at the office (60%) and at home (75%) also need attention.

Work-life balance and feedback culture require the most focus. Consultancy is demanding by nature: high client expectations, intense workloads, and a high workspace. Our people are also deeply committed to quality, which is one of IDEA's greatest strengths but makes balance harder to achieve. We won't solve this overnight, and in a competitive sector we never fully will. What we can do is create better conditions: clearer roles, stronger leadership, and more open dialogue. It's a starting point, not a complete answer, and we'll keep listening.



# Our people

## Gender Gap & Training

### Gender pay gap

In 2025, we measured our gender pay gap using the Eurostat methodology. The pooled, unadjusted gap stands at +8.76% in favour of men. This number does not reflect unequal pay within roles. In 4 of 5 job categories, women earn the same or more than men. The gap is driven by women being over-represented in entry-level roles and men in the Expert positions. This baseline will be complemented next year by an adjusted analysis.

### Training

In 2025, we registered 917 training hours across our team. 72 colleagues recorded training during the year, while 9 had no logged hours, with an average of 12.3 hours per active participant. This sits below the Belgian sector benchmark, which targets roughly three training days per employee. Training is nonetheless encouraged at IDEA: colleagues can propose their own development paths, most requests are approved, and this is complemented by internal sessions led by our own experts.

Learning at IDEA takes different shapes. The mix was balanced between formal sessions (58%) and shorter, more informal exchanges (42%), reflecting how development happens in practice as well as in dedicated programmes. We delivered 23 internal sessions during the year, with average attendance at 63%. Participation was also skewed toward women (77% of hours), a pattern we want to understand better to ensure development opportunities reach all profiles equitably.

Looking ahead, the official benchmark rises to 4 training days per employee in 2026 and 5 by 2028. Fully matching that trajectory isn't realistic in a consultancy setting, but learning remains a priority. One specific need surfaced this year: stronger project management skills for younger project leaders, which we will address. More broadly, in 2026 we will shift toward smaller, applied formats like peer learning and case-based workshops, embed learning into everyday work, and improve how we track what already happens.

# Our people HR Projects of 2025

Beyond the day-to-day, 2025 was a year of deliberate investment in how we organise and support our people. We want to highlight four projects.

## Talent Management

We upgraded our Development Review cycle into a more transparent and consistent framework, improving the quality of development conversations across the organisation. Alongside this, we introduced a structured Talent Review to identify critical roles, assess performance and potential, and take targeted action on succession and retention. Both processes are now supported by one integrated tool.

## AI-HR assistant

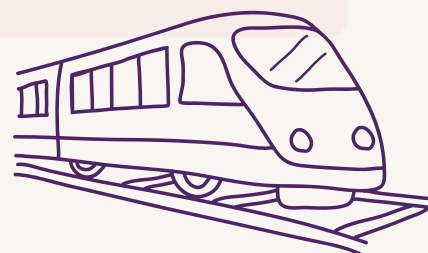
We developed and launched an internal AI assistant 'Louise' that allows colleagues to ask questions about HR policies, benefits, holidays and procedures in natural language and get instant, reliable answers. Less time searching, more transparency, stronger self-service.

## Buddy Framework

We formalised our onboarding buddy system, giving every new colleague a dedicated person for practical guidance, cultural orientation and regular check-ins during their first months. A small investment with a meaningful impact on how welcome people feel from day one.

## Mobility Plan

We initiated the rollout of the federal mobility plan, a first concrete step toward ensuring that colleagues in comparable roles have access to equivalent mobility solutions. The groundwork laid in 2025 sets up a phased rollout from 2026 onwards.



# FUN at IDEA

At IDEA Consult, we genuinely believe in bottom-up energy. People are encouraged to bring ideas forward, organise their own initiatives and shape the culture they want to work in. Our FUN team and monthly yoga sessions are good examples of what that looks like in practice.

## Yoga-lunch break sessions



Once a month since 2019, our largest meeting room swaps spreadsheets for yoga mats at lunchtime: a chance to step out of desk mode, loosen up and reset. A loyal crew has been showing up for years for the calm and focus it brings, with sessions built around the things our bodies actually ask for during a workday: neck and shoulder relief, stress release, desk-friendly yoga movements and so forth...

## Our FUN-team providing us with the goods...

A word from Dune,  
Lead of the FUN-team

"The FUN team aims to bring joy into everyday work life by organising a monthly activity. Sometimes big, sometimes small, but always meant to put a smile on people's faces! We make sure there's something for everyone by mixing up the themes: sports, culture, food, or simply light-hearted surprises like hiding Easter eggs around the office.

In all activities we try to focus on letting colleagues connect with each other, whether it's a New Year's breakfast, a Valentine's 'speed-dating' event with question cards, or after-work drinks planned on days when most people are in the office. We also pay special attention to new colleagues by inviting them to join in early so they can get to know everyone and feel at ease in the team."



Colleagues at opera 'Ali' - 06/11/25

# Our people HR lookout 2026

The work we did in 2025 gave us a clearer picture of where we need to improve. Here is what we commit to.

## Talent development

Updated job profiles and career paths across all categories, a cross-IDEA talent matrix to guide succession planning, and closer attention to junior careers.

## HR & governance

A more data-driven HR practice, an updated HR portal and Louise 3.0, full rollout of our pay transparency work, a validated Gender Equity Plan and GDPR compliance across all HR processes.

## Leadership & trust

A dedicated coaching track for project leads, clearer role expectations across the organisation, and the appointment of a new person of trust.

## Learning

More peer learning, smaller groups, applied formats. Priority topics: project management, evaluation techniques and quantitative methods.

## Employer branding

Stronger internal communication, a more visible presence at PhD job fairs and university networks, and more authentic external storytelling about life at IDEA Consult.

# Our Office

## Energy, waste and consumption

Alongside caring for our people, we aim to make our day-to-day operations as responsible as possible. That means paying attention to mobility, energy, purchasing, catering, and using ICT.

### Energy usage

Our office infrastructure is designed with energy efficiency in mind. Lighting is fully LED, the building has solar panels, and we use green electricity. Temperature control responds to outside conditions, and meeting room equipment switches off automatically when not in use.

Energy use is still an area for improvement. Even in an efficient building, plugged-in devices can cause unnecessary standby consumption. As a knowledge organisation, we also need to pay more attention to the energy use linked to digital storage and cloud infrastructure.

**We will upload our carbon footprint as soon as our energy data is published.**

### Waste and consumption

We also aim to make conscious choices in what we buy and use. Waste is sorted on every floor, and batteries, cartridges and broken IT equipment are collected for recycling. Office supplies carry sustainable quality labels and are ordered in larger batches to reduce transport. Laptops are leased so materials stay in circulation longer.

At the same time, we know practice does not always match ambition. We do not always choose the most sustainable digital accessories, and buying less and buying better still needs to become a stronger reflex in our organisation.

We also try to make thoughtful catering choices through local partners, seasonal options, reusable packaging, bicycle or foot delivery, and standard vegetarian options. Here is also room for improvement: orders still too often include meat, not all choices are local, and last-minute decisions can limit sustainable options.

# Cybersecurity, privacy protection & AI

Responsible ways of working are not only about environmental choices. They also concern how we handle information, data and technology. IDEA therefore works with internal guidelines on cybersecurity, privacy protection and the responsible use of AI. These include a GDPR framework for handling personal data and an internal AI code of conduct that addresses issues such as quality assurance, ethical concerns, intellectual property and sustainability considerations

Our use of digital tools also raises broader ethical questions. AI companies and AI-use raise important questions around data use, intellectual property, environmental impact, bias and harmful applications. We take these concerns seriously. The context around these technologies is evolving quickly and is not always easy to navigate. Within IDEA, an internal AI team is following these developments closely, discussing the ethical implications and continuously exploring alternatives. The landscape is changing fast, and we want to make sure that the tools we use and deploy are the most appropriate ones for IDEA and society.



The IDEA Office in Brussels

# Scaling up our efforts in 2026

As stated at the beginning of this report, sustainability requires honest reflection and acceleration. Based on that reflection, we want to make our internal operations more responsible in 2026, with a focus on three clear priorities.

## Giving back

We aim to use our leverage more actively to support social causes. When we organise something internally, we want to make it a standard question: how can this also create value for a good cause?

## Better food, better choices

We aim to further improve the sustainability of our catering practices. Our goal is to make local and healthy food the standard and to move gradually towards a more plant-based offer.

## Digital footprint

We aim to reduce our digital footprint by making more sustainable choices in our IT equipment and by organising a digital clean-up to reduce unnecessary storage and data use.

## Supporting Streetnurses in their mission to end homelessness - 2026

Our first giving back initiative is secured. In 2026, IDEA Consult colleagues are rallying together to raise funds for Streetnurses: a Brussels-based organisation that has been working since 2006 to end homelessness by providing sustainable housing, medical and social support to the most vulnerable people living on the streets. Some colleagues will run half a marathon, others have already organised bake sales.



Streetnurses visit at our office to explain their mission - 24/2/2026



# Chapter 4

## Just do it

Throughout this report, we have shared actions and commitments for the coming years — in Chapter 2 on our project work and impact, and in Chapter 3 on our people and organisation.

In this chapter we group our ambitions in one consolidated action plan, so you can see at a glance what we commit to from 2026 onwards.

# 2026 action plan

Our 2026 action plan is structured around three pillars.



## 1 Impact moves

The greatest impact we can have lies with our clients. This pillar, which we call big impact moves, is where we support them in advancing the sustainable transition, whether ecological, social, or governance-related. These actions connect to our five impact domains: innovation, sustainable development, digitisation, labour market, and stakeholder involvement.

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## 2 Better ways of working

Guiding clients toward a more sustainable future only carries weight if we walk the talk ourselves. This second pillar focuses on our internal practices, from the choices we make as a buyer to how we look after our people and shape our everyday operations. It covers the suppliers and partners we work with, the working environment we create for our colleagues, and the governance principles that guide our decisions.

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## 3 Fun challenges

Sustainability is often perceived as complex and demanding. With our third pillar, we want to balance that by making it lighter, more tangible, and enjoyable. Through playful challenges, we inspire our colleagues to explore what sustainability looks like in their own everyday lives.

# 9 Action Objectives

All our actions relate to 9 operational objectives.

## 1 Drive systemic change

Actions that foster shared learning, collaboration, and co-creation across teams, partners, and stakeholders to drive systemic change.

## 2 Impact-driven work

Actions that mainstream sustainability across our offers, projects, and internal decision-making processes.

## 3 Social impact assessment

Actions focused on better assessing, demonstrating, and scaling the societal impact of our clients.

## 4 New methodologies & tools

Actions focused on developing, improving or scaling methods, frameworks, and tools that support our projects, services and strategic ambitions.

## 5 Measuring our impact

Actions to foster long-term relationships with clients, beyond project delivery, by improving follow-up, feedback, and impact discussions.

## 6 Strengthening our network

Actions aimed at strengthening IDEA's strategic networks, partnerships, and visibility at European level.

## 7 Sharp communication

Actions that give our work the visibility it deserves, sharper, clearer, and built to be reused, inside IDEA and out.

## 8 Collab with digital team

Actions that bring our project teams and the digital team closer together

## 9 Walking the talk

Actions that reduce IDEA's environmental footprint and strengthen social responsibility and inclusive practice.





## Impact report 2025

Contact:

Jozef II-straat 40 B1

1000 Brussel

T +32 (0)2 282 17 10

[info@ideaconsult.be](mailto:info@ideaconsult.be)

[www.ideaconsult.be](http://www.ideaconsult.be)

Colofon: Bart Vanherck, Elke Thurman, Justine Bauters, Louis Van De Leest