

# AWDC OFFICE SUSTAINABILITY



As the umbrella organization of the Antwerp diamond industry, it is the AWDC's responsibility to lead by example, also concerning sustainability in the office. With about 80 employees, the environmental and social impact of our daily practices has to be managed properly. And even though external stakeholders express few expectations regarding the AWDC as a responsible organization itself, we intend to behave like any good citizen company and be a role model to inspire Antwerp diamond companies to adopt sound social and environmental habits.

In doing so, we aspire to contribute to SDG 12: "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns", and more specifically to:

- **Target 12.7:** Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.

Most of the AWDC's actions regarding office sustainability target energy saving and the reduction of carbon emissions, beneficial for the planet as well as our finances.

## ENERGY:

- Replacement of half of the back roof in 2017 with improved insulation.
- Systematic renewal of the servers in 2016, 2017 and 2018 from 60 to about 25 led to a significant decrease of about 10kW of the consumption by the server room. As a result, the cooling capacity also decreased from 27 Kw to 16 Kw, so this was a double win.
- In 2015, the old high-voltage cabin was replaced (1960), making it possible to remove the transformer with polychlorinated biphenyl.
- For safety reasons, we use halogen-free cables for all new cabling, which also contributes to the environment as it consumes less energy.
- A study has been completed in 2015 by Factor 4 and in 2018 by Magnet Group on the renewal of our air conditioning, which is based on the latest environmental standards; the sustainable upgrade of our air conditioning system is a priority for 2019.

- The smaller air conditioning units have been replaced. They use the cooling gas R32, which has a global warming potential of 677, instead of the previously-used gas R410A, which has a global warming potential of 2088.
- By February 2019, 80% of our lighting will be converted to LED, which will lead to a diminution of our electricity consumption.
- In 2017, we submitted and obtained the dossier for our environmental permit Class 2. The division into classes is based on the nature and importance of the environmental impact, with Class 2 being less polluting activity.

## WASTE:

- The use of containers for confidential paper has improved the selective retrieval of paper.
- Computers are replaced every 6 years, portable phones every 3 years, phones every 8 years, multifunctional machines like copy machines and printers every 4 years. The replaced ones go to 'Out of use' who recycle as much parts as possible.
- Food surplus after events go to the 'food bank' or are made available to AWDC employees.

## MOBILITY:

- We provide 35 guarded bicycle racks for cyclists inside the AWDC building. Cyclists have access to a shower.
- According to the AWDC's travel policy, everyone travels in economy class.
- According to the AWDC car policy, the maximum permitted CO<sub>2</sub> emission for a car is 135gr. The AWDC has a fleet of 15 cars.

The AWDC participates in → '**Samen Klimaactief**', a project established at the initiative of the City of Antwerp to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at offices. Companies can post their projects to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> on this platform (e.g., solar panels, new lighting, double glazing, etc.) and then suppliers/contractors who supply these products can join. At the

AWDC for example, we are converting all lighting to LED. AWDC hosted the launch event of the platform in 2017, with 17 companies attending.

We have no knowledge regarding office sustainability at the 1,600 Antwerp diamond companies, but we try to lead by example. Many diamond companies have a rather old-fashioned mentality and still use a lot of paper, so we strive to make the Antwerp diamond industry a more paperless environment. For example, we encourage diamond companies to digitalize their businesses by digitalizing ourselves, softly coercing them to adjust their own way of doing business. We are currently working on a digital platform to enable diamond companies to consult documents, invoices, floor plans for trade fairs, etc., via our website.

In 2019, we plan to place the sustainability of operations in the Diamond district high on the agenda of our activities, like we did for "Samen Klimaatactief" in 2017. This fits with our endeavor to encourage companies to act for the SDGs.

### SUSTAINABILITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE DIAMOND SQUARE MILE

Our external stakeholders have an outspoken opinion regarding the Diamond Square Mile and its lack of attractiveness.

*"Perception is reality: the three streets of the diamond district are horrible. You feel more in a disreputable low-district area than in a luxury fashion centre like you find in Paris, New York or London. Should we move away?"*

- Stakeholder interviews

*"The streets could be more attractive but it's up to the city of Antwerp to make that happen. Diamond dealers wrongly disregard this current state as they are primarily focused on security. But when you take a look at what other trading centers, like India and Dubai, have done for their diamond sector, you see quite a difference. Antwerp is not only recognized the world around as THE historic diamond trading center but also as the leading one. But it fails to deliver on appearance. And perception becomes reality. Things must change and fast." S.Fischler*

So, the AWDC is well aware that the Diamond Square Mile has lost its attractiveness over the years. This is mainly due to security reasons and to ensure easy passage for the transport of valuables. The district needs to become a modern, sustainable and livable hub without compromising on security. The City of Antwerp administrative agreement

2013-2018 stated that the city would improve the quality of life in the diamond district by introducing qualitative infrastructure projects and refinement interventions. Unfortunately, they never materialized. In its new vision note, AWDC therefore requests the execution of a new Spatial Implementation Plan. At the moment, the new spatial implementation plan is still in the concept phase and it is important that the city conducts an impact study on safety and security before approving it.

Except for some weeds here and there, there is no nature anywhere, nor any benches, etc., in the diamond district. The AWDC wants to change this. At the heart of the diamond district lies a long-vacant lot where the AWDC, in collaboration with the City of Antwerp and in consultation with the diamond community and the owner of the lot, wants to build a pop-up park to bring a touch of greenery between the grey office buildings. The pop-up park would be a step in the right direction toward improving the quality of life and attractiveness of the Antwerp diamond district.



We are in continuous dialogue with the city authorities regarding assistance in restoring the image of the district. We nourish the ambition to turn Antwerp's diamond district into a vibrant and sustainable diamond center.