



# Annual report 2022

You have in your hands the condensed paper version of Sibelga's annual report. It provides an overview of the main projects we worked on during 2022.

If you would like to learn more about these topics, we invite you to consult the web version of this report, available from 21 June 2023.

You will find more detailed explanations and useful links for further information.

We hope it makes for interesting reading!

For more information, visit the website  
[www.sibelga.be/2022](http://www.sibelga.be/2022)







## Sibelga, at the heart of the energy chain

Gone are the days when the energy transition was talked about in the future tense! The change has been underway for several years already. This annual report shows the new face of the energy sector. The changes are clear to everyone: every customer in Brussels now has a public charging point within 250 metres of their home. All 19 Brussels municipalities are supplied with rich gas. Innovations in smart street lighting, such as bubble lighting, are beginning to appear. New forms of green and/or local energy sharing are available to Brussels customers.

The Brussels Region has adopted an ambitious roadmap for climate objectives and carbon neutrality: a shift away from thermal mobility, renovation of buildings and the end of heating oil, to name but a few. Sibelga actively supports their implementation. In the short term, we need to address three main challenges:

1. **Facilitate local renewable energy production**, in particular through energy communities
2. Ensure the **transition to sustainable mobility**, which will be largely electric
3. And, last but not least, **prepare the future of heating in Brussels**

We are not working alone. Sibelga is a link at the heart of a value chain with, upstream, energy producers and suppliers and, downstream, customers, who are asked to play an increasingly active role. The regulator, Brugel, is another key stakeholder. Only by joining forces can we achieve an inclusive energy transition for all Brussels customers.

Moreover, how can we look back at 2022 without mentioning **the energy crisis** we are currently facing? In this context, our role in guaranteeing reliable and quality access to energy for all Brussels customers is all the more essential. More than a quarter of Brussels households are affected by fuel poverty according to the latest barometer of the King Baudouin Foundation. The new ordinance on the organisation of the gas and electricity markets in the Brussels-Capital Region, published in April 2022, has also introduced extended protection measures for Brussels customers affected by fuel poverty.

Faced with this situation, our role as **energy advisor** is more relevant than ever, both for the public authorities through the RenoClick programme, and for private individuals through various tools such as the Energuides magazine or our website.

Finally, Sibelga is actively involved in **energy efficiency** efforts and, as a public company, is setting an example by reducing its energy consumption and making its fleet greener, for example.

All these elements form the backdrop to Sibelga's achievements in 2022. We have divided this annual report into four chapters. The first three chapters reflect the three main focus areas of our strategy:

1. Integrating new uses in networks and markets
2. Facilitating the energy transition for all customers
3. Making internal changes for ever greater efficiency

The fourth chapter explores Sibelga's actions for the safety and well-being of its staff, the environment and support for social causes. These strong commitments, enshrined in our Environmental, Social and Governance policy, actually cover all our activities and projects.

We look forward to building tomorrow's energy landscape with you!

Inne Mertens,  
CEO Sibelga

Faouzia Hariche,  
Chair of the Board of Directors

# An evolving role

Our mission is to **ensure reliable and quality access to energy for all Brussels customers**. Today, Sibelga wants to become a true **partner in an energy transition that is accessible and affordable for everyone**. In order to achieve this vision, some of our roles are being reaffirmed while others are being expanded and diversified:

## 1. NETWORK MANAGER

Ensuring the distribution of gas and electricity to all Brussels customers and managing municipal street lighting: that is our core business! On the one hand, we want to improve the quality of our services to our customers by limiting the impact of roadworks, as well as breakdowns and energy interruptions, thanks to an (increasingly) smart network. On the other hand, as the world moves towards a decentralised and decarbonised model, it is crucial to prepare our infrastructures for the needs of tomorrow.

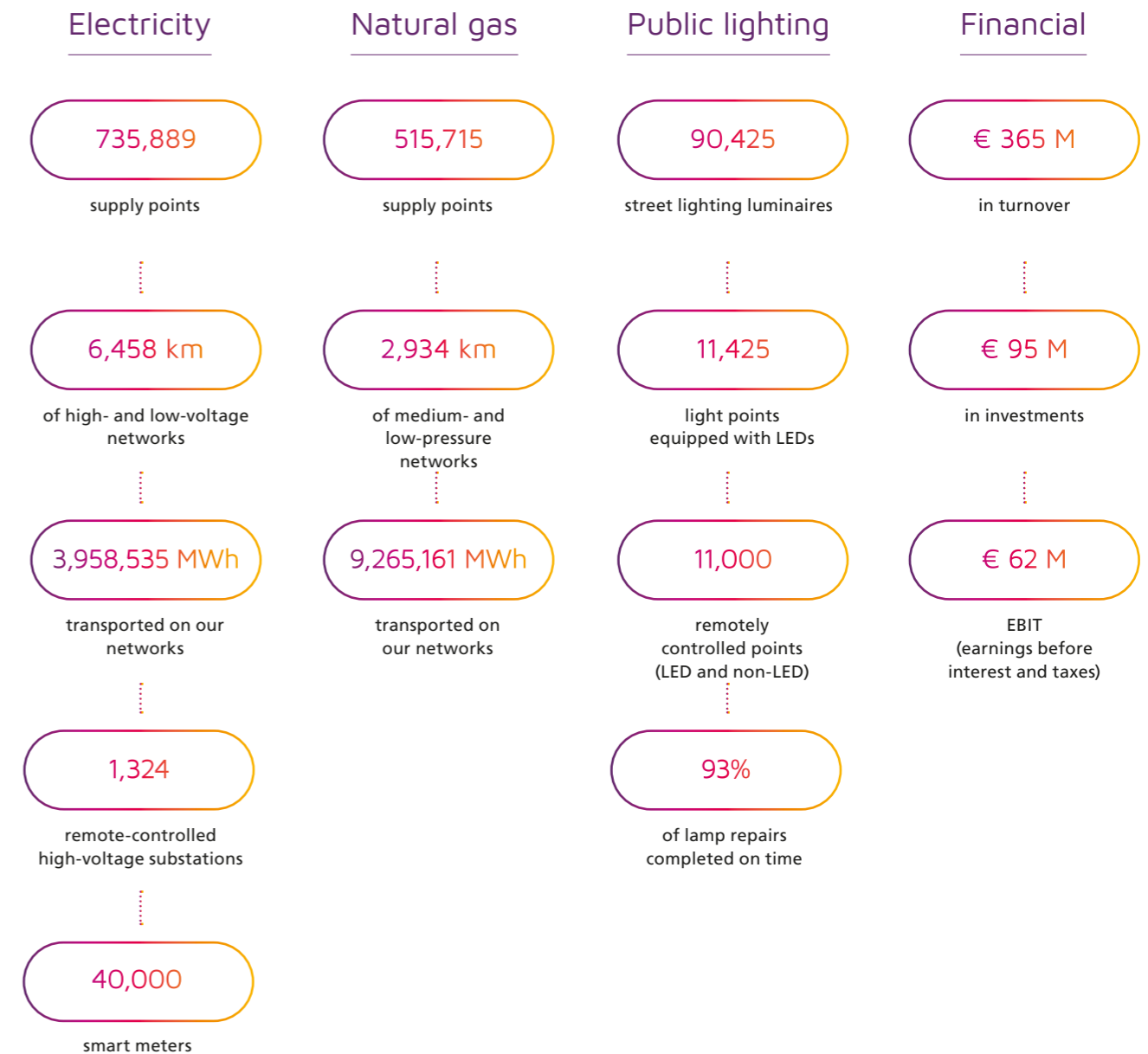
## 2. MARKET FACILITATOR

Since the liberalisation of the energy market and the start of the energy transition, new players have arrived on the energy market. All these actors need data, advice and support. As a «neutral» data manager, Sibelga's role is to collect, validate and transmit the data, while sharing its expertise. In this way, we make life easier for the various market players and enable them to do their job.

## 3. A PARTNER OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

We are driving the implementation of Brussels' energy policies in the field of social protection. At the same time, we are helping public authorities through the «Click» programmes funded by the Region to organise, support and boost their energy efficiency, renewable energy production and sustainable mobility projects.

# Sibelga in a few figures



# 2022 at a glance



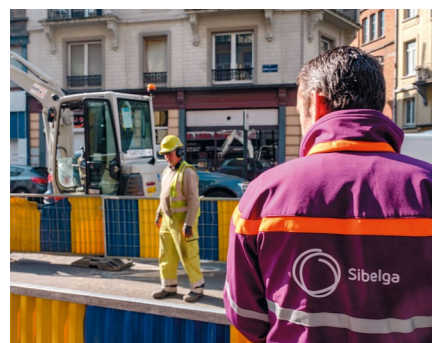
Launch of the central purchasing unit to support local and regional authorities in the energy renovation of their buildings (RenoClick Programme).



Sibelga participates in the Bright Brussels festival and runs the Sibelga Light Market, a meeting place for the people of Brussels to raise their awareness of the energy transition.



Inne Mertens takes up her position as CEO of Sibelga.



Launch of a major Sibelga project on Boulevard de Smet de Naeyer following the redevelopment of the area around the Jette Cemetery.



Since 1 September, all Brussels customers connected to the Sibelga gas distribution network are supplied with rich gas.



In the wake of the energy crisis, Sibelga implements public lighting efficiency measures in consultation with the Brussels authorities.



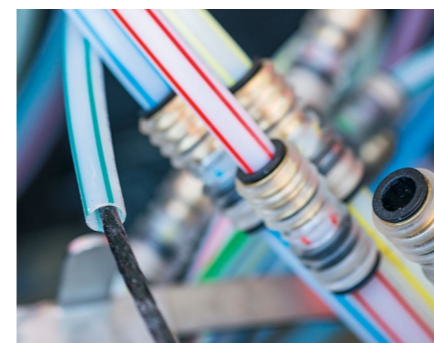
With the support of Sibelga, the ULB launches a Master's degree in Lighting Engineering to train professionals in lighting design.



Sibelga and Fluxys sign a partnership agreement to develop a hydrogen network open to all market players.



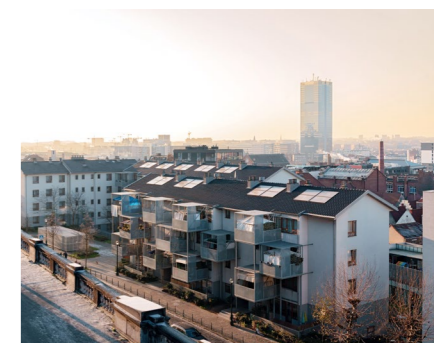
Launch of a taskforce led by Brussels Environment with Brugel, Sibelga and the office of the Minister for Energy to analyse the prospects for heat and cold production in the Region.



On the initiative of the Minister for Digital Transition, six Brussels institutions, including Sibelga, pool their fibre optic networks in order to market the available capacity through a one-stop shop.



Official inauguration of one of the 500 new charging points for electric vehicles installed in Brussels in the presence of the Minister for Energy.



The first peer-to-peer energy exchange in the Brussels-Capital Region is initiated.



# A changing energy landscape

IN THE WAKE OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION IN BRUSSELS, A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES NEED ADDRESSING TO MEET THE FUTURE NEEDS AND USES OF BRUSSELS CUSTOMERS.

## A CONSTANTLY EVOLVING CITY

In 2022, no fewer than **350 worksites** launched to upgrade and renew the gas and electricity distribution networks were supervised in Brussels by teams from Sibelga's Studies and Construction department. Over the course of a year, this represents an average of one to two worksites per working day.

One of the biggest challenges for Sibelga is to make these urban works compatible with the continuity of **mobility** in Brussels, which is becoming increasingly complex and diverse.

In addition, since 1 September 2022, all Brussels customers connected to the Sibelga gas distribution network have been supplied with **rich gas**. This means that Brussels can be supplied with high-calorific gas from countries other than the Netherlands, which will stop exporting natural gas in 2030.

## A CHANGING MARKET

Sibelga is participating in the development of innovative market mechanisms such as **flexibility services** that will enable consumers to play an active role in maintaining the balance on the network. The Belgian federation of grid operators Synergrid, of which Sibelga is a member, finalised a «Flexibility Market Guide» in 2022, which will serve as a roadmap for future market developments.

Moreover, the new ordinance on the organisation of the gas and electricity markets in the Brussels-Capital Region provides a framework for the **sharing of renewable and/or locally produced energy**. In addition to the energy communities, several of which are already active in Brussels, it is possible for a Brussels consumer to share the green energy they produce with another inhabitant of the Region. Sibelga plays an active role in the installation of smart meters and the provision of the consumption data needed to operate these new devices.



## THE FUTURE OF HEATING IN BRUSSELS IN QUESTION

As a fossil fuel, natural gas will probably no longer be usable in its current state in Brussels by 2050. Sibelga is actively involved in discussions on the future of heating in Brussels.

In July 2022, an **energy taskforce** was launched to advise the regional government on the technical and economic aspects of the energy transition options for the coming years. It brings together Sibelga, Brussels Environment, the office of the Minister for Energy and the regulator Brugel.

Sibelga has also commissioned a study from SWECO and Deloitte on the **potential of green hydrogen**, a gas obtained by electrolysis from water and electricity produced by renewable energy. Its results, published in June 2022, confirm that this solution is technically feasible and could meet part of the heating needs of Brussels customers.

In addition, Sibelga and Fluxys, the two gas network players in Brussels, want to play an active role in the future green hydrogen market. In June 2022, they signed a **partnership agreement** to develop a hydrogen network in stages and according to market needs, open to all stakeholders.





# Facilitating the energy transition for all

SIBELGA WANTS TO GIVE EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY AN ACTIVE PART IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION AND TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE ENERGY FOR BRUSSELS CUSTOMERS.



## ACCESS TO ENERGY FOR ALL

Since April 2022, Brussels customers facing **fuel poverty** have benefited from extended protection measures and the supply of energy by Sibelga. As a result of these new measures, Sibelga is acting as a social supplier to an additional 3,500 customers.

Sibelga also played an active role in **managing the energy crisis** that marked 2022. It did so in particular by actively informing customers in Brussels via various media, but also as a manager of public street lighting by implementing **street lighting efficiency** measures in consultation with the local authorities.

## AN INCLUSIVE ENERGY TRANSITION

As at 31 December 2022, Sibelga's network had **40,000 smart meters**. These devices are essential for the energy transition. Not only do they optimise energy consumption, they also make it easier to manage the flows on the network. The new ordinance on the organisation of the gas and electricity markets in the Brussels-Capital Region stipulates the situations in which Sibelga can or must install these meters.

In particular, this technology will give customers better access to their energy consumption data in real time. Sibelga is also developing a **mobile app for monitoring energy consumption** for all residential customers in Brussels.

Elsewhere, Sibelga continues to coordinate the deployment of a **public network of charging points** for electric vehicles, in collaboration with Brussels Environment, Brussels Mobility, Brugel, the VUB and the offices of the Ministers of Energy and Mobility. By the end of 2022, this network will have no fewer

than 1,380 publicly accessible charging points, i.e. 10 charging points per km<sup>2</sup>.

## PARTNERING WITH THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Sibelga is working closely with the Brussels Region to develop services dedicated to public authorities to help them achieve the goals set in relation to the energy transition and greenhouse gas reduction. In 2022, these services were combined into a one-stop shop: **RenoClick**. This one-stop-shop offers, among other things, support to the Brussels public authorities in the thorough and sustainable renovation of their buildings, with the support of NextGenerationEU. In particular, the beneficiary public authorities will be able to use a dedicated central purchasing unit to easily and quickly call on competent partners selected by Sibelga to carry out the studies and perform the work. The RenoClick one-stop-shop also supports public authorities in their heating and air conditioning renovation projects (15 heating plants renovated in 2022),

in the installation of solar panels with their own funds or via a third-party investor and, from 2023, will cover the renovation and insulation of roofs.

In addition, the **MobiClick programme** helps public authorities to acquire clean vehicles and appropriate recharging solutions via a dedicated central purchasing unit. Almost 50 public authorities have already joined the unit.



# Making changes for ever greater efficiency

THE ENERGY LANDSCAPE IS CHANGING, AND SO IS SIBELGA! TO BE IN A POSITION TO RESPOND TO EXTERNAL CHALLENGES, INTERNAL CHANGE IS ESSENTIAL.

## DIGITALISATION TO BETTER SERVE CUSTOMERS

In February 2022, Sibelga launched its **new website**. It provides Brussels customers with a set of practical tools designed to further meet their needs: EAN code search, meter reading history, monitoring of electricity outages in Brussels, calculation of the recharging time for an electric car, etc.

Thanks to digitalisation, Sibelga **simplifies certain specific customer requests**. For example, customers with multiple connection requests for the same project now receive a single offer per project instead of one offer per energy source and per connection.

In 2022, Sibelga also tested the effectiveness of **alternative contact methods** for customers who are absent when their meters are read, and will introduce a multi-channel reminder system to improve customer feedback.

## INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION

Since July 2022, as was already the case for other Sibelga services, the on-call technicians have been using **new digital tools** on a tablet to facilitate information sharing, coordination and task scheduling. To transform the company, a far-reaching cultural change must also take place. As such, Sibelga wants to develop a new **leadership culture** and in 2022 launched cross-functional courses and the first team coaching sessions to drive this new dynamic.

What's more, Sibelga is **reviewing the organisation of its services** in order to integrate the new areas of competence in which it is developing its

expertise. The department in charge of knowledge management, training, methods and technical notes within the organisation now includes units specialising in hydrogen, heat networks, solar panels, heat pumps and connected devices.

## NEXT-GENERATION PUBLIC LIGHTING

In 2022, the Brussels municipal street lighting network will have 11,000 remotely controlled points and 11,425 LED luminaires.

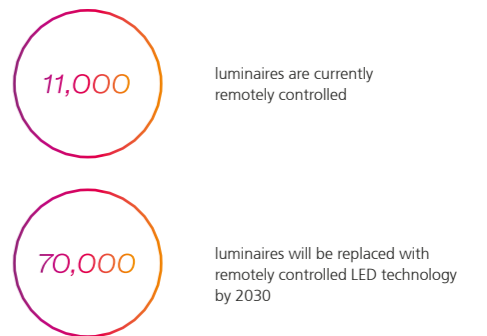
To reduce energy consumption and anticipate the end of light bulb production, Sibelga has drawn up a programme for the complete replacement of its installations with remotely controlled LED technology in 2022. This programme will involve the replacement of 70,000 luminaires over eight years (from 2023 to 2030).

At the same time, Sibelga continues to organise the deployment of modules that allow remote control and the sending and receiving of information in real time from light points, which allows more active management of each luminaire, and therefore energy savings. In combination with the switch to LEDs, a reduction in the consumption of municipal street lighting of around 35% is expected by 2030.

## SHARING INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIMITING URBAN CONGESTION

After initial conclusive tests, Sibelga carried out a study in 2022 which confirms the possibility of deploying charging stations for electric vehicles on public lighting poles and will enable a roll-out to be planned.

In addition, at the instigation of the Brussels Region, Sibelga and five other Brussels public players have decided to pool their fibre optic networks. This operation has enabled the Region to set up a genuine fibre optic backbone, measuring 964 km.



# Sibelga, a responsible company

AS A RESPONSIBLE COMPANY, SIBELGA HAS ADOPTED AN ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) POLICY THAT COVERS ALL OUR ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS.



0 accidents is still Sibelga's objective



10 additional electric vehicles were allocated to employees responsible for meter reading or customer work



## A HEALTHY, SAFE AND FULFILLING WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Sibelga's objective is still zero accidents. In 2022, Sibelga organised **Safety Days** to raise awareness and train technical staff on the specific risks of burns and electrocution. A **shock awareness campaign** featuring injured colleagues was also deployed. In addition, Sibelga is testing a **mobile app** for reporting risks.

At the same time, Sibelga is focusing on the **well-being of its teams**. In 2022, two well-being surveys were carried out and preventive actions implemented: activities targeting nutrition, physical exercise and mental health, workshops for managers on detecting signs of stress.

Finally, following the publication of its **ethics charter** in 2021, Sibelga continued its internal actions to maintain a welcoming working environment for all,

based on non-discrimination, respect and integrity. An audit carried out in November 2022 revealed a very good level of maturity in this area and Sibelga obtained the maximum score in terms of ethics in the Top Employer assessment.

## LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Sibelga is pursuing its efforts to **green its fleet** and reduce travel-related emissions. In 2022, a further ten electric vehicles were allocated to employees responsible for meter reading or assigned work at customer premises. During the summer, five Sibelga employees successfully tested the use of an electric cargo bike for callouts related to gas and electricity meter readings. Moreover, Sibelga renewed the cogeneration plant installed on its Quai des Usines site in 2022. The renewal of this installation triggers a significant environmental gain by its very principle and by the installation of a more heat-efficient cogeneration system. This installation will help cover part of Sibelga's electricity needs.

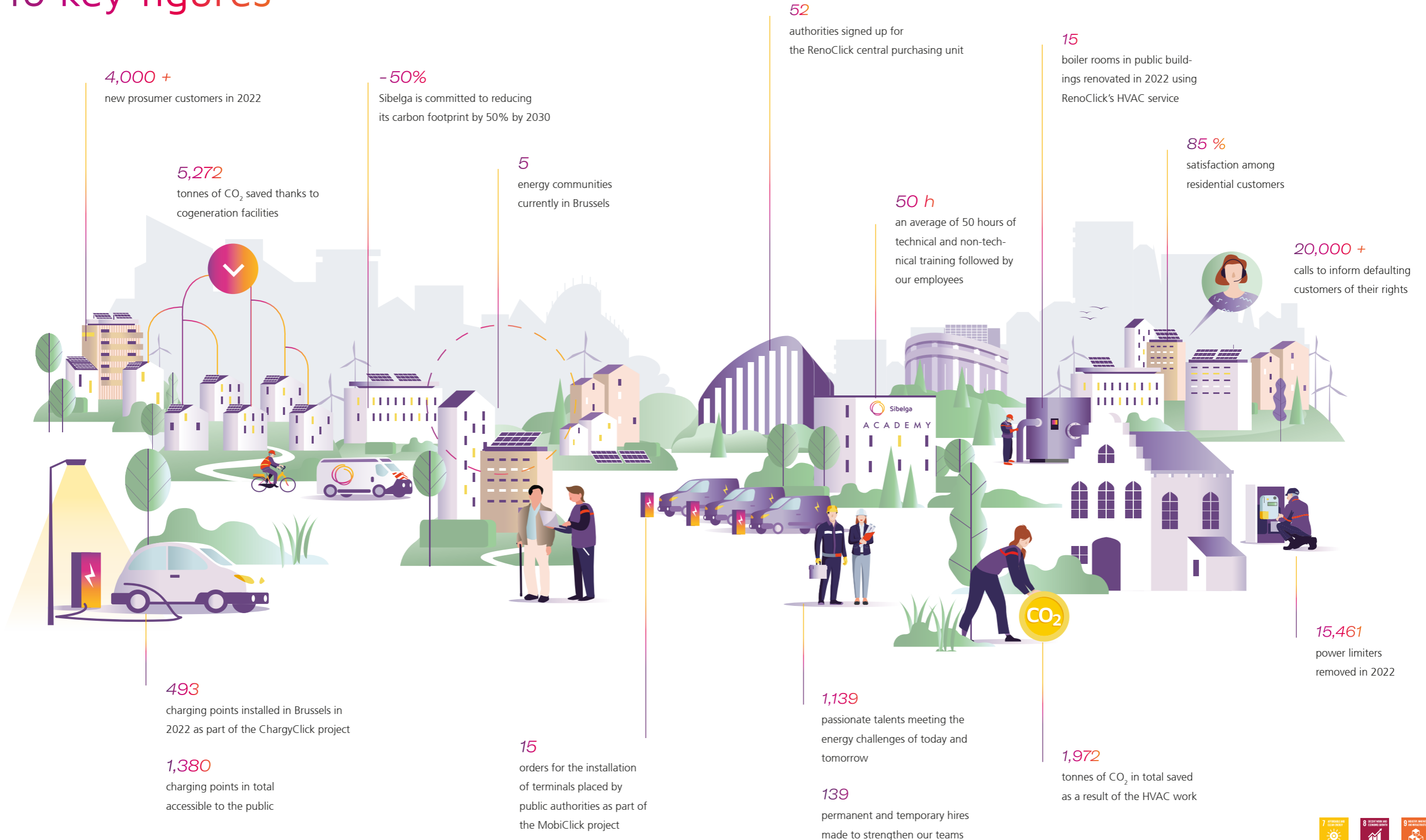
## COMMITTED EMPLOYEES

Throughout 2022, Sibelga's staff once again gave their **all for a good cause** by distributing meals to the most disadvantaged as part of the «Thermos operation» or by running for «Run & Walk for Parkinson» during the Brussels 20K run.

In addition, more than **one tonne of computer equipment and smartphones was collected** from Sibelga and its staff by Out of Use, a specialist in the recycling of computer and electrical equipment. 25% of this equipment was refurbished for re-use and 68% of the equipment was dismantled for recycling.

Finally, in June 2022, Olivier De Ridder and Sebastien Vanhuyse, two Sibelga staff members, installed solar panels in a children's centre in Togo, as part of a **mission with Energy Assistance**. The orphanage and school now have electricity and the centre has better access to drinking water.

# The year 2022 in 16 key figures



# Other perspectives on 2022

We give the floor to our partners and employees to shed light on different aspects of 2022...

GRÉGORY NAVET

Head of Mobility at Sibelga

BENJAMIN WILKIN

Director of Énergie Commune

EVA MAXSON

Consultant at Climact

SOUMAYA IFKIRIN

Head of the Energy Unit of the public social welfare centre of the district of Anderlecht

MIRJAM VAN BELLE

Emergency Planning Coordinator at safe.brussels

CHRISTOPHE TIERCET

Gas substation foreman at Sibelga

Just like the energy sector, mobility is changing. As a public service company, Sibelga must set an example in the shift away from thermal mobility and work towards the Region's zero emission objectives. We are acting on several levels: electrification of our fleet of utility vehicles and company cars, integration of a mobility budget for staff, but also provision of a pool of shared electric vehicles and (cargo) bikes!

As the initiator and manager of two pilot energy-sharing and community projects, we work closely with Sibelga. We are fortunate in Brussels to be able to count on institutional players such as Sibelga, but also such as Brugel, Brussels Environment and our political leaders, who are truly constructive and proactive partners in the energy transition. Their readiness to listen to what is going on in the field allows these new solutions to be developed under the best conditions.

Since 2019, Climact has been supporting Sibelga in reducing its environmental footprint. We calculated Sibelga's carbon footprint and together defined an action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This overall view makes it possible to define priorities in the actions to be taken for maximum impact and also identifies the independent variables over which Sibelga has less direct control.

For several years now, we have been organising energy days in which Sibelga plays an active part. In 2022, instead of one day, we opted for an energy week for all Anderlecht's citizens. Sibelga added real value to this event by informing participants about the procedure to follow when moving house, for example, by explaining how to read their meters and by answering all their practical questions.

Safe.brussels ensures the organisation of a centralised and cross-cutting management of prevention and security in the Brussels-Capital Region as well as the development and support of the actors involved in ensuring the safety of the Capital's residents and visitors. Preparing for emergencies, as was the case during Sibelga's last crisis exercise, is essential. It is also crucial to establish a network between the Brussels institutions. Sibelga is an important link in this chain.

In 2022, I became a gas substation foreman after 15 years in the field as a gas technician. I am personally very satisfied with this progression and it is also a very positive signal to my fellow technicians about the career opportunities available to us. We are fortunate to work in a company that is moving forward by innovating in its working methods, through digitalisation for example, or by embracing new technologies.





