



# Strategy & Design as a force for good

Impact Report 2021



# A message from our founder

I'm very proud that I can share our first Impact Report with you. I'm used to writing these types of reports for stock-listed companies so it was an interesting exercise to do it for my own company for once.

2021 was a special year for Quest. It's the year in which we grew from two to five employees. I'm so grateful I could welcome Diana, Helena, and Yolan to the team. They brought in a lot of expertise and new insights and blended right in.

COVID-19 continued to be a challenge, but we continued to turn it into an opportunity. We continued our international growth path and welcomed amazing new customers like B Lab Europe, Organic Cotton Accelerator, Percent Pledge, Herwin, and many more.

We launched our Impact Scan, a much-downloaded resource to visualize the impact a company is making and we launched a new service to help other companies become a B Corp.

In 2021 we also saw a strong rise in companies and other agencies making claims about impact. Although we strongly encourage this transition and we see a lot of genuine efforts, we also see a lot of opportunism.

So in this message, I'd also like to make one request: we had to come up with the terminology ESG because 'CSR' and 'Sustainability' were no longer sufficient. They were overused, often without real meaning. Let's not screw up the words 'Impact' and 'Purpose' in 2022.

Our goal for 2022 and beyond is to demonstrate that when it comes to impact, we're the real deal. We have the expertise and we walk the talk. This impact report is just the start of the process. 2022 has already proven it will again be an exciting year for Quest. A year in which we will launch new programs, our very own Academy, and even a brand new business, all with the same goal: helping our customers to measure, communicate and maximize their impact. More on that later.

I want to sincerely thank our customers for trusting us. It's amazing to work for such amazing organizations that are pushing change on the highest global levels. You inspire us and make us learn daily. We hope we can push positive change together and grow your impact for many years to come.

And last but not least I want to thank my amazing team who went above and beyond in 2021. It's an absolute privilege to work with all of you.



*Michael Boschmans*

# An International Impact Design Studio

## Who are we?

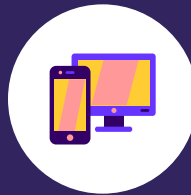
Quest is an international Impact Design Studio combining strategy consulting and creative design to drive positive change.

**We help organizations measure, communicate and grow their impact.** To do so, we offer the following services and programs.



### Impact

Impact Strategy / Impact Scan Program / Impact Accelerator Program / B Corp Certification Program / Fundraising Strategy / Impact Reporting



### Digital

UX Design / UI Design / Prototyping / Motion Design / User Research & Testing



### Strategy

Business Modeling / Positioning / Value Proposition Design / Customer/User Journey / Customer Experience Optimization / User & Market Research / Strategic Sparring Program



### Branding

Logo Design / Brand Identity / Brand Strategy & Experience / Brand Positioning

# Our Manifesto

**We are 100% dedicated to creating and building the brands and organizations above. The ones that are truly meaningful to us and our planet.**

- We design human-centered solutions and experiences that maximize their impact and improve people's lives.
- We study their context before we make them thrive.
- Because the difference is in the details, and life's too short to build something nobody wants.
- We experiment, we iterate and we learn. Continuously.
- We challenge, we simplify and we co-create.

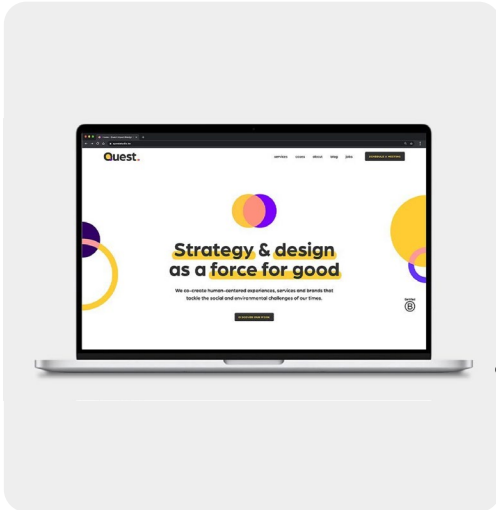
**Great brands and organizations are driven by purpose, not just profit. They understand that business can – and should be – a force for good.**

- They put people first, always.
- They find solutions to problems, not problems to solutions.
- They inspire, evoke emotions and ignite desires.
- They are authentic and transparent, because they can and want to, not because they need to.

**We are quest.**



# Key highlights of 2021



## Change of ownership

In March 2021, Michael Boschmans and former co-founder Jeroen Callewaert decided to end their collaboration. Michael is now the sole owner of Quest.



## New branding and website

Also in March, we launched our new brand identity and website. After 3 years of creating impact globally, growing our expertise, team, and ecosystem, we wanted our brand to reflect our personality better: human(e), accessible, and playfully serious.



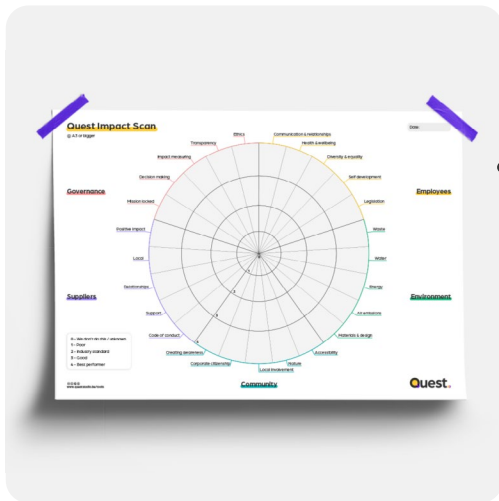
## Further international growth

We extended our (international) growth with renowned new impact-driven customers like B Lab Europe (the Netherlands), Organic Cotton Accelerator (the Netherlands), and Percent Pledge (USA).



## From 2 to 5 employees

We were happy to welcome three new talented people to the team: Diana (Head of Growth & B Corp Certification), Helena (UX & UI Designer), and Yolan (Digital Designer & Developer)



### Launch of our Impact Scan

As of 2021, you can download free impact tools on our website. The masterpiece is our very own impact scan which helps organizations to get an all-around picture of their (and their competitors') current status in terms of impact. This Impact Scan tool is also the foundation for our new 'Impact Scan' and 'Impact Accelerator' programs.



### Launch of our B Corp Program

In 2021 we started helping other companies to join the incredible B Corp movement. We aim to grow this service in 2022.



### Mission-locked

At the end of 2021, we changed the articles of association of our company. Our quest for positive impact is now officially locked in these official documents, a key criterion for certified B Corps in Belgium.



green hydrogen, duh

# Our Customers

We're creating impact globally



## Our key impact areas

For the most part, our clients have a clear purpose integrated into their business model. Impact is an essential part of their DNA. We give priority, though not limited to, the following impact areas:



Climate Tech



Ethical &  
Sustainable Fashion



Happy & Healthy  
People



Sustainable Food  
Systems



Systems Change



**Climate Tech**

Politics has an important role to play in tackling climate change, but so do businesses. New technologies that help reduce our emissions, and innovate current industries are emerging daily, and we want to help them scale their impact asap.



**Ethical & Sustainable Fashion**

B2B and B2C customers are increasingly demanding ethical practices and transparency in the fashion industry. The time has come to reshape the fast fashion business model.



**Systems Change**

It's clear that our system is broken, but lucky for us an increasing number of organizations are pushing for systems change in many different sectors.







### Sustainable Food Systems

Around two billion animals are killed for food around the world every day. The production of our food production is responsible for about 26% of global greenhouse gas emissions and almost 70% of our total water consumption. All while at least one-third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted every year. And yet, every 10 seconds a child dies from hunger. Sufficient to say this needs to change.



### Happy & Healthy People

A focus on (mental) health, well-being and equal rights all around the world has never been as mainstream as it is today. It is our job to make sure it sticks.



# How we select our customers

Quest is known to be rather selective when it comes to the companies we work with. We refused more revenue than we earned during our first year in business. The reason? The projects just didn't align with our vision.

In short: we won't help an organization with a project when we believe:

- ✘ it's a **negative impact project**, causing harm to people and/or planet
- ✘ it's a positive impact project used to **greenwash** the negative impact of a company and that company has no intention at all to make a positive change



## So how do we select our customers then?

For the most part, our clients have a clear impact focus integrated into their business. It's an essential part of their DNA. When a company is a certified B Corp, we also definitely want to work with them since we trust the thoroughness of the B Corp certification process.

Yet, we also often get requests from organizations where the impact focus is less clear. For these cases, we do an internal scan, which includes answering the following questions:

- ✓ Do they want us to work on their branding, website, customer experience, ...? They have to **showcase a clear impact strategy** or agree for us to devise one for them.
- ✓ Do they have leadership buy-in? How do the management team and board **look at impact**? Are they willing to make a – sometimes radical – change?
- ✓ Do they have a **significant say-do gap**? Basically: do they say they (want to) do more than they actually do?
- ✓ Lastly, **are they a fit for our team**? All our team members are impact warriors and wouldn't accept it if we'd work for a company that doesn't align with our vision. So if there's even the slightest doubt, we take a vote.



Yes, we know that by refusing some organizations to become our customers, we're making it more difficult for ourselves. From a strict, short-term financial perspective, we know we make decisions most agencies wouldn't make. And that's ok, because daring to make choices is a crucial component to make the balancing act between people, planet and profit truly work in the long run.

# Cases



» ETHICAL & SUSTAINABLE FASHION



## Fashion For Good

Fashion for Good is the leading global platform for sustainable innovation in the fashion industry. They run a renowned sustainable fashion accelerator and the world's first sustainable fashion museum.



» CLIMATE TECH



## Full Cycle

Full Cycle solves the plastic pollution problem by turning organic waste into a circular and cost-competitive alternative to oil-based plastics. After use, their bioplastics can be upcycled into virgin PHA or fully biodegraded in nature.

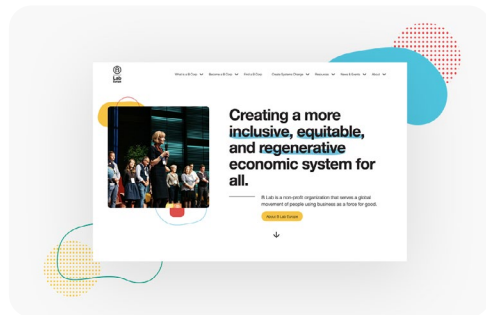


» HAPPY & HEALTHY PEOPLE



## Eight

Eight is a non-profit that offers people in developing countries a basic income. They advocate for unconditional help and try to create a new mindset among NGOs and non-profits.



» SYSTEMS CHANGE

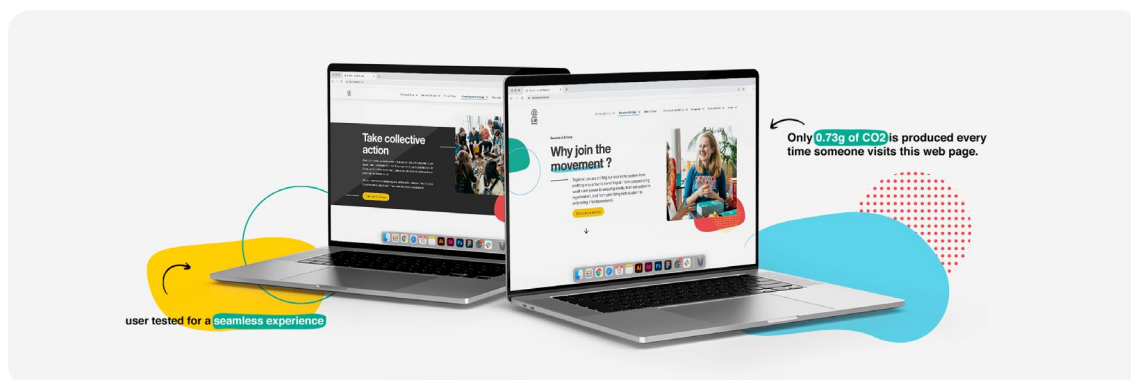


## B Lab Europe

B Lab Europe is part of an international network that creates economic systems change through standards, policies, tools, and programs for business, and certifies companies—known as B Corps—who are leading the way.

# B Lab Europe

» SYSTEMS CHANGE



## The challenge

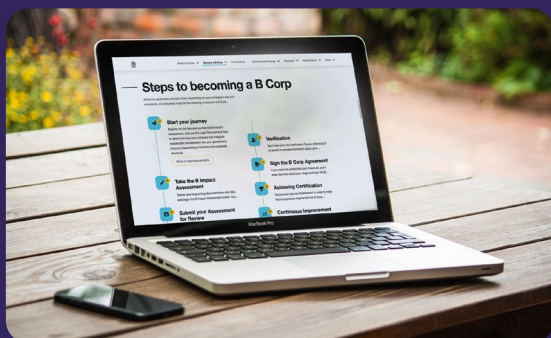
B Lab Europe has the unique challenge of being a resource for a variety of countries, cultures, and languages. We needed to create a clear and simple website that could encourage very different audiences to accomplish the same goal: **to join the movement**. Though B Lab Europe was launching

its standalone website catered to its audiences, we also had to tie in B Lab Global's website mission and goals. We had the added challenge of **balancing global standards** while still launching the website with a **dynamic European twist**. Easy, right?

## Our approach

When evaluating all the different pain points that B Lab Europe had with their previous website, our goal was simple: create a future-proof website that can grow and flourish with the momentum of the movement. To tackle this goal, we focused on three main objectives:

- **Providing clear & engaging information:** An amplification of the movement
- **Improved user experience:** An invitation to get involved
- **A performance-based website:** An improvement for people and planet.

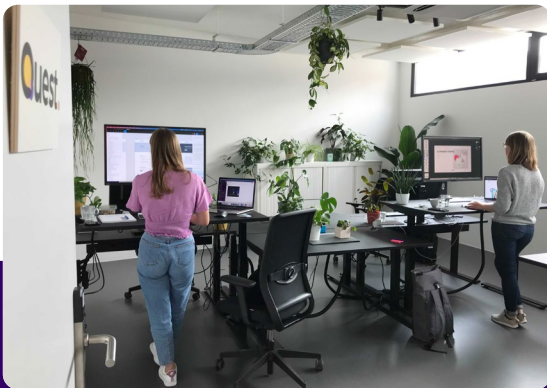


## The result

1. An improved performance score from **86 to 95**
2. A greener web experience ranking cleaner than **59% of web pages**, compared to its previous ranking stating it was dirtier than 94% dirtier of web pages
3. A more accessible website with an **accessibility score of 99**

# Giving back

## Volunteering & discounts for nonprofits



In 2021, we spent **79 hours getting our nonprofit organization off the ground**. To maximize our impact, we also decided to grant discounts to a limited number of nonprofits.

In 2021, these discounts represented **265 hours of work**.

» **344 hours**  
of volunteering & nonprofit discounts

## Mentoring impact-driven entrepreneurs

We regularly accept mentorship opportunities at impact-focused incubators or accelerators. Our **founder Michael is a mentor at the renowned Fashion for Food Innovation Platform**. The Platform offers an accelerator program for the most promising startups driving innovation in sustainability, circularity, and transparency to make all fashion good.

Our **Head of Growth & B Corp Certification Diana accepted a mentorship opportunity** at the brand new 'Beating the Odds' Incubator by Impact Shakers. This incubator is a 4-month fast track for underrepresented founders to launch their impact startup. She is on a mission to see a more equitable and inclusive future, this is one project that aligns with her goal.

## Co-founder as a Service

We also noticed that a lot of early-stage entrepreneurs don't have the resources to pay for our services, while they need us (or a company like us) to reach a level that would offer them that possibility. That's why we decided to allow a select number of entrepreneurs to a **'co-founder as a service' program**. These entrepreneurs are invited for strategic sparring sessions with our founder or other team members.

They can ask any strategic question they have and our team will challenge their ideas or give advice wherever necessary.

With this program, we want to give a selected number of impact entrepreneurs we believe in the benefits of having a co-founder without having to gather funding or giving away equity from the start. We charge an hourly rate for our advice.

## Sharing knowledge & expertise

We want to drive positive change in any way that we can. A key component of our strategy is to make our expertise as accessible as possible. That's why we decided to make all tools on our website freely available for everyone.

In 2021, we also **gave multiple keynotes and training** for students of Ghent University and

Howest, the Fashion for Good innovators, and members of the Womenpreneur Initiative. Topics included: Impact Design Thinking, product-service systems, positioning your impact startup, and an introduction to the B Corp label.

In 2022, we will **launch an Impact Academy** to share our expertise and insights even more.



## Supporting and growing the B Corp Movement

As a proud Belgian B Corp, we do everything we can to support and grow the B Corp movement. In Belgium, The Shift is responsible for boosting the movement, and we're actively supporting them by leading and participating in task forces.

Diana also delivers keynotes on the benefits of B Corp certification or life after B Corp certification regularly. She's also responsible for our B Corp Program, where we guide other companies through their B Corp certification.

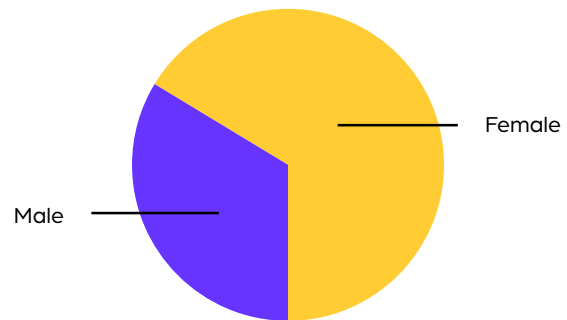
# Our Team

## Our culture

At Quest, the word exclusion doesn't exist in our dictionary. Any person with the right skills and mindset will always get a chance at Quest. All team members are carefully selected to fit purpose + culture.

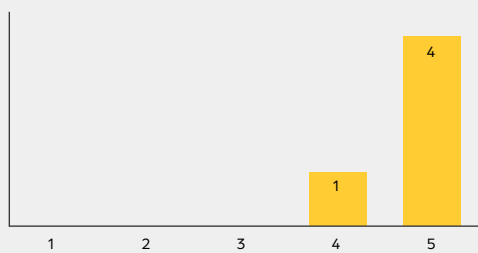
They share several of characteristics:

- Highly driven
- A strong willingness to continuously learn
- Empathetic
- Good-natured
- Open-minded
- Down-to-earth
- A strong personality
- An ever-present sense of responsibility to use their skills as a force for good

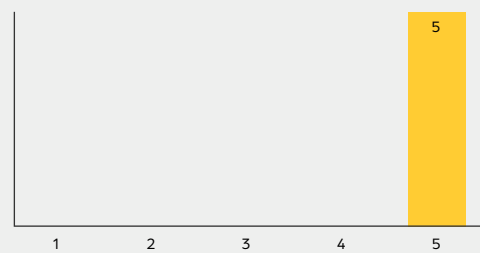


**Transparency is key** in our culture. For us, this means that our founder communicates transparently about strategic choices, doubts, our financial situation, etc. Moreover, the team is involved in all strategic decisions. When the majority of our team, for instance, doesn't want to work for a potential lead, that lead won't become a customer.

I have a good working relationship with my team members



I feel involved





# Health & well-being

We take care of both the physical health and the mental health of all our team members in any way that we can.

## Physical health

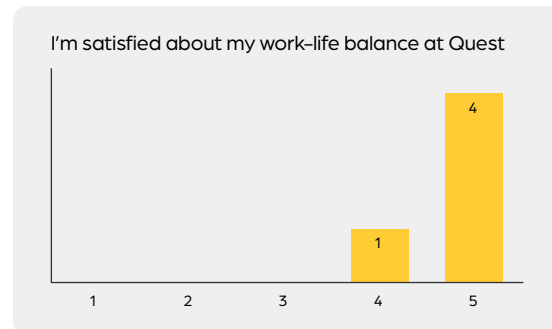
All our team members are covered by our very **extensive hospital insurance**. This insurance also allows everyone from our team to schedule a (virtual) doctor's appointment within max. half an hour. 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

In terms of COVID-19, we've always taken drastic measures before we even needed to. The entire team continuously worked from home during lockdowns. In the office, we can easily respect the social distance of 1.5 m.

In our new private office at Kohezie, the space we work in is also properly ventilated at all times. In the communal areas, **a Miele Air Control system filters 99.995% of all viruses and bacteria from the air.**

Since our move, all team members can work on

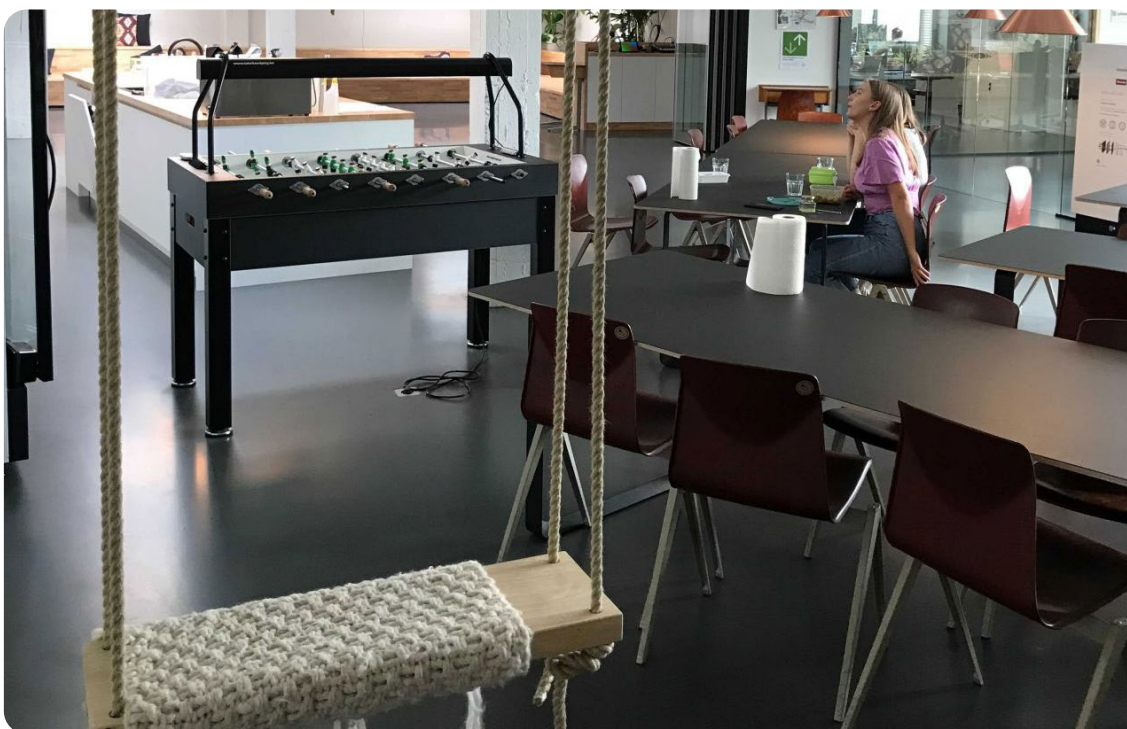
an ergonomic chair and a height-adjustable desk. Employees who needed a new desk to be able to work from home properly also received an adjustable desk from fellow B Corp Fully for their home office.



## Mental health

We focus heavily on finding **a good work-life balance** for our team. People working overtime is something very rare at Quest and we always make sure not to bother anyone after business hours (unless with explicit consent for something urgent).





With COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns, 2020 and 2021 haven't been the easiest years. Lucky for us, we're a very strong team functioning with an open company culture. Within the team, we can talk about anything with anyone.

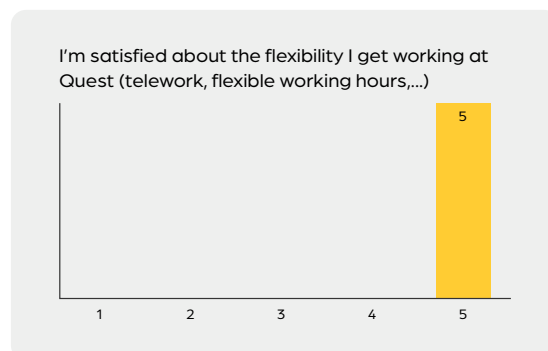
During lockdowns and long working-from-home periods, we scheduled a short (or sometimes rather long) call every morning. To give a recap of what we did the day before and give a summary of what we plan to do. More importantly, these calls were also used to discuss frustrations, make jokes, talk about life. Just like we'd do in the office.

At Quest, everyone's **free to schedule their day as they please**. Want to work from home? Great, we'll miss you though. Want to go for a run during office hours? We'll cheer you on. Need to go to a party early? Ok, but can we join? As long as the work is finished on time and according to our high-quality standards, all team members are given as much flexibility as possible.

With a pool table, foosball table, darts, PlayStation, and board games, our team has access to **plenty of opportunities to relax** whenever they need to. Community tournaments, where all Kohezie community members compete against each other, are organized regularly.

Everyone at Quest also has **24/7 access to a mental health professional** via our hospital insurance.

As of 2022, we will also set up a collaboration with our customer Breathworks: all team members will get unlimited access to a mindfulness platform.



# Our environmental footprint

## Net Zero by 2030



We joined the B Corp Climate Collective and have committed to becoming Net-Zero by 2030, **20 years ahead of the 2050 targets set in the Paris Agreement.**

## Why we're not CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral yet

Let's be honest: it would be rather easy for a small service company like Quest to obtain a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral label. This year, not in 2030. So why don't we do that?

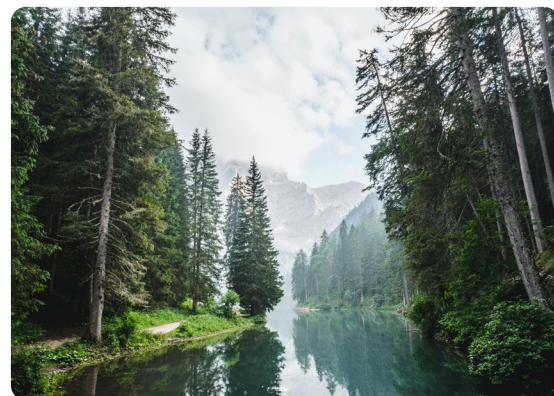
For us, it's just a matter of common sense and investing in the right targets at the right time. Let's do the math. To get a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral label, you have to get an analysis of your environmental footprint by an external expert. The average cost for us: ca. 5,000 EUR.

The result: an analysis of our scope 1 and scope 2 emissions and (in the best case) a reduction plan. We're still emitting CO<sub>2</sub> at the moment so to obtain the CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral label we would have to offset our emissions through one of the many projects available on the market. We know that bigger emitters than ourselves pay around 3,000 EUR to offset their emissions, so let's make an educated guess and say that it would cost us 1,500- 2,500 EUR to offset our emissions.

The total cost of obtaining the CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral label for 1 year: 6,500 - 7,500 EUR.

Now let's analyze the added value of doing this right now:

- **Our environmental footprint is rather limited compared to most companies.** That doesn't mean we don't need to do anything about it, but when determining materialities it's something we have to take into account.
- We already **know what our biggest emitters** in scope 1 and 2 are **and what to do about them.**
- For all of these emitters, we're already doing everything we can given the current context.



When we looked at these facts, we could only conclude that a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral label might help our marketing, but if we're thinking in terms of impact maximization, it's not the best option. We don't believe in having a label just for the sake of it. Right now, we see too many companies using the CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral label they obtained through offsetting as an excuse to not do anything about their real emissions.

At Quest, we want to do things the right way in the long term. So we asked ourselves: how can we better make use of that 7,500 EUR to truly maximize our impact?

For instance: if we'd spend those 7,500 EUR directly on a compensation project, our impact would be way bigger and we'd even be climate positive. Just not officially with a label, but should that stop us?

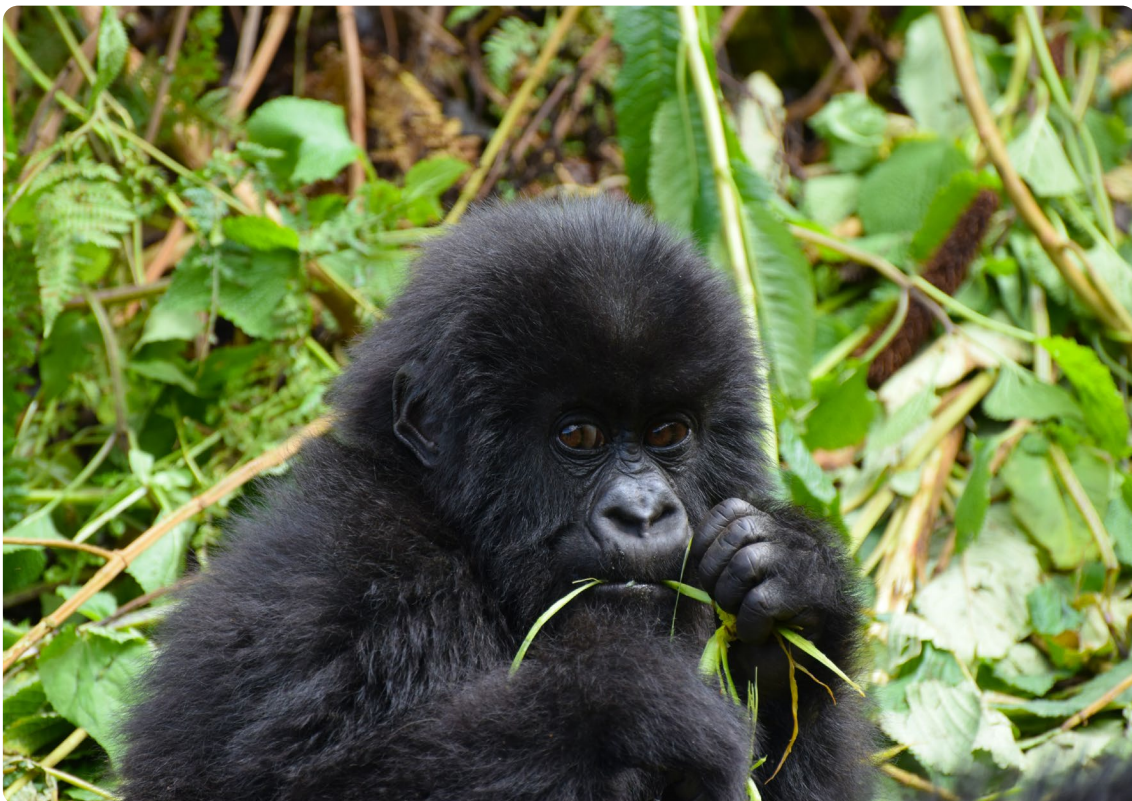
We decided to do things differently and invest in thorough research first before we start our own project in the near future. So in 2021, we gave

our team, and our intern Joana Arhip, a clear assignment: if we decide to go CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral, what are the best practices globally?

And when we say best practices, we mean from an impact perspective, not necessarily from a commercial perspective. Joana created a list of best practices, emerging trends and the best projects to support in case we needed offsetting.

Based on all insights, we decided we want to start a new organization that works on a long-term, structural solution to climate change and biodiversity degradation. To set this up, we use the funds we'd normally have to pay to obtain a CO<sub>2</sub>-label straight away.

Our Impact Venturing Studio will create this new organization with two like-minded partners in purpose. The identity of those partners and the goal of the organization has to remain a secret for now, but we aim to launch this new business in 2022.



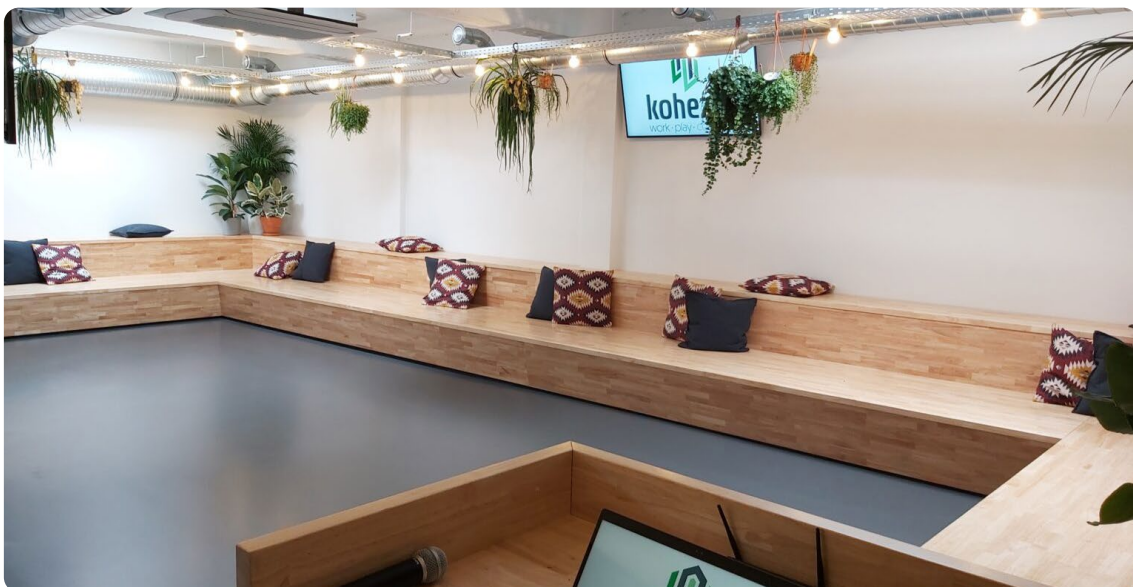
## Energy

Energy is what caused most of our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2021. We do everything we can to limit these emissions, by buying energy-efficient equipment for instance. But we're also limited by the fact that we rent an office in a co-working space.

That being said, we made a very big change in terms of energy-efficiency by moving to our new office in Kohezie. At Kohezie:

- We heat and cool the office using very efficient heat pumps (cf. gas in the former office)
- Unfortunately, there are no solar panels on the roofs (yet), but all the energy purchased by Kohezie is green.

Kohezie is in talks with the city of Ghent to discuss the possibility of installing solar panels on its rooftop.



## Mobility

All employees come to the office by train, by bike, or even on foot. Those who come to the office by train receive full reimbursement and a foldable bike. Those who come to the office by bike are given an above-average compensation of **0.24 cents per km**.

We try to limit our transport to customers and partners as much as we can. If we have an external meeting, we use public transport or our electric company car. Quest leases a Tesla Model 3 which is always fully powered by the solar panels on our founder Michael's home.

Up until the end of 2021, it hasn't been necessary for us to take a plane to visit our customers abroad. Given our strong international growth, we understand that soon we'll probably need to regularly hop on a plane. When that happens, we guarantee that we will :

- always look for greener alternatives first
- keep plane flights to a strict minimum, and follow best aviation emission practices
- offset the emissions from our flight

## The carbon footprint of our digital products

Most of the emissions resulting from our services are already covered in the energy and mobility chapters.

However, we also have to take the emissions caused by websites and apps throughout their entire lifecycle into account. In 2021, we strengthened our focus on creating sustainable digital solutions. The website we made for B Lab Europe is a solid example of our approach.

While we delivered a website with more content and a strongly upgraded user experience, we succeeded in heavily **decreasing the environmental footprint of the website**.

In 2022, we will continue to look for new ways to decrease the negative impact of our digital solutions (including our own website). We want to play a pioneering role in this field.

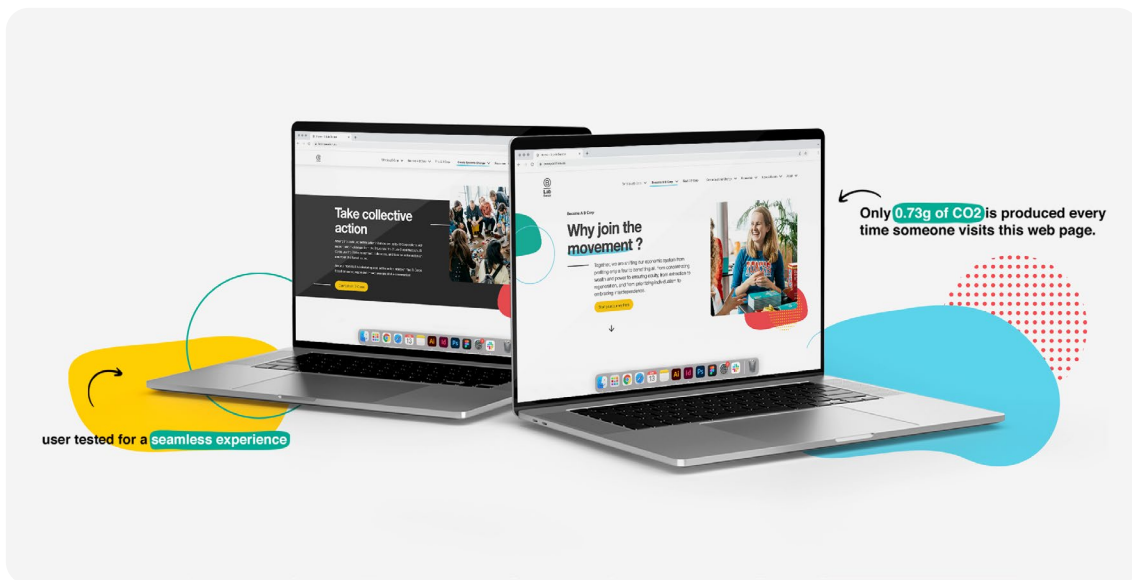


Image: Carbon footprint of B Lab Europe



# Governance

## Mission locked

At the end of 2021, we changed the articles of association of our company. Our quest for positive impact is now officially locked in these official documents, a key criterion for certified B Corps in Belgium.

## Code of Ethics for employees

All employees at Quest have to sign a Code of Ethics. This Code offers our employees guidelines on:

- treating their peers equally and with respect
- creating a safe and comfortable work environment for everyone
- conflicts of interest
- handling confidential information and intellectual property

- using company assets
- thinking and acting sustainably
- how to report any type of violation

So far, we haven't received any complaints and we hope/expect this will remain the same for a very long time.

## Code of Conduct for suppliers and partners

We ask our suppliers to sign a Code of Conduct. By signing this, we're not asking them to become a fully purpose-driven organization like we are (would be a smart move, though).

We're asking them to be, at a minimum, humane. We work with suppliers that act with integrity and treat everyone, from their employees to their customers, like they'd like to be treated themselves.

Our suppliers are selected based on:

- the quality they can deliver
- their compliance with this code of conduct
- our personal connection with them

Fellow B Corps and local suppliers that go the extra mile (e.g. to reduce their environmental impact or increase their social impact) and can deliver the quality we expect, will always have our preference.



# Questions?

**We're at your service!**



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