



# Niko and environmental care 2013

**niko**  
*Illuminating ideas.*

# Investment in the environment and the future

Environmental care is an **essential part of Niko's general business strategy**.

Investing in the environment is an investment in the future. We take responsibility by reducing the impact of our industrial activities on the environment as much as possible. We take this **even further than what is legally required**.

Environmental care is part of all our business processes, from product design to the last stages of a product's life cycle. Our extensive waste management policy helps reduce our environmental impact considerably. In addition, our products increase energy-efficiency for end users and help them reduce their energy bill.



# Our mission

## **Solutions for an ever-changing world**

Our society is changing more rapidly and more drastically than ever before. At Niko, we design and develop solutions in line with current trends.

### **Trend 1: environmental care**

The environment is under increasing pressure, for which each one of us is responsible. The energy-efficiency of residences and buildings must improve. The solutions we develop provide an answer to this search for a new lifestyle with a reduced impact on the environment.

### **Trend 2: flexible living**

Family situations are ever-changing. We no longer live in traditional role patterns and our pace of life has increased dramatically. These days, people want more and more individual solutions. That is why we offer solutions to suit any lifestyle. Homes can now be customised to the ever-changing requirements and personal habits of their residents.

### **Trend 3: growing older at home**

Each new generation has the prospect of a longer, healthier life. The number of people reaching the age of one hundred years and over is increasing every day. Our society needs to be reorganised to be able to care for our elderly. Homes need to be adapted to their needs. Our home automation solutions provide people with the care they deserve, which allows them to grow older in the comfort of their home.

### **Trend 4: living in comfort**

We always want more comfort. We want to feel good, safe and cared for in our own home. Using solutions developed by Niko, it is easy to adapt residences and offices without modifying existing structures.

# Environment and energy

For more than 20 years, we have been actively implementing an environmental policy to reduce the impact of our industrial activities on the environment. We take this even further than what is required under Belgian legislation.



## Eco design

Eco design means that during the **development stage** of a product, **environmental aspects** are taken into consideration in addition to more traditional criteria (such as functionality and design). All elements of the lifecycle of a product are taken into account: from resource extraction to the moment the product is no longer used. Eco design works, as proven by our latest range of switches.



## Limited air pollution

We are one of few companies in Belgium who use a **bio filter** to capture and biologically degrade pollutants from our lacquer production line. Bacteria that are located in four containers with bark from trees convert hydrocarbon into neutral elements. This means that 20,000 m<sup>3</sup> of purified air is released every hour.



## Green energy

Niko uses green energy 100% of the time. More than 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> of **solar panels** have been installed on the roof of our production halls, providing us with more than 850,000 kWh of electricity each year. This means we produce 1/12th of the energy we require on-site. We also believe in purchasing green energy.





The bio filter purifies 20,000 m<sup>3</sup> of air per hour.



Our extensive waste management policy helps reduce our environmental impact considerably.

## Waste management

Our waste management policy has been based on the **Lansink ladder** for more than 10 years now. This ladder offers an order of preference for an active approach towards waste management. The top step of the ladder represents the most environmentally-friendly way while the lowest step represents the least environmentally-friendly way. More specifically, this means that one must first **prevent** waste production, or at least **re-use** waste. If this is not possible, then waste should be **recycled**. The next option is waste combustion with energy recovery. The least desirable option is waste disposal.

For each one of our waste materials, our goal is to remain at one of the top steps of the ladder. Our extensive waste management policy has helped us **reduce the amount of waste that needs to be disposed** to a considerable degree.



Lansink ladder

Some examples:

- In the past, liquid stain residue (30 tonnes/year) was removed to the waste disposal tip. Today, we use this product as a resource in our water treatment installation to acidify the pH.
- To reduce timber waste, we ensure that our wooden pallets are collected, repaired and reused.
- We use a better sorting system for our plastic waste materials (P.C., PA, ABS, etc.) and we reuse these materials without loss of quality. This way, we have been able to limit our residue waste to 20 tonnes.
- We have improved our waste collection plan, which helped us reduce our residue waste by 30%.

## Wastewater treatment

Our physicochemical water treatment system removes heavy metals and strong acids and bases from the wastewater from our galvanising line via a process of detoxification-neutralisation-drainage. The treated wastewater is then disposed of via sewers.

## Bio-circle

We make use of the Bio-circle technology in our tool production line. Bacteria biologically degrade oil and grease from machine parts and equipment. Bio-circle fully replaces the former removal process using solvents. We no longer produce waste from degreasing processes.

## Less waste

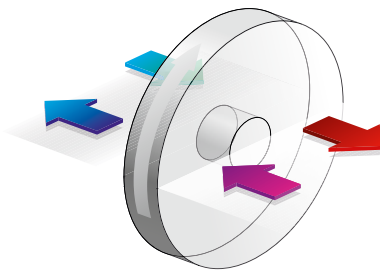
Our goal for 2013: produce **30% less waste** at our production facilities in Sint-Niklaas. Waste includes any products that fail to meet our quality standards. It also includes repair time, recounts, delays due to wrong parts, etc. It is an ambitious plan that we work very hard on and in which all employees at our production facilities are closely involved. Our current status is visualised at all times in the lunch room. This way, we can all see the progress we have made and remain committed to our goal.



# Rational energy consumption

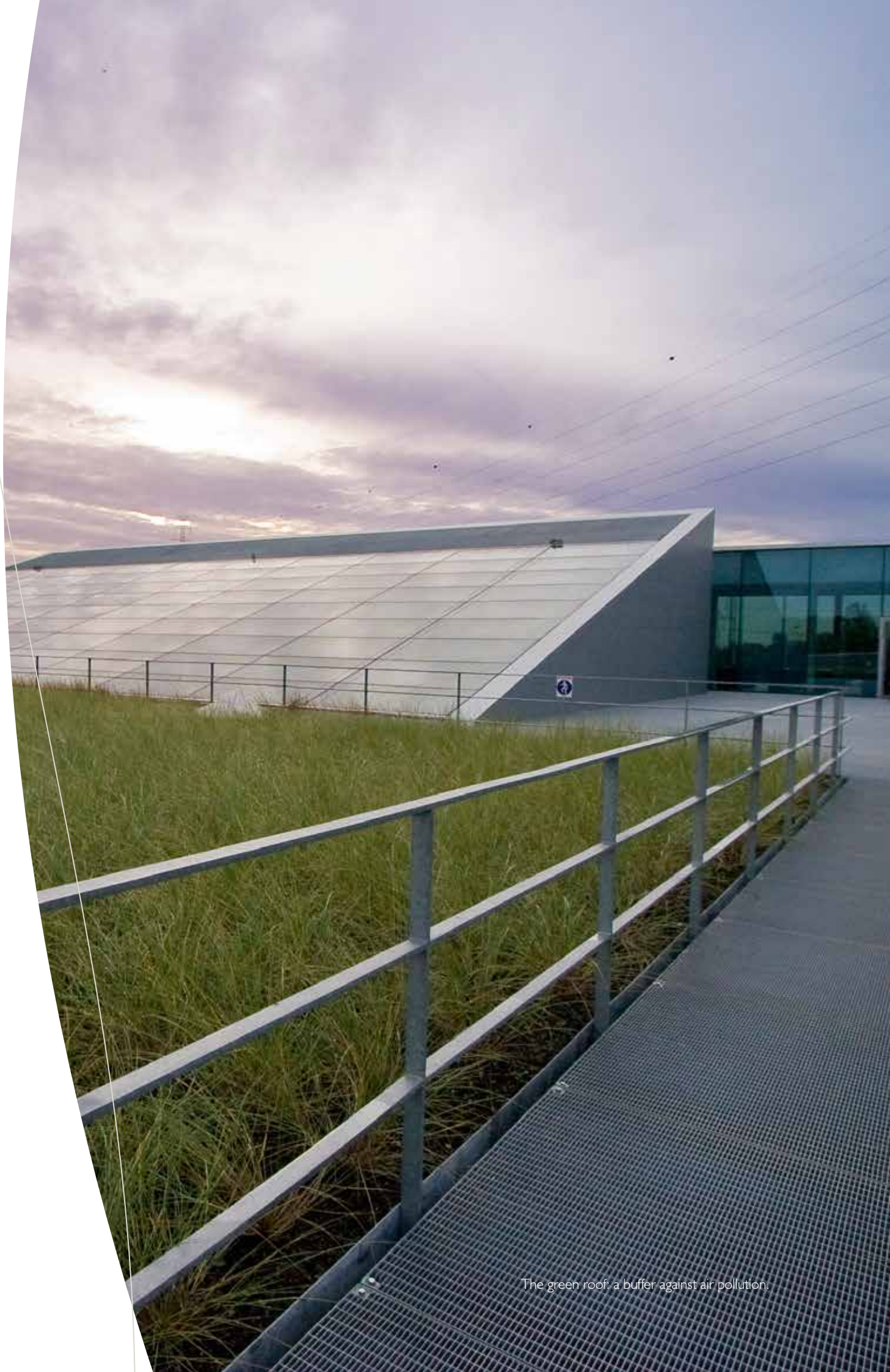
When we were renovating our office building in 2006, we implemented **seven energy-saving measures** to reduce our emissions and to increase the comfort of our employees at the same time.

- In our offices, only **energy-saving lights** are used. By using **motion** detectors, the lights are never on longer than needed. Our **automatic lighting control** system ensures that lights are switched on in function of the amount of daylight available in a certain room. By combining these three functionalities, our energy consumption has been reduced by more than 50%.
- A **thermal wheel** provides good ventilation and reclaims heat and cold, which in turn reduces heat losses by 80%.



- **We have installed cooling ceiling systems.** This energy-saving technique circulates cold water in spiral-shaped tubes that are built into lowered ceilings.
- We have installed **super insulated glass** everywhere, with a K value of 1.1. The glass offers great noise and heat insulation.
- Thanks to the automatic window shutters, our offices remain cool for longer during summer and we can make optimum use of the available heat from the sun and daylight during winter.
- We use approximately 250 m<sup>3</sup> of **rainwater** for our sanitary facilities. Catching the rainwater and reducing the amount of rainwater that needs to be drained away decreases the burden on the sewer system and prevents flooding.
- Our **green roof** has a total surface area of 1,005 m<sup>2</sup> and offers several benefits:
  - it provides better insulation and therefore reduces energy consumption
  - it blocks out environmental noise, thus reducing noise nuisance
  - it extends the lifespan of the roof covering. The plants protect the roof against UV rays and temperature fluctuations.
  - it absorbs small dust particles from the atmosphere and therefore provides a buffer against air pollution.





The green roof: a buffer against air pollution.



### Environmentally-friendly administration

Our aim is to reduce our ecological footprint as much as possible, not only during our manufacturing processes but also in other areas of our business.

- We use FSC-certified printing paper.
- To reduce the amount of paper used, invoices, acquisition and order processing are all done digitally.
- In the autumn of 2012, Niko switched to electronic wage slips. Employees can choose whether they wish to receive their wage slips electronically. As of today, 50% of our employees opt to receive the digital version.
- The standard setting of our copiers is set to double-sided printing and copying. In 2011, this reduced our paper usage by 44% in comparison to 2008.

### Mobility plan

We promote **alternative means of transport**. Each day, 450 Niko employees commute to their work site. We aim to reduce this impact on traffic and on the environment as much as possible by implementing a number of measures to encourage our employees to use alternative means of transport.

- Carpoolers can easily make arrangements via the Niko intranet site. A number of parking spots are reserved for those who participate.
- Employees who travel to work on bicycle receive a 10% increase in their bicycle commuting reimbursement.
- Bus and tram commuters only pay 20% of their commuter costs. The other 80% is paid by Niko.
- Train commuters travel free. We pay 80% of their commuter pass, while the government pays the other 20% through their third-party payer system.

Our **policy on company cars** promotes eco-thinking and is based on the level of CO2 emissions. This motivates our employees to opt for a more environmentally-friendly vehicle.

### Code of conduct

All our suppliers sign a **code of conduct**, in which they declare that they will observe the legislation of those countries they operate in. However, Niko's code of conduct goes one step further, by stipulating that our suppliers must actively:

- reduce their waste and emissions as much as possible
- handle, store and process chemicals and hazardous waste in an environmentally-friendly manner
- contribute to the recycling and reuse of their materials and products

We closely monitor the observance of this code of conduct by our suppliers. We also conduct site visits both before and after the agreement is signed. During these visits, we verify that our suppliers meet all the requirements.



# East Flanders Environmental Charter

Each year, Niko participates in the East Flanders Environmental Charter, which encourages businesses to implement environmental actions under 10 environmental themes. Participating businesses commit to achieve measurable results in one year's time for at least 4 of those themes.

In 2013, we received the Environmental Certificate for the 12th time. It confirms our continued efforts and commitments from the past 12 years. This year, we are working with 7 themes.

1. We have defined **key performance indicators** and accompanying actions for improvement. This means we actively monitor our usage of electricity, groundwater, natural gas and printing paper. We have used 20% less groundwater by installing automatic taps. We have also reduced the amount of waste to be processed and waste for recycling by 30%.
2. To **prevent soil pollution**, we have added a new epoxy coating on the floors in our metal department. In our galvanising and metal departments, we have also installed new containment basins for hazardous liquids.
3. We have made even bigger efforts to **prevent waste**. By introducing a new degreasing process in our galvanising line, we are producing 40,000 litres less of polluted degreasing solvents. We have optimised the efficiency of the water curtain in the lacquer production line, which means we no longer need to dispose of wastewater containing solvents. Before this, we used to dispose of 20,000 litres/year. By dewatering the sludge from our water treatment system in a better way, we are generating 20 tonnes less sludge per year. And by optimising our moulds for plastics, we have been able to reduce the amount of plastic waste by 6 tonnes per year.
4. With regard to **rational energy consumption**, we have installed motion detectors to automatically switch the lights in the production halls on or off.
5. We have further **optimised our acquisition procedure**. All orders and order confirmations are now processed digitally.
6. By purchasing new grinding machines with an improved dust removal system, the **air purifying system in our metal department has improved dramatically**, and emissions are now entirely free from grinder dust.
7. In our thermal hardening department, we have been able to reduce noise nuisance levels from 90 to 82 dB(A) by using noise insulation in all deburring drums.

We continue our efforts throughout 2013 to ensure that we will receive this certificate again in 2014.









TOUCHSCREEN





# Sustainable product range

Environment is not the only thing on our mind when we develop and manufacture new products. We also develop several products to assist people with a more energy-efficient way of living.

Indoor and outdoor **motion detectors** can be used for automatically switching lights on or off. The light will switch on as soon as someone enters the room and will automatically switch off when everyone has left the room. This saves a great amount of energy as the lights are only on when needed.

Our extensive range of **LEDs** (LED strips, orientation lighting, LED dots, etc.) also helps reduce your energy bill. LED lights are more reliable, more shock-resistant and last longer than traditional lights. They are also extremely energy-efficient. They produce almost no heat and only require a very low wattage to produce just as much light as traditional incandescent bulbs.

Dimmers will help you reduce your energy consumption as well. Niko's **universal dimmer plus can dim any type of dimmable light**, including dimmable energy-saving bulbs and LEDs. This is Niko's answer to the rising trend of energy-efficient and budget-friendly energy-saving bulbs and LEDs.

In addition to individual products, we offer **Niko Home Control** – an electrical installation that allows people to monitor and actively reduce the energy consumption in their home by 5 to 15%. From the **eco-display**, you can read how much electricity, water or gas you are currently using and how much power your solar panels are producing. Simply press the eco-button to set all the functionalities in your home to the eco-setting and instantly reduce your energy consumption. It ensures that appliances and lights are switched off if they do not need to stay on while you are away. The heating will automatically be set to a lower setting and ventilation will be set to the lowest level. Add to this our **remote control service** to monitor your energy consumption and production remotely. If the standby power consumption in your home is too high or you forgot to switch off some lights, for instance, then you can simply adjust the settings remotely via your smartphone or tablet.



reddot design award  
product design 2011

Ecodisplay

Niko Home Control includes other ecological functionalities as well. **Zoned heating** allows you to set individual heating settings for each room at different times of the day. Heat your bathroom between 7 and 8 a.m. and from 8 p.m. onwards only for instance. Zoned heating will reduce your heating bill considerably: up to 14% in new, detached dwellings or townhouses that are insulated in line with current standards, and up to 18% in renovated, detached dwellings from the 1980's.

Our latest Niko Home Control electrical installation lets you operate and monitor all functionalities within your home from one central location: lighting, heating, ventilation, roll-down shutters, etc. Actively save energy and create more safety and comfort in your home.

Niko is the market leader in Belgium and produces solutions for switching material, access control, lighting control and home automation from its headquarters in Sint-Niklaas (Belgium). Niko invests heavily in research and development as part of its ongoing commitment to focus on well-considered design and to produce the highest quality products in an environmentally-friendly manner. Niko's design philosophy is to consistently create the most innovative, aesthetically pleasing and user-friendly products on the market today. The company is actively expanding into new markets, employs more than 630 people and has an annual turnover of more than 125 million euros. Currently, Niko has offices across Europe: Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Denmark.

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