



den  
berk<sup>®</sup>  
DÉLICE

# Our Sustainability Strategy

2030



# Your fresh retail partner



## Introduction

In 2014, 4 top Belgian growers decided to join forces. They combined their experience, know-how and expertise for a single approach to the customer.

And with great success. Initially formed out of genuine friendship and a shared drive and ambition, Den Berk Délice has since gained a comprehensive perspective of the sector, strengthened by its unified purpose. This has provided the opportunity to both scale up and specialize, with the ongoing goal of building a future-ready company by producing with the lowest possible environmental impact and by creating a pleasant and safe work environment.

With our experience in the world of tomatoes, as well as extensive research into concepts and packaging, we can venture as far as describing ourselves as a professional partner for the retail sector. With a focus on working together with the retail sector for an optimal return and with the goal to increase the vegetable consumption, we stock tomato shelves with consumer-oriented concepts we have created and strive to fill in gaps in product range.



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# What sustainability means for Den Berk Délice



Sustainable entrepreneurship means building a future-ready business for Den Berk Délice. This means a financially healthy company that can continue to invest in a better, healthier and greener future. We aim to do good for both present and future generations and we will do this in a way that really fits our organisation, enabling us to effectively create a positive impact. Innovation and strong partnerships, both core values of our organisation, will play crucial roles.

As today's world becomes ever more complicated, we are faced with a series of challenges. Consider climate change and the increasing legislation that comes with it, war and geopolitical tensions leading to fluctuating energy prices and the war for talent. However, other developments represent opportunities for Den Berk Délice, such as the increasing demand for healthy and snackable foods.

To seize those opportunities and prepare for the climate-neutral economy of tomorrow, we have developed this sustainability strategy. We based our strategy on a double materiality analysis, in line with the European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). This allows us to take responsibility throughout the entire value chain.



# Our sustainability history



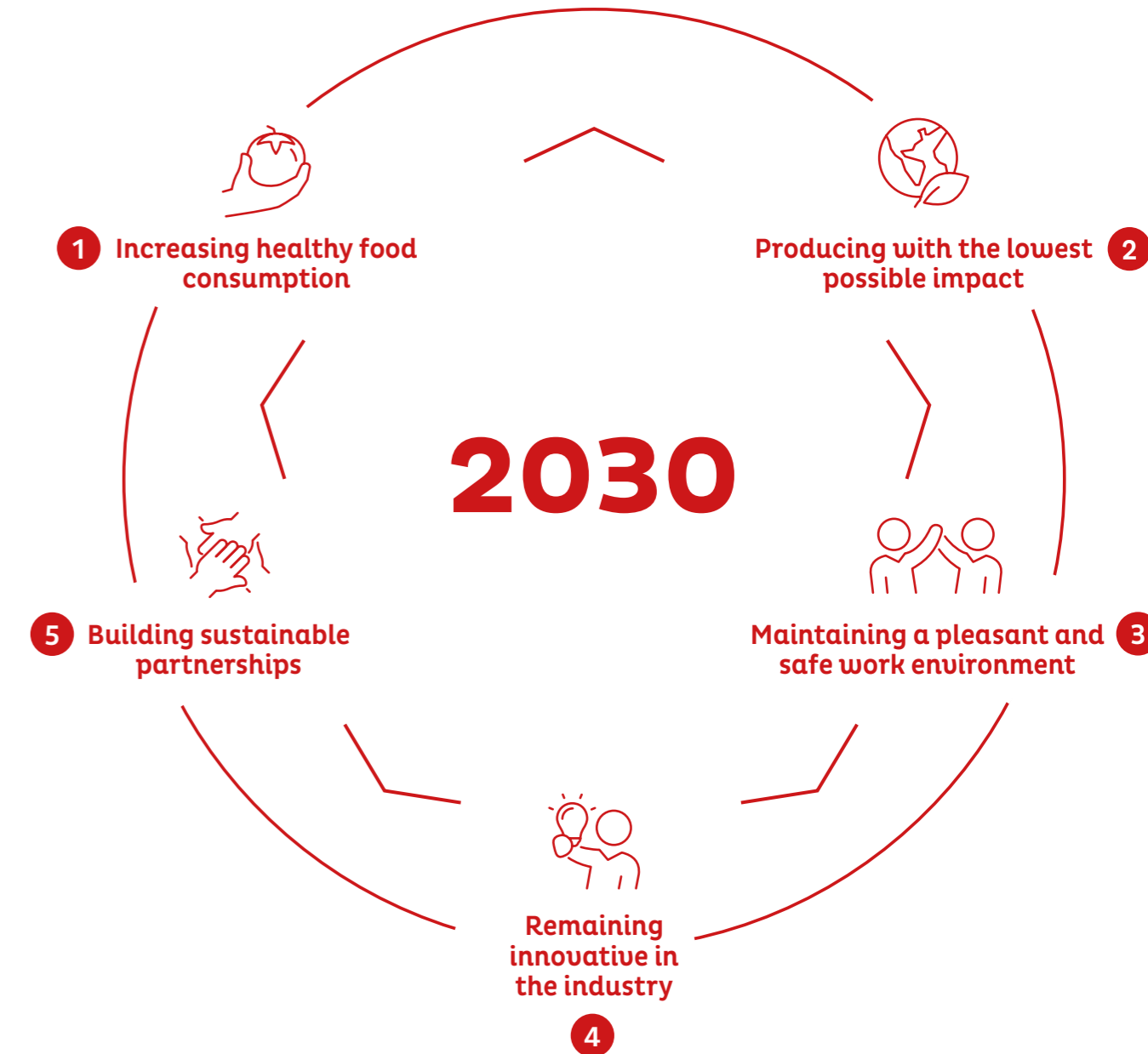
# Analysis of future steps

Regardless of the steps taken in the past, we want to raise the bar even higher. In 2024, we undertook the exercise of analyzing our double materiality. This exercise is required by the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, a recent European legislation which mandates large companies to compliantly report on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) matters. To this end, we mapped out potential impacts, risks and opportunities (IROs), together with our stakeholders. These IROs were assessed on impact materiality (scope, scale, probability, remediability) and financial materiality (size of financial effects, probability). The result of this structured exercise is an overview of our 'material topics', meaning the topics which are possibly impactful for our organization. By aligning these topics with our business strategy, we were able to set 5 strategic priorities for 2030. These priorities will be presented in this sustainability strategy.



## Our 5 strategic priorities for 2030

As described, we have created a sustainability strategy focused on the topics that are strategically the most important for us, our stakeholders and the planet. First of all, we want to contribute to an increase in healthy food consumption. Additionally, we aim to produce our tasty specialty tomatoes and snack vegetables with the lowest possible impact, in a pleasant and safe work environment. Building sustainable and long-lasting partnerships, where giving and receiving trust is invaluable, is embedded in our DNA. These partnerships put our company in a pole position to continuously improve and to remain innovative within our industry. By defining and making the above priorities more tangible, we keep our focus and will be able to fulfil our vision effectively.







**1 Increasing healthy food consumption**

Everyone should have access to healthy and tasty snack vegetables, as access to healthy food is crucial for improving the physical and economic health and well-being of communities. By 2030, Den Berk Délice aims to reinforce its position as a leader in growing specialty tomatoes and snack vegetables.

**OUR COMMITMENTS**

✓ **Develop tasty food options**

- Aim for the highest quality and tastiest product through data-driven, selective production.
- Collaborate with seed companies to develop varieties that are convenient to eat, easy to grab on the go and bursting with flavour. This promotes the mindset that snacking healthy is easy and encourages a healthy lifestyle.
- Continue to improve our taste. Our main products consistently rank in the top 3 per country in taste tests.

✓ **Create consumer-oriented concepts**

- Conduct joint market research to understand consumer preferences and adapt our market approach accordingly.
- Promote concepts in the market.
- Fill gaps in the product range.
- Every two years, we introduce innovative concepts into the market, based on consumer research.

✓ **Grow healthy produce**

- Collaborate with suppliers, trial stations and research institutions to enhance the quality of our produce.
- Maintain high food safety standards throughout the growing, sorting and packaging process.



100%



**Evolve towards 100% tasty specialty tomatoes and snack vegetables**



**Our main products consistently rank in the top 3 per country in taste tests**



**A new innovative concept launched every 2 years**





## 2 Producing with the lowest possible impact

The growth of tomatoes depends on optimal temperature and sufficient CO<sub>2</sub> for photosynthesis. Creating these conditions in our greenhouses requires significant amounts of energy, which directly impacts our carbon footprint. Limiting our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is a top priority for us. However, we also recognize that CO<sub>2</sub> is essential for the growth of our tomatoes. As we work towards achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, we are actively exploring ways to reduce these emissions. Additionally, we aim to validate these commitments through the SBT Initiative.



### OUR COMMITMENTS

#### ✓ Optimise our use of resources

- Reduce our gas usage by 30% by 2030.
- Continue to invest in LED lighting to improve light efficiency.
- Interconnect our greenhouses to optimise the use of heat, water and CO<sub>2</sub> for photosynthesis.
- Map out our water flows in both Belgium and Morocco to optimise water management.
- Maximise rainwater use while minimising the extraction of groundwater through additional rainwater capture.
- Reduce our Belgian water consumption by 10% by 2030.

#### ✓ Support the energy transition

- Use surplus electricity generated during the growing process to balance the energy market and facilitate the transition to more solar and wind power.
- Support the electricity grid with a unique multi-asset approach.

#### ✓ Invest in green energy

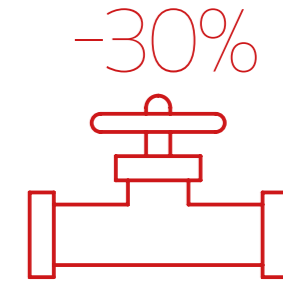
- Continue implementing additional electricity and heat production through solar panels and e-boilers.
- Explore options for geothermal heat and recovery of waste heat from surrounding industries.
- Ensure 100% of our own fleet is electric by 2028.

#### ✓ Invest in circular economy

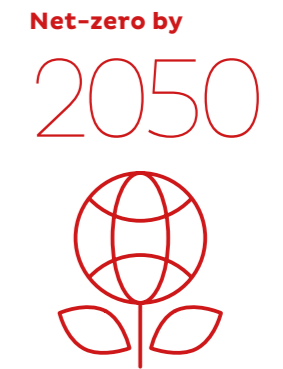
- Keep using 100% recyclable packaging.
- Optimise packaging to use less cardboard and plastic without compromising its protective function. Less damage to tomatoes means less food waste.
- Reduce residual waste by 70%.
- Explore the best possible applications for fallen tomatoes (e.g. biogas).

#### ✓ Expand production to Morocco

- Benefit from naturally available resources like heat and light in locations other than Belgium.

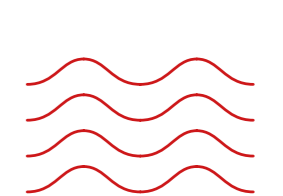


Reduce our gas usage by 30% by 2030



100%

recyclable packaging



reduction in Belgian water consumption





### 3 Maintaining a pleasant and safe work environment

Our people are a vital part of what makes our tomatoes great. Investing in our employees means investing in our company, our product and our future. Through regular check-ins, as well as formal and informal training sessions, we encourage our people to become the best version of themselves.

## OUR COMMITMENTS

### ✓ Care for people

- Offer a stable work environment and a sense of belonging.
- Maintain low employee turnover by offering fair, market-based wages and conditions.
- Develop education programmes across five levels: knowledge and craftsmanship, responsibility and safety, organisation, leadership and communication.

### ✓ Go the extra mile

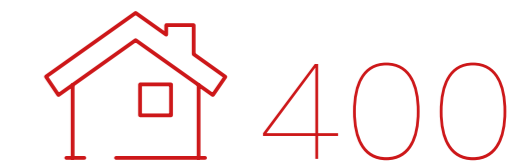
- Increase housing accommodation capacity for our seasonal workers to 400 places by 2028.
- Provide active support for administrative processes (e.g. authorities, health care).
- Offer mobility solutions (e.g. bus transport, bikes to accommodation).

### ✓ Strive for inclusion and integration

- Treat every employee equally, regardless of race, age, origin, language, gender ...
- Provide communication in multiple languages (Dutch, English, Romanian and Arabic) with visual support.
- Promote work participation across generations.

### ✓ Preserve high employee engagement

- Implement programmes to support employee wellbeing.
- Foster connection and lead by example.
- Maintain our current best-in-class results on employee engagement surveys, with an overall job satisfaction rate of > 85%.
- Increase the return rate of seasonal workers to > 50% by 2026.



Increase accommodation for our seasonal workers to 400 spots by 2028



Increase our annual return rate to over 50% for seasonal workers





#### 4 Remaining innovative in the industry

We are constantly working on creating the best conditions for our tomatoes to grow. We conduct research in various areas: developing new varieties with the utmost flavour, minimising plants' water needs and optimising the requirements for heat, light and CO<sub>2</sub> necessary for photosynthesis. We maintain a strong, data-driven focus for all our processes and share knowledge to contribute towards a more sustainable sector.



#### OUR COMMITMENTS

##### ✓ Focus on data-driven cultivation

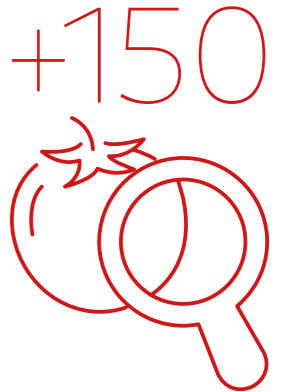
- Create models for crop planning.
- Improve our production forecasts.
- Evaluate our realised production and compare it with theoretically feasible production.
- Explore the possibilities of plant sensors and plant analyses regarding the plant's response to external conditions.
- Test AI support for climate computers.

##### ✓ Contribute to a sustainable sector

- Share knowledge in research groups focused on tomato-specific greenhouse horticulture, in collaboration with trial stations and academic institutions.
- By being member of Cooperatie Hoogstraten, who are also working on a sustainability strategy, the sustainability pace can be accelerated and expanded to multiple growers.
- Represent the sector's interests to policy makers.
- Actively research automation technologies to reduce error margins and ensure our employees' jobs are meaningful and fulfilling.

##### ✓ Continuously look for new varieties

- Perform in-house trials on > 150 varieties per year.
- Both in specialty tomatoes and snack vegetables.
- Collaborate intensively with seed breeding companies.
- Be closely involved in the early stages of the breeding process.
- Provide high-quality trial data to suppliers.



**In-house variety trials per year**



**We test at least 1 new technology every year**





## 5 Building sustainable partnerships

Collaboration has been at the core of Den Berk Délice since its foundation. It is a vital value in every aspect of our operations. Den Berk Délice will continue to grow strong, sustainable partnerships with retailers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Furthermore, we dedicate greenhouse space to test new substrates, varieties, biologically integrated systems, more sustainable materials ... This regularly leads to tailormade partnerships.

## OUR COMMITMENTS

### ✓ Continue to invest in our partnerships

- Identify customer needs by executing at least 5000 retail shop visits across at least 6 different countries.
- Maintain the highest score as a preferred partner for clients. We've received this score in 2023.
- Conduct joint market research to understand consumer preferences and adapt our market approach accordingly.
- Develop better working methods together, including (but not limited to) optimal use of substrates, packaging, recyclability, reusability ...
- We strive towards long-lasting partnerships of 5 years and more for clients and suppliers who represent 80% of our turnover.

### ✓ Cooperate in field trials

- Provide trial opportunities (execution and follow-up) to suppliers of plants, fertilisers, substrates, cultivation supplies, biological control agents and pollinators.
- Allocate 2 FTEs for field trials.



5000

yearly store visits  
in 6 countries.



Highest score as  
preferred partner  
for clients.

Allocate 2 FTEs  
for field trials.



+5  
years



Strive towards long-lasting  
partnerships of 5 years and more  
for clients and suppliers who  
represent 80% of our turnover.





## Shift from SDGs to CSRD

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly formally adopted the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formed an action plan to free humankind from poverty and return the planet to the path towards sustainability. As a first step to solidify our sustainability efforts, we subscribed to the SDGs in 2020.

With our new strategy we are taking our sustainability efforts a step further by subscribing to the European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). By subscribing voluntarily, we want to emphasize the importance of rolling out a well-defined and structured sustainability strategy. We look forward to further walking this path in 2025, as we will publish our first CSRD-compliant sustainability report in 2026.



## Our targets in line with the CSRD



### Increasing healthy food consumption

- ✓ Develop tasty food options
- ✓ Create consumer-oriented concepts
- ✓ Grow healthy produce



### Producing with the lowest possible impact

- ✓ Optimise our use of resources
- ✓ Support the energy transition
- ✓ Invest in green energy
- ✓ Invest in circular economy
- ✓ Expand production to Morocco



### Maintaining a pleasant and safe work environment

- ✓ Care for people
- ✓ Go the extra mile
- ✓ Strive for inclusion and integration
- ✓ Preserve high employee engagement



### Remaining innovative in the industry

- ✓ Focus on data-driven cultivation
- ✓ Contribute to a sustainable sector
- ✓ Continuously look for new varieties

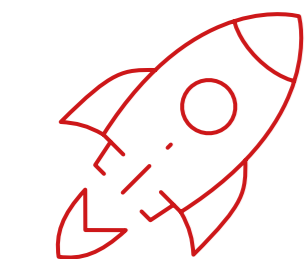


### Building sustainable partnerships

- ✓ Continue to invest in our partnerships
- ✓ Cooperate in field trials

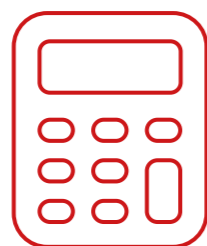


# Next steps



mid 2024

**launch  
sustainability  
strategy**



second half  
2024

**calculate our  
scope 1, 2 and 3  
footprint**



end 2024

**define our  
next steps towards  
CSRD compliance**



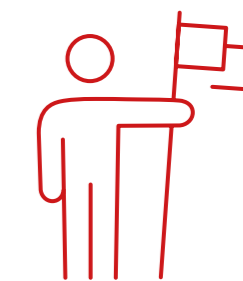
first half  
2025

**map out  
our reduction plan**



mid 2025

**launch our first  
sustainability report**



first half  
2026

**CRSD-compliant  
sustainability report  
of 2025**



Gour fresh  
retail partner