

Agency for Facility Operations supports the Government of Flanders and local governments in circular office design

Why buying something new when you already have everything for a fresh, new interior around? It is this philosophy that inspired the Agency for Facility Operations in 2019 to conclude two framework agreements with Nnof (Nearly New Office Facilities) aimed at the refurbishment of furniture. Besides the refurbishment of furniture, where new furniture is made out of the components and materials of existing furniture (if necessary with a limited amount of new materials), the framework agreements additionally facilitates the Government of Flanders and local governments to focus on a more efficient redeployment of existing furniture (second chance furniture).

The first framework agreement enables the Government of Flanders and local governments to maximally focus on refurbishment in their redevelopment projects. The framework agreement includes, inter alia, the inventory of the existent furniture, the study of the redeployment and collection of this furniture, the refurbishment and the feed-in and placement of the refurbished furniture. This set-up proved to appeal to a large number of local governments, the Agency for Facility Operations therefore concluded a new contract with Nnof in early 2022 to continue this service.

Many entities of the Government of Flanders possess excess furniture without having plans for a redesign themselves. On the other hand, the Agency for Facility Operations perceives entities that want to design a space or building sustainably, but do not have suitable basic materials for a refurbished interior that fulfills their wishes. Therefore, the Agency for Facility Operations concluded a second framework agreement that enables entities to get their excess furniture picked up by Nnof in exchange for credits. Nnof cleans and refurbishes the material in order to resell it to entities that are looking for a circular office design. Entities that previously accrued credits, can use these as a discount for their purchase.

City of Leuven and AG Stadsontwikkeling Leuven already saved 77.2804kg CO₂ via these framework agreements

In anticipation of its own office, the AG Stadsontwikkeling Leuven recently moved to a hull office building on the 'Diestsevest'. In this new, empty office space the municipal company could create its own identity, both in the collaboration between the four departments and in the accents in the office design. An important part of this identity of Leuven is its attention to sustainability and circularity. AG Stadsontwikkeling Leuven looked for a sustainable solution and found its remedy in the framework contracts of the 'Agency for Facility Operations'. Nnof supplied washable acoustic workstations, which saved 480kg CO₂-emissions compared to an interior with new workstations.

Next to this refurbished furniture, Ahrend supplied (also through a framework contract of the 'Agency for Facility Operations') new adjustable sit-stand desks that, amongst other things, focused on material use and demountability. In this way, there is a higher chance to be re-used or refurbished in the future. The employees of the City of Leuven and the Agency Stadsontwikkeling Leuven got the opportunity to install refurbished furniture in their home offices as well. Nnof already supplied about 300 office chairs for employees at home, an operation that saved a further 76.800kg CO₂-emissions.

AG Stadsontwikkeling Leuven is already looking forward to new opportunities! They are for example participating in a pilot project that refurbishes the current wooden drawer blocks into personal lockers.

What do the framework agreements yield?

The framework agreements naturally deliver a nice and high-quality interior! Additionally, the Agency for Facility Operations wanted to realize social added value in terms of climate and circular economy. It therefore monitors the figures annually and the results are impressive! In 2021 308.329 ton CO₂-

equivalent emissions were avoided by the deployment of second chance and refurbished furniture. 1.123 pieces of furniture were, after a slight clean-up, redeployed and another 1.002 refurbished pieces were installed. In the refurbishment of furniture new materials are often added, but their use remained very limited. Only 8% of the delivered second chance and refurbished furniture pieces contained new materials, 86.944,05kg material was reused and consequently stays out of the dump for a little longer.