



Derived from nature,  
refined by innovation

# Sustainability Report 2025



Citribel's sales, marketing & product management team at the production site.  
Citribel Sustainability Report 2025



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Joris Merckx, CEO of Citribel.  
Citribel Sustainability Report 2025

**Letter From the CEO**

Dear all,

We are pleased to share Citribel's third Sustainability Report, reflecting our continued commitment to working in a more sustainable way. Circularity has been part of Citribel's approach for more than a century. By using sugar molasses, a by-product of the sugar industry, as our main raw material, and through our surface fermentation process, we produce citric acid and other circular products that support a wide range of applications.

Operating in a changing global economic and political landscape, sustainability and local production remain key priorities for Citribel. As one of Europe's last citric acid producers, we take our responsibility as a reliable, local supplier seriously. With increasing attention on carbon reduction and responsible sourcing, we aim to support our customers and partners in meeting their sustainability ambitions.

Across our portfolio, our products and brands continue to open new application opportunities. At the same time, our work with mycelium is expanding into new areas, with promising potential in fields such as sustainable materials, agriculture, and biotechnology.

Sustainability is important to all of us at Citribel. The growing focus on circularity and responsible production continues to attract motivated and skilled colleagues whose ideas and engagement help move Citribel forward.

This report outlines our actions and progress over the past year, providing insight into our initiatives and their impact. While we are proud of what we have achieved so far, we remain committed to continuous improvement and further progress.

Thank you for your continued support as we work towards a more sustainable future.

**Joris Merckx, CEO**



# Citribel

Today, Citribel stands out as a global leader in the circular production of citric acid, citrates, mycelium, and other high-value products, all produced through natural surface fermentation of sugar molasses.

## 1 About Citribel

### Who we are

Citribel is a producer of citric acid, citrates, mycelium and other high-value products. Founded in 1919 in Tienen, Citribel began with the production of citric acid using sugar fermentation. Over the decades, our production processes have continuously evolved, becoming more efficient and embracing circular principles. By 1947, efforts to enhance circularity led to the use of sugar molasses, a byproduct of the nearby sugar industry, as our primary raw material. This choice significantly reduced waste and environmental impact while ensuring a steady supply for the production of citric acid, citrates and mycelium.

Today, Citribel's product portfolio has expanded, with mycelium-derived ingredients: MycoFence®, MycoGlucan®, MycaNova® and other high-value feed & agro products, contributing to a growing range of innovations. Our products are widely used across various industries, including food, pharmaceuticals, animal feed, agriculture, aquaculture and fashion materials.



Mycelium growing in trays through surface fermentation at our production facility.



## 2 Closing the circle

### Circularity at heart

At Citribel, circularity is at the heart of everything we do. Increasingly, our customers are embracing sustainability and circularity as they address the urgent environmental and climate challenges we all share. We meet this demand as the world's only citric acid producer that utilizes sugar molasses, an upcycled byproduct of the sugar industry, as our primary raw material.

By choosing sugar molasses, we not only reduce carbon emissions but also avoid the need for extra land, fertilizer, and water, minimizing our impact on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Citribel also taps into the benefits of sugar beet, which naturally sequesters carbon, requires less nitrogen, and is processed close to where it's grown. Together with our efficient production processes, this allows us to create truly circular products, where nearly all raw materials are transformed into valuable new resources for our customers effectively closing the loop.

**“Citribel is so much more than citric acid and citrates. Due to our unique production approach, we also provide various agribusiness solutions. And we are not stopping there as we continuously investigate ways to expand our portfolio even more, focusing foremost on our one-of-a-kind mycelium.”**

Jasper Deckers - Scientific Product Specialist





Machinery in production during a tour of our factory.



## Our production processes

At Citribel, circularity runs through all aspects of our operations. By transforming nearly all of our waste streams into valuable resources, we minimize the amount of residual waste left behind. Our commitment to circularity extends to how we manage water and energy, with a strong focus on reducing our carbon footprint and minimizing water use. As an ISO 14001-certified company, we continuously work to improve our environmental performance across the board.

Our production process is an interconnected system with multiple stages that all play a role in maximizing circularity. It starts with sugar molasses, the perfect nutrient for our unique 'Citribel fungus'. Through surface fermentation, the fungus grows into a biomass known as mycelium, while converting the sugar in the molasses into liquid citric acid. We closely monitor and fine-tune key factors like temperature and humidity across our 184 fermentation chambers. After a few days, once most of the sugar has been processed, we carefully separate the mycelium from the crude liquid citric acid.

The citric acid then enters a refining process. Initially, it reacts with lime milk, forming a calcium salt precipitate. This mixture undergoes a liquid-solid separation, producing a filtrate that is directed to our feed and agro facility. The precipitated calcium salt is then dissolved using sulfuric acid, yielding a citric acid solution and gypsum. After separating the gypsum, the citric acid solution is further refined through ion exchange, activated charcoal treatment, and crystallization. The process concludes with the production of high-quality citric acid crystals, which are dried, sieved, and packaged for use.



Scan for  
our  
production  
video



Mycelium growing in trays through surface fermentation at our production facility.



## Citric acid and citrates

As a result of our unique production methods, Citribel delivers high-quality products with distinct properties.

Citric acid, a naturally occurring acid, is a key component across many industries. It is valued for being safe, environmentally friendly, and readily biodegradable. As an odorless and non-toxic ingredient, it poses minimal risk to both human health and the environment, making it the go-to choice for a variety of uses:

In the food and beverage industry, it acts as a natural preservative and flavor enhancer. In cosmetics, it serves as an exfoliant, pH adjuster, and stabilizer. Its chelating properties make it essential in detergents, where it binds to mineral ions to boost cleaning power. Citric acid is also found in dishwasher tablets, offering a natural alternative to phosphates in cleaning agents.

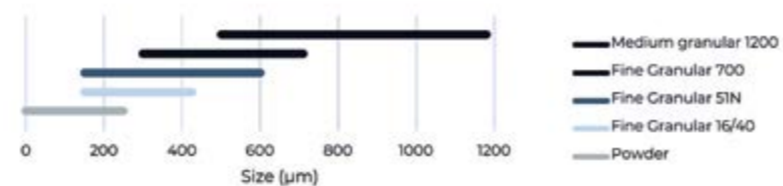
In pharmaceutical applications, citric acid is widely used as an excipient. It functions as a pH regulator, buffering agent, stabilizer, and chelating agent, helping to improve the stability and performance of pharmaceutical products.

This versatile ingredient is found in many everyday products, from effervescent tablets and jams to gummy bears, juices, and canned fruits and vegetables. Though often unnoticed, citric acid plays a vital role in local supply chains, supporting the production of a wide range of goods.

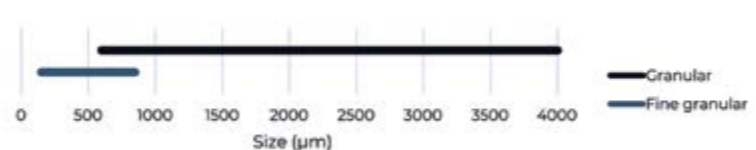
We produce citric acid in two forms: Dry (anhydrous) or with one water molecule (monohydrate). Depending on what's needed, we offer different granulations, powders, and solutions, along with various packaging and logistical options to suit specific applications.

In addition to citric acid, we also produce trisodium citrate dihydrate (TSC) and monosodium citrate anhydrous (MSC). These are made by neutralizing citric acid with sodium hydroxide. Both TSC and MSC are odorless, white crystals with a mildly salty and tart flavor. They're widely used in food, beverages, and technical applications, like buffering, sequestering, or as agents in coagulation and emulsification.

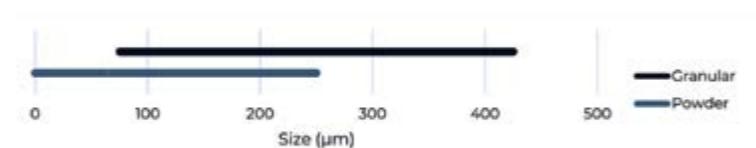
### Citric Acid anhydrous



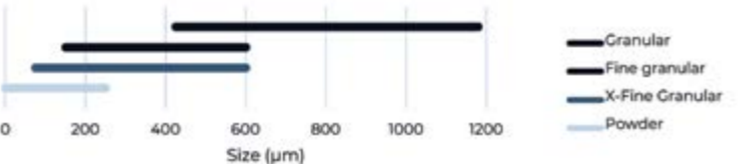
### Citric Acid Monohydrate



### Monosodium citrate anhydrous



### Trisodium citrate dihydrate



## Citric acid

Our citric acid portfolio covers anhydrous, monohydrate, granular and liquid solutions, available in a range of grades and formats. Thanks to this broad offering, Citribel supports customers in industries such as food & beverage, pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, personal care and industrial processing.

## Citrates

Our citrate range includes monosodium citrate and trisodium citrate, developed for use in a broad variety of formulations and processes. These products are used in sectors such as food, pharma, nutraceuticals and industry, where they help with buffering, acidity regulation, stabilisation, mineral enrichment and effervescent applications.

Product name	Reference	Available packaging	Compendia Compliance
Citric Acid Anhydrous Medium Granular 1200	0482951	25 kg   500 kg   1000 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Citric Acid Anhydrous Fine Granular 51N	0432938	15 kg   25 kg   500 kg   1000 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Citric Acid Anhydrous Fine Granular 700	0483087	25 kg   1000 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Citric Acid Anhydrous Fine Granular 16/40	0432962	25 kg   1000 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Citric Acid Anhydrous Powder	0432717	25 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Citric Acid Solution 50%	0433020	1000 L	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Citric Acid Monohydrate Granular	0432768	25 kg   500 kg   1000 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, OU, H
Citric Acid Monohydrate Fine Granular	0432776	15 kg   25 kg   900 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, OU, H
Trisodium Citrate Dihydrate Granular	0412503	25 kg   500 kg   1000 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Trisodium Citrate Dihydrate Fine Granular	0412325	15 kg   25 kg   475 kg   1000 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Trisodium Citrate Dihydrate X-Fine Granular	0412326	15 kg   25 kg   475 kg   1000 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Trisodium Citrate Dihydrate Powder	0412481	25 kg	USP, FCC, Ph, Eur, JP, JECFA, OU, H
Monosodium Citrate Anhydrous Granular	0412570	25 kg   500 kg   900 kg	DAC, JECFA, OU, H
Monosodium Citrate Anhydrous Powder	0412562	25 kg	DAC, JECFA, OU, H

## Other circular products

In addition to citric acid and citrates, we also produce a range of high-value circular products, including mycelium, potassium calcium salt, gypsum, and low potassium vinasse. Thanks to our careful fermentation, separation, purification, crystallization and drying processes, we are able to contribute to a more sustainable future. Our goal is to inspire businesses to explore the many potential uses of these products.

### Citrofert®

The combination of sugar molasses and surface fermentation produces a significant amount of potassium calcium salt, commonly known as syngenite. This product is a game-changer for farmers, recognized as a top-quality fertilizer. It is proudly sold under our trusted brand, Citrofert®.

### Citrogips®

Our gypsum powder, sold under the Citrogips® brand, is not only a versatile material for construction but also a key ingredient in dental and medical applications.

### Nutribond®

The organic residue from molasses is concentrated into low-potassium vinasse at the end of our process. Our low potassium vinasse, sold under the Nutribond® brand, is mainly used in the feed industry.

### Mycelium, MycaNova, MycoFence, MycoGlucan

Our surface fermentation process produces a large volume of mycelium. As more markets and industries recognize the potential of mycelium, new and innovative uses are constantly emerging. This fascinating material is worth exploring further.

## The opportunities of mycelium

Mycelium is the root-like structure of fungi, typically growing underground or on decomposing tree trunks. In our case, it grows on a liquid mixture of sugar molasses. From mycelium, fungi can produce mushrooms. Mycelium is a network of microscopic tubes that help with natural decomposition and provide nutrients to plants and trees. It is even been called the "wood wide web" because it helps plants communicate with each other.

There are different types of mycelia, each with unique properties. The fungus we use at Citribel has evolved over decades to thrive on sugar molasses, producing both citric acid and high-quality mycelium around the equivalent of six soccer fields per day.

While many companies are just starting to scale up mycelium production, Citribel has over a century of experience at an industrial level, creating a valuable upcycling process.

Due to the large quantities we produce, most of our wet mycelium is sold to the feed industry under the Citrocell® brand, where it is valued as a natural, tasty, high-protein feed additive with a spongy texture. To make it even more versatile, we have developed a specialized drying process that turns the mycelium into a powder. This powder is easy to use, mix, and integrate into industrial processes.

We continue to collaborate with partners, exploring innovative applications and new ways to use mycelium in various industries. To demonstrate Citribel's commitment to innovation, we have partnered with Onda, a research organization specializing in aquaculture, to develop MycoFence, aimed at enhancing the immune system of Atlantic salmon and shrimps, reducing the need for antibiotics. Additionally, we have conducted research on MycoGlucan to improve immunity in pets and livestock, with promising results in animal health. We also developed a brand "MycaNova" which creates sustainable mycelium based materials for the fashion and automotive industry.



Washed wet mycelium in our installation in production.



Scan to  
watch our  
innovation  
video



Mycelium growing in trays through surface fermentation at our production facility.



## MycaNova®

**MycaNova®: upcycling mycelium to enable carbon footprint reduction in synthetic leather applications.**

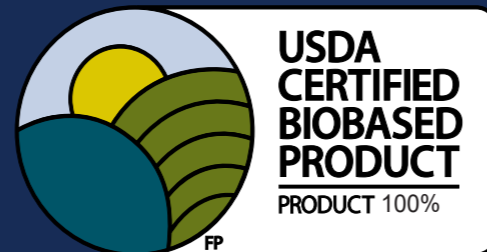
In our efforts to maximize the value of our circular products, we found that our dried mycelium powder integrates easily with bio-based binders. When combined with materials like organic cotton or recycled polyester, it creates high-quality alternatives to natural leather. This not only offers sustainable solutions to various markets but also significantly reduces carbon footprints.

Our MycaNova® mycelium is 100% natural, animal-free, non-GMO, and fully upcycled. Transparency is key, so we provide full details on MycaNova® materials. Due to growing demand, MycaNova® has been invited to showcase samples and solutions across industry platforms.

Besides finished MycaNova® material on roll, the MycaNova® mycelium itself is also available for innovative producers of alternative leather for a broad variety of applications, in which we provide the much-appreciated support.

To find the perfect balance between sustainability, design, and performance, we collaborate with industry partners to develop MycaNova® solutions tailored to their specific needs. These solutions are being used across various industries, including leather goods, footwear, automotive materials, luxury packaging, interiors, furniture, and more.

## Certificates



## MycaNova® in the spotlight

### From Innovation to International Exposure

MycaNova has already gained international and national media attention. The material was featured in a design by Stella McCartney in collaboration with Coronet and worn by Taylor Swift, highlighting its potential as a next-generation, bio-based material on a global stage. In Belgium, MycaNova was also showcased at the MIA's, where Fien Germijns wore a MycaNova creation on the red carpet. These moments underline the growing visibility of mycelium-based innovation in fashion and creative industries.



Sample of material made with MycaNova®.



Fien Germijns in MycaNova outfit.



Taylor Swift with MycaNova bag & boots.



Scan for the article about Fien Germijns



Scan for the article about Taylor Swift



Scan for our Podcast

## MycoFence®

MycoFence® can support the immune system. Derived from mycelium, it is an eco-friendly and sustainable ingredient designed for use in feed formulations. Thanks to the unique beta-glucan structure naturally present in mycelium, MycoFence® offers a distinct functional profile compared to yeast-derived beta-glucans. The product is supplied as a pure, free-flowing powder, ensuring easy handling and homogeneous incorporation into feed.

### How is MycoFence® produced?

MycoFence® is derived from mycelium, pure and rich in high-quality beta – (1,3/1,6)-glucans (>60%). In an optimised and validated production process, all proteins from the mycelium are removed with a gentle extraction. What is left is a pure powder high in beta-glucan content, that we call MycoFence®.

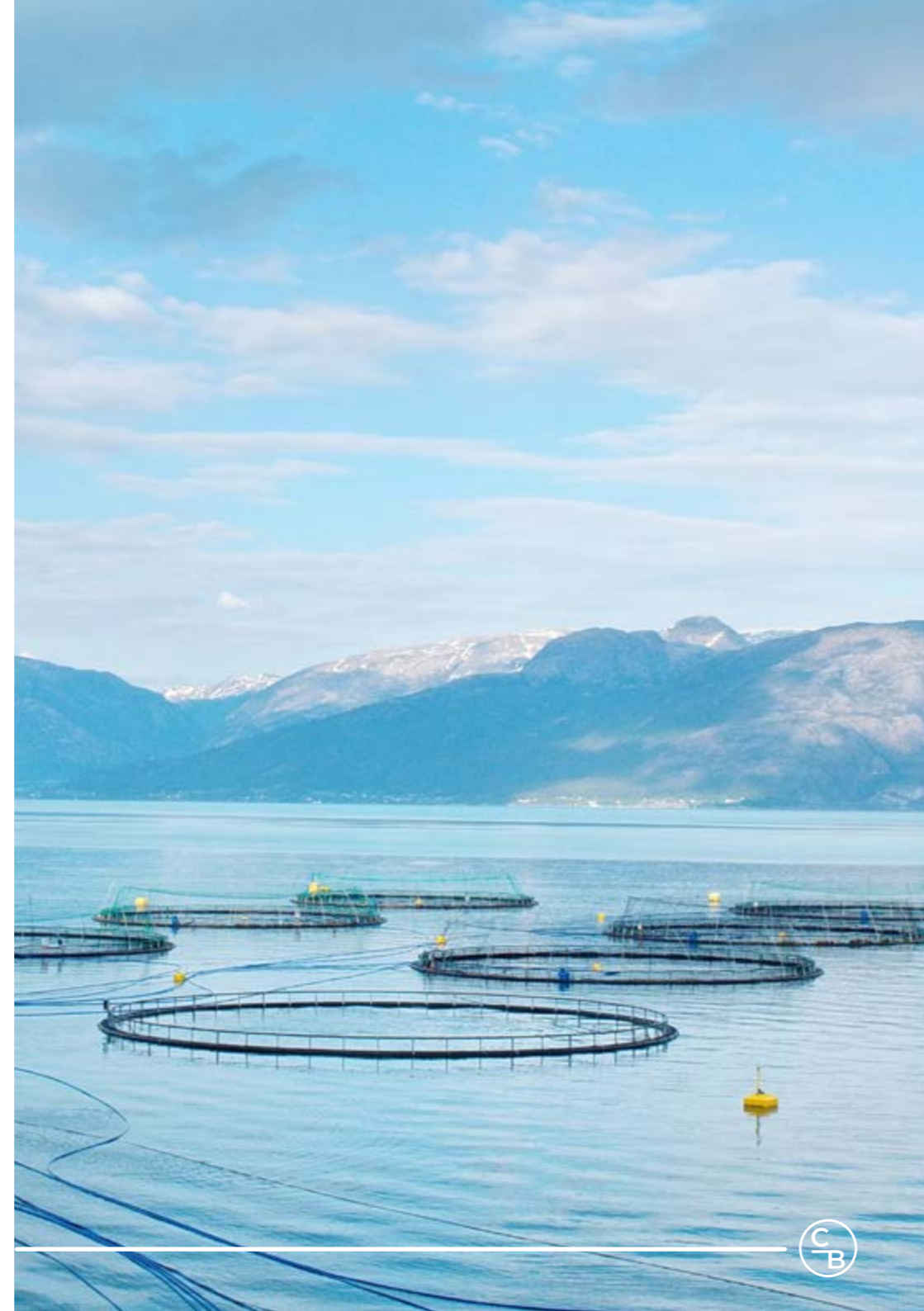
### Climate & Society

The urgency for innovative immune-enhancing products is underlined by the increasing challenges in aquaculture, such as over-fishing and rising ocean temperatures, factors that contribute to increased risk of infections.

Through advanced challenge testing with shrimp and salmon, this product has been proved effective to stimulate the immune system.

### Why MycoFence®?

- Supports immune responsiveness
- Derived from mycelium
- Eco-friendly and sustainable production
- High-purity beta-glucans (>60%)
- Free-flowing powder, easy to dose and mix



## Salmon & Shrimp challenge tests

In collaboration with Onda, Kasetsart University and Imaqua, the effects of MycoFence® and selected commercial beta-glucans were investigated in shrimp and Atlantic salmon under controlled experimental conditions.

The studies involved dietary supplementation followed by exposure to pre-defined challenge models, with the objective of observing physiological and immune-related parameters in both species. Growth development and selected immune markers were monitored during the trial period.

MycoFence® was further assessed in controlled feeding trials in shrimp and Atlantic salmon, designed to evaluate robustness and physiological responses under challenging conditions. These investigations were exploratory in nature and focused on observational parameters only, without aiming to demonstrate therapeutic, medicinal, or performance-related effects.

### Key Findings:

- Growth performance and feed conversion maintained
- Supported immune responsiveness



Citribel's MycoFence® team.

### Scientific publication - MycoFence® – Atlantic salmon

MycoFence® results in Atlantic salmon was recently featured in a peer-reviewed scientific paper on ScienceDirect.



Scan to review the scientific paper on ScienceDirect

### Two awards for MycoFence®

MycoFence has won two awards – the “Corporate Blue Innovation Wave” and the “Public Award” at The Blue Innovation Awards hosted by Blauwe Cluster (Blue Cluster) vzw.



Scan to review our video pitch



## MycoGlucan®

MycoGlucan®, derived from the mycelium of *Aspergillus niger*, offers a powerful solution for boosting the immune system of pets. This product is rich in 35%  $\beta$  (1,3/1,6)-glucans, which are known for their immune-enhancing properties, making it a valuable addition to functional feed.

To ensure immune competence, animals need both innate and adaptive immune responses. MycoGlucan® supports these systems, helping animals defend themselves against infections while also developing long-term immunity through antibody responses. This dual approach strengthens the overall health of animals.

### Health benefits

MycoGlucan®, has demonstrated the significant positive impact on the immune system in dogs.

### Digestibility

MycoGlucan® not only supports immune health but also plays a key role in improving overall digestion. The proteins within MycoGlucan® are easy to digest and contain a balanced amino acid profile, which enhances nutrient absorption and gut health. Research shows that high digestibility is crucial for animal performance and well-being. In fact, the mean apparent protein digestibility was found to be exceptionally high in pet food produced with 14% MycoGlucan®: 91.4-93.3% for dogs and 86.6-92.5% for cats.

### Palatability

Palatability is a key factor in the success of any animal feed ingredient. MycoGlucan® has been shown to significantly improve feed intake, ensuring animals readily consume the product. This is especially important when supplementing feed to improve immune function and overall health.

Acceptance tests of pet food produced with 14% MycoGlucan® incorporation resulted in slight improvements, with 67% feed acceptance compared to 50% for the control group, demonstrating a clear preference for the MycoGlucan®-enriched diet.

### Why MycoGlucan®?

#### Pet Friendly

MycoGlucan® contains at least 35%  $\beta$  (1,3/1,6)-glucans, scientifically recognized for their ability to support both innate and adaptive immune responses, making it a safe and effective choice.

#### Natural Source

Using a surface fermentation process starting from sugar molasses, CitribeL has developed a sustainable and gentle purification process that results in a highly biofunctional product without mannoproteins.

#### Key Finding

MycoGlucan can be added to petfood to support the wellbeing of pets.



Dogs:

92%

Cats:

89%

### Digestibility

Digestibility was found to be exceptionally high in pet food produced with 14% MycoGlucan®.

Feed acceptance:

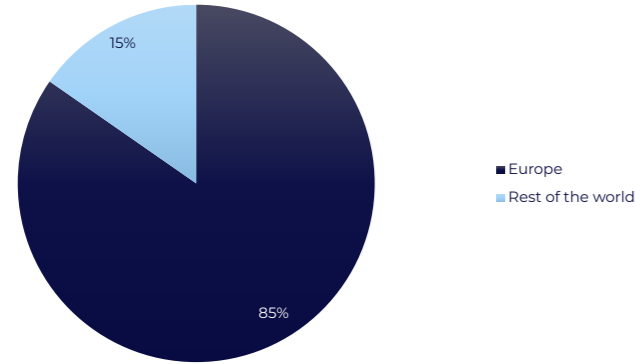
67%

### Palatability

Acceptance tests of pet food produced with 14% MycoGlucan incorporation resulted in slight improvements, with 67% feed acceptance compared to 50% for the control group, demonstrating a clear preference for the MycoGlucan-enriched diet.

## Our markets

Historically, the European market has always been our main market for citric acids and citrates. The increasing focus on local products in the past years further strengthened our position in the EU. Nevertheless, our products are valued in more than 60 countries worldwide with emphasis in North America and Asia. Within Europe, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands comprise our largest markets.



Other circular products total around two thirds of our outgoing goods. Historically, the distribution of these products has a strong local focus, with almost half of them sold in Belgium. In the last few years, exports to other countries have increased.

## 3 How we consider risk & impact

Our sustainability strategy is about creating a business environment where Citribel can thrive while addressing environmental concerns, ethical business practices, and stakeholder interests. This requires a balanced approach and input from both internal and external stakeholders.

We use the principles of double relevance to assess how global sustainability issues impact Citribel and how we affect society and the environment. This includes evaluating our supply chain from sugar beet cultivation to the food and pharmaceutical industries and considering factors like our carbon footprint and business relationships.



### Upstream

Beet molasses are our primary raw material, valued for their low carbon footprint and excellent fermentation efficiency. While most molasses come from nearby EU countries, we also source from more distant regions. As a result, we closely monitor the environmental impact of transportation, biodiversity, water use, and soil health in these areas. We also work with regulators to prevent beet molasses from being used for low-value applications like biofuels, instead focusing on its role in fermentation. Additionally, we ensure our raw materials are responsibly sourced and processed.



### Citribel

At our production facility, we carefully assess the impact we have on people, the environment and the local community. We take pride in being a reliable local employer and purchaser. Acknowledging that our company was founded in a time of different resource availability, we have implemented proactive initiatives to minimize environmental impact. Ensuring the health and safety of our employees remains a top priority, in line with our sustainability strategy.



### Downstream

Once our products leave our warehouses, they serve a wide range of applications for our diverse customers. Regardless of the end use, quality remains our top priority. We value customer feedback and aim to build lasting partnerships to better understand their needs. With the expertise of our innovation team and the practical skills of our technicians, we're able to adapt to market changes and evolving regulations to meet customer demands effectively.



**“In the current spirit of population growth, we notice that we are more and more aware of healthier living and eating. These factors lead to intensive fish consumption and production, which brings along infections and diseases. Mycofence, derived from fungal biomass, is rich in immune stimulating fibres and, as a surplus, completely natural and circular. I am happy to be part of an innovative and future oriented team and company that has developed one (of many to come) new product to provide an answer to this. ”**

Edith Wilderjans – Project Manager Innovatie

## Our sustainability strategy

In our comprehensive value chain analysis, we adopt an approach centered on Citribel's perspective while considering the expectations of our stakeholders. This approach enables us to compile an extensive list of topics, which are subsequently assessed based on their impact and financial materiality.

By categorizing this list of topics, we identify and prioritize five key focus areas. Within this framework, our strategic ambitions are defined. In alignment with our longstanding commitment to contributing to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG's), we link these prioritized areas with the overarching UN SDG's, reinforcing the cohesion and synergy between our strategic priorities and global sustainability objectives. The following section illustrates these 5 focus areas, along with our established set of ambitions.

Focus Areas	Ambitions	Value Chain Impact	SDG link
Circular Excellence & Innovation	Product innovation through valorisation and new applications of all our products	UP CB DOWN	9, 12, 13
	Circularity and innovation in production processes	UP CB DOWN	
Care for our Planet	Reduce our carbon footprint	UP CB DOWN	9, 12, 13
	Reduce our energy use	CB	11, 14, 15
	Optimise and reduce our water use	CB	
	Avoid waste and pollution	CB DOWN	
	Strengthen biodiversity	CB DOWN	
Care for our People	Focus on health and safety	CB	3, 4, 5
	Attract and develop talent	CB	8, 10
	Promote well-being of our employees	CB	
	Improve equality, foster diversity and inclusion	CB	
Sustainable Procurement	Expand use Code of Conduct	CB	8, 12, 13
	Elaborate due diligence policy	UP CB DOWN	16, 17
	Improve sustainable evaluation suppliers	UP CB DOWN	
Good Governance	Focus on business ethics and conduct	UP CB DOWN	8, 15, 17
	Invest in process management, operational excellence and quality	CB	
	Commitment to IT security, data security and privacy	UP CB DOWN	
	Communicate Citribel's circular story internally and externally	UP CB DOWN	

## Sustainability targets & endorsements at Citribel

At Citribel, our commitment to sustainability is evidenced by our numerous endorsements and certifications that reflect our dedication to responsible business practices.

**We are proud to hold the following recognitions:**

**SMETA audit:** We adhere to the SMETA principles, which ensures that our practices meet high standards in human rights, health and safety, the environment, and business ethics.

**Code of conduct:** Our Code of Conduct provides a framework for maintaining integrity and transparency in all our business dealings, ensuring that we operate in a socially responsible manner.

**Fair pay:** Citribel is committed to equitable compensation for all employees, recognizing the hard work and dedication that each team member brings to our company.

**Equal pay:** We enforce a strict equal pay policy, ensuring that all employees are compensated solely based on their role, experience, and performance, without discrimination.

**Employee rights:** We staunchly uphold the rights of our employees, providing a safe and respectful working environment that fosters professional growth and personal well-being.

**Carbon footprint:** We aim to reduce our scope 1 carbon footprint by 50% by 2030 compared to 2022. This through close monitoring of existing facilities, use of advanced data infrastructure and AI as well as targeted electrification of key thermal consumers.

**Waste:** We aim at reducing our waste production by 80% by 2030 through the implementation of new state of the art technologies that will enable Citribel to avoid waste production.

**Water reduction:** Citribel uses significant amounts of process and cooling water in its operations. By 2030, we aim to reduce our water consumption by 35% compared to 2022 levels. We plan to achieve this by raising awareness around efficient water use and by implementing new water recycling technologies.

Citribel is dedicated to continuing our journey of sustainability and ethical business, setting a benchmark in the industry for others to follow.



Scan for our code of conduct



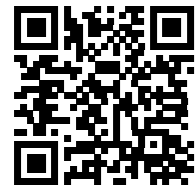
Lab technician working in Citribel's laboratory.  
Citribel Sustainability Report 2025



## Together with our partners

Citribel values its role in being part of a vibrant community and values the contributions of generations of diverse colleagues and partners. We actively support local initiatives like Red Cross blood drives, poverty reduction programs, and litter clean-ups. Additionally, we foster future talent through internships, often leading to permanent roles.

Our daily work shows how everything is connected at Citribel, from molasses and fungi to our people and history. We value our ecosystem of research institutions, suppliers, and global customers, each essential to our circular journey.



Scan for  
our supplier  
code  
of  
conduct

## We listen to our stakeholders and take action



### Our customers

Our customers rely on us for consistent quality and service with minimal carbon and water footprints. We work closely with them to address these challenges, supporting their transition toward a Net Zero carbon economy through collaboration and innovation.



### Our Employees

Our employees are the foundation of Citribel's story, and we're dedicated to their well-being. As a local employer, we welcome and support each person, valuing the unique perspectives they bring to our journey.



### Investors

We appreciate the trust our investors place in Citribel, confident that this partnership will continue to strengthen the value of our organization.



### Schools & research centers

Citribel is located near some of Europe's most renowned universities and research centers, providing invaluable knowledge for our R&D efforts and a strong pool of skilled engineers and managers to lead us into the future.



### Local and sectoral network organizations

Citribel is a valued member and active stakeholder of Belgian and European sector organizations where it advocates the sustainable industrial processes and reliable supply of critical additives to the food, feed and pharmaceutical sectors.



### Municipality – regional governments and European institutions

Citribel operates in compliance with local, regional, federal, and European regulations. With the growing emphasis on sustainability, we are pleased to partner closely with regulatory authorities, who play an important role in advancing our sustainability strategy.



### The local community

We greatly value input from the local community around our historic site in Tienen, Belgium. Open communication helps us identify priorities for growth and reinforces our role as a dependable local employer committed to meeting community needs.



### Unions

Unions play a key role in negotiating collective bargaining agreements and setting employment conditions. Transparent communication across various platforms helps us work together to identify and implement solutions.



### Suppliers & service providers

Citribel works closely with its suppliers in alignment with the ETI Base Code and our own Code of Conduct. As part of our Sustainable Procurement approach, we actively evaluate our suppliers against defined environmental, social and governance criteria, covering areas such as human rights, anti-corruption, health & safety, carbon footprint and science-based targets.

As a SEDEX member, Citribel fulfills its due diligence responsibilities through structured supplier assessments and continuous monitoring, ensuring partnerships built on transparency, compliance and long-term sustainability.

## By connecting with others, we optimize our efforts

We value assessments, audits and certifications

In our journey towards a more circular and sustainable economy, we recognize that we are not acting alone. Our commitment to learning and progress is underscored by our active engagement in various sustainability-related programs and initiatives. We consider these memberships and involvements to be invaluable, since they provide us with opportunities to gain insights from other companies around us while allowing us to share our own knowledge and experiences.



COSMOS APPROVED



Becoming an SDG Champion!

The 'VOKA Charter Duurzaam Ondernemen' provides a framework to turn sustainable goals into real actions, promoting ongoing improvements in areas like carbon reduction, circular projects, and social responsibility all in alignment with the UN SDGs. We are proud to announce that Citribel has been awarded the VOKA Charter for Sustainable Business for the 6th consecutive year! This recognition highlights our dedication to sustainable practices and our commitment to a better future.

Following an independent assessment, companies earn certificates across three levels: SDG Pioneer, SDG Champion, and SDG Ambassador. After 7th consecutive year after 6 years of active participation, Citribel has achieved both SDG Pioneer and Champion status, with sights set on becoming an SDG Ambassador.



We are an active member of associations

Through our affiliation with network organizations and sector/industry federations, we have the privilege of engaging with individuals and companies who share similar values and objectives. As such, we are provided with valuable opportunities to acquire knowledge, exchange insights and collectively advocate for sustainability topics and other related matters.



Joris Merckx, CEO of Citribel, in conversation with EU expert Jos Delbeke at FTI Leuven by Leuven MindGate.



Business Club Regio Tienen



# Care for our planet

At Citribel, environmental responsibility is closely linked to the way we produce. By valorizing molasses, a residual stream from the sugar industry, as our main raw material, and by continuously optimizing water and energy use throughout our operations, we work to reduce the environmental impact of our activities.

## 1 Towards a lower carbon footprint

Citribel's carbon footprint covers emissions from our operations and across the value chain, with energy use and raw materials as the main contributors. In 2025, our total corporate carbon footprint amounted to 119,942 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Product carbon footprints per ton dry product were 0.529 tCO<sub>2</sub>e for citric acid, 0.722 tCO<sub>2</sub>e for monosodium citrate, and 1.19 tCO<sub>2</sub>e for trisodium citrate. Direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from our CHP plant declined between 2022 and 2025. To support our target of reducing scope 1 emissions by 50% by 2030, we continue to invest in stronger monitoring, data infrastructure and AI to improve energy efficiency and guide further emission reductions.

### Commitments

We reduced our scope 2 and scope 3 emissions by over 50% compared to our 2022 baseline. By 2030, we aim to reduce our scope 1 emissions by 50%.

### SBTi commitment

We are committed to setting near-term and net-zero targets in line with a 1.5°C pathway.

### Initiatives to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

We continue to invest in energy efficiency and emission reduction. Our hot water circuit recovers excess heat and saves enough energy to power over 1,000 households annually. Additional projects are being developed to further improve efficiency.

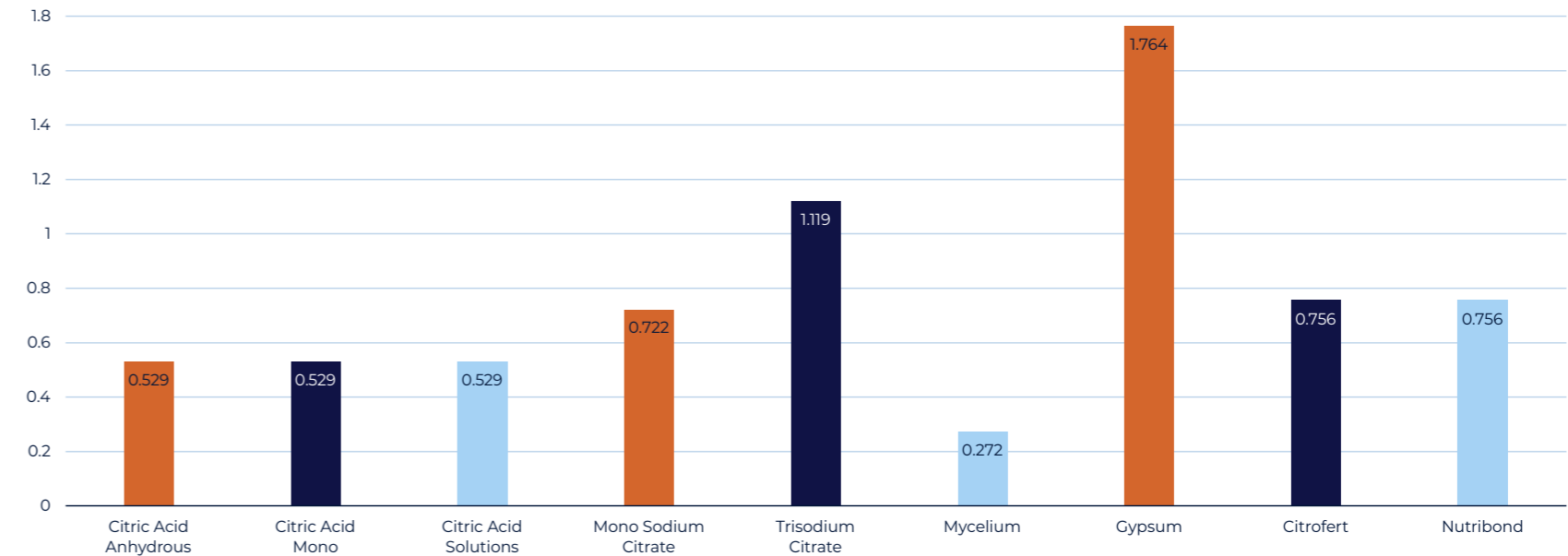
### Key actions

- Employee awareness on energy use
- Advanced technologies to structurally reduce energy consumption
- Energy re-use through heat exchangers and heat pumps
- Efficient on-site electricity & heat generation via CHP
- Solar panels on site
- Multimodal transport to reduce truck mileage and air emissions
- Collaboration with suppliers on sustainable production and lower carbon footprints

### Citribel commitment to raw material efficiency & innovation

At Citribel, we recognize that the sourcing and use of raw materials significantly impact both the environment and society, and are one of the key drivers of our Scope 3 emissions. We are therefore committed to minimizing raw material consumption through continuous improvement, process optimization, and innovation, while promoting responsible and efficient use of resources across our value chain. By improving yields and reducing losses throughout our operations, we enhance resource efficiency and lower the overall footprint of our products. Through close collaboration between our Process Improvement Team, Engineering, R&D, and Operations, we implement projects and process adaptations that structurally reduce raw material usage. This approach supports our ambition to offer our customers products with one of the lowest carbon footprints on the market, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient value chain.

### TON CO<sub>2</sub> EQ PER TON DRY PRODUCT FOR CITRIBEL CITRIC ACID PRODUCTION



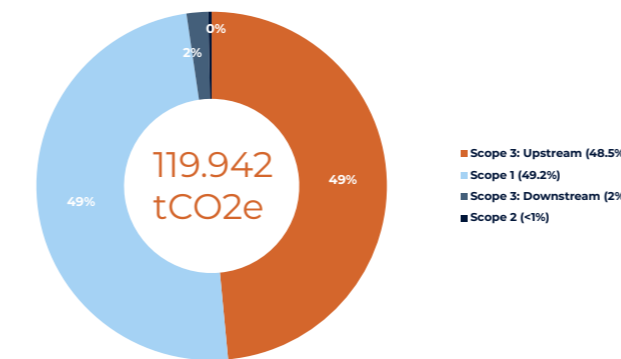
### Product carbon footprint of Citribel's products

System boundary: cradle-to-gate

Data sources: primary data by Citribel (year 2025) and secondary data by EcoInvent database

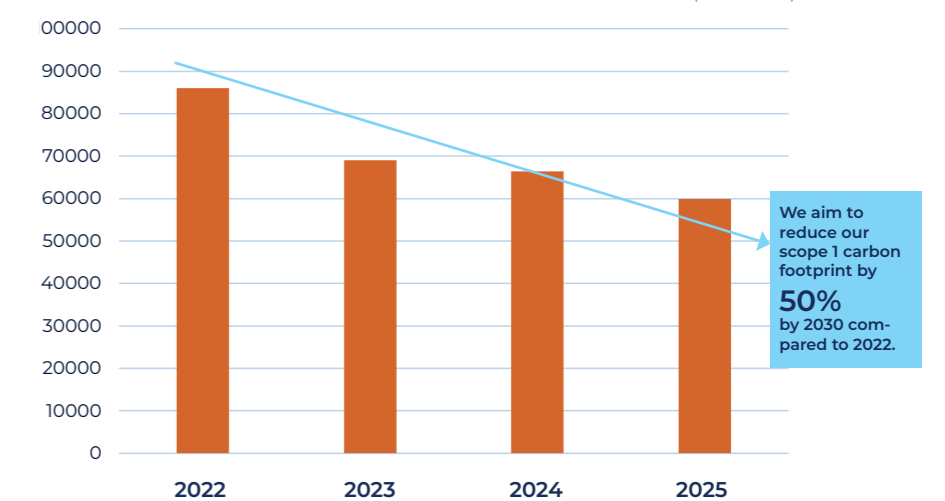
Allocation: dry mass allocation per department

### EMISSIONS



Corporate Carbon footprint Citribel: according to the greenhouse gas protocol (year 2025).

### DIRECT CO<sub>2</sub>-EMISSIONS FROM CHP PLANT (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)



## 2 Reducing our energy use

Citribel has a production capacity of 300,000 tons per year, operating around the clock to meet market demand, which requires significant energy. As the only global producer using surface fermentation for citric acid, Citribel's process consumes considerably less energy during fermentation than conventional deep-tank methods. We remain committed to evaluating and refining our processes and infrastructure to continuously reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions.

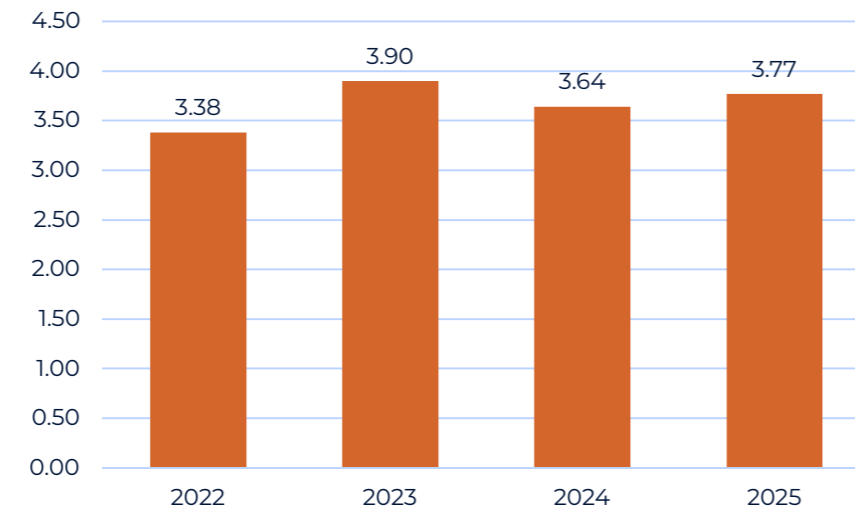
### We reduce our energy use

Since 2014, Citribel has participated in the Flemish Energy Benchmark initiative, which supports large industrial companies in Flanders in improving their energy efficiency. In recent years, changes in our production setup have contributed to a lower overall energy consumption. One important example is our hot water circuit, which recovers excess heat and saves enough energy to power over 1,000 households annually.

The graph illustrates our specific energy consumption per produced ton, measured in MWh. After recording 3.38 MWh per ton in 2022, energy consumption increased to 3.90 MWh in 2023. In 2024, this figure decreased again to 3.64 MWh per ton, reflecting continued efforts to improve energy efficiency. In 2025, it rose slightly to 3.77 MWh per ton.

As part of our strategic plan, we continue to invest in measures that reduce energy use and improve operational efficiency. Building on the results of initiatives such as the hot water circuit, we are also developing additional projects to further optimize our energy performance.

Specific energy consumption MWh per produced ton

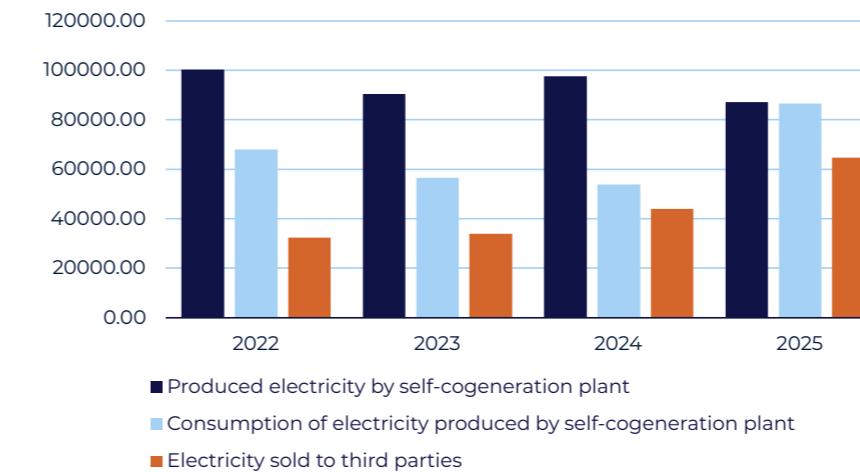


## We generate energy

Since 2020, Citribel's combined Heat and Power (CHP) facility has used natural gas as its primary fuel source to generate both steam and electricity. Part of the electricity produced is used internally in our production process, while the surplus is supplied to external parties through the conventional power grid. This confirms Citribel's role as a net contributor to the electricity grid.

The chart shows that our cogeneration plant continued to produce significant volumes of electricity between 2022 and 2025, with annual production remaining close to 90,000–100,000 MWh. At the same time, the share of electricity sold to third parties increased over this period, reaching its highest level in 2025.

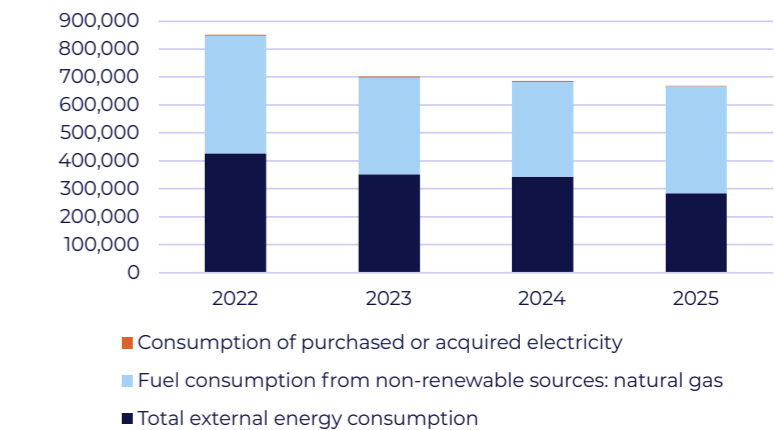
ELECTRICITY PRODUCED BY COGENERATION PLANT (MWH)

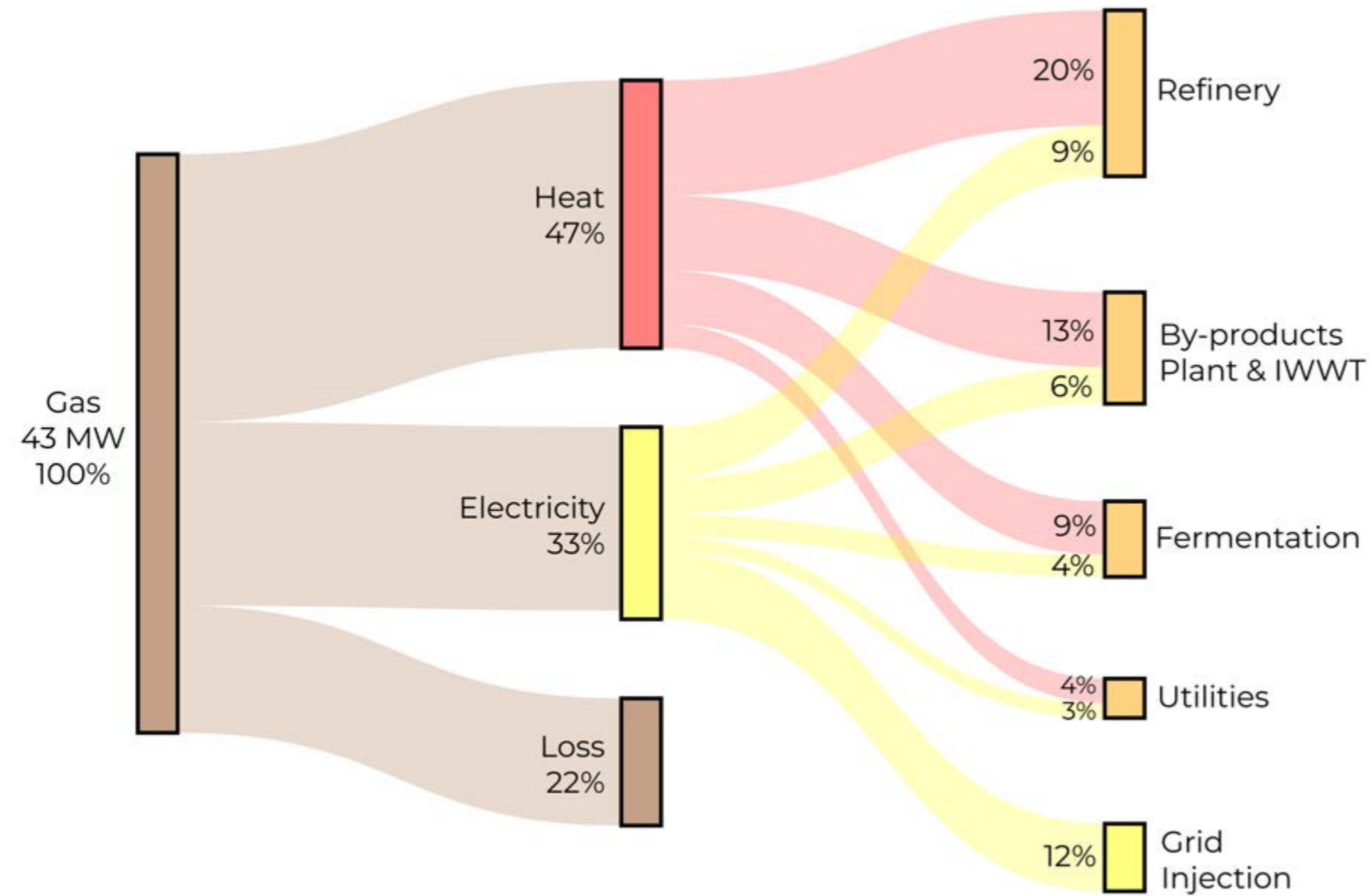


The external energy consumption chart shows a continued decrease over the past years. Compared with 2022, Citribel's external energy consumption had fallen markedly by 2025, driven by lower purchased electricity volumes and reduced fuel consumption from non-renewable sources. This reflects our ongoing efforts to improve energy efficiency and reduce reliance on external energy sources.

As part of our commitment to further reducing our carbon footprint, we are preparing a solar panel installation on our facilities in 2026. This initiative is expected to further lower our dependence on external energy and support our broader sustainability ambitions.

EXTERNAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION (MWH)





## We measure our energy use

Citribel developed an in-house digital network of data measurement systems designed for real-time tracking of energy consumption across our different plants and processes. This system empowers us to pinpoint opportunities for energy reduction and optimize energy systems for maximum efficiency.

## We reduce the impact of transportation and mobility

As a prominent (bio)chemical corporation, Citribel manages a substantial volume of inbound and outbound freight. To minimize truck mileage and reduce air emissions, we strategically adopt multimodal transportation strategies, actively incorporating ship and rail transportation options where possible.

Furthermore, Citribel is dedicated to fostering a culture of sustainable commuting among its employees. To achieve this, we implemented various initiatives, including financial incentives for staff who choose to commute by bike. We also introduced a bike leasing program and enhanced our on-site bike storage facilities, resulting in a noticeable increase in the number of employees choosing cycling as their main mode of transportation. At his moment-- For those employees who still rely on automobiles, Citribel has revised its company car policy to prioritize the adoption of electric or hybrid vehicles. To support this transition, charging stations have been installed, allowing staff to conveniently charge their vehicles at work using sustainable electricity sources.

**“As a zero carbon engineer, I believe in collaboratively building a profitable future where we minimize our ecological footprint. Through joint innovation and continuous improvement, we create this sustainable future.”**

Ruben Hoofwijk – Zero Carbon Engineer



Employees were treated to ice cream during “Citribel Fietst”, an initiative encouraging more employees to commute to work by bicycle.

### 3 Reducing our water use

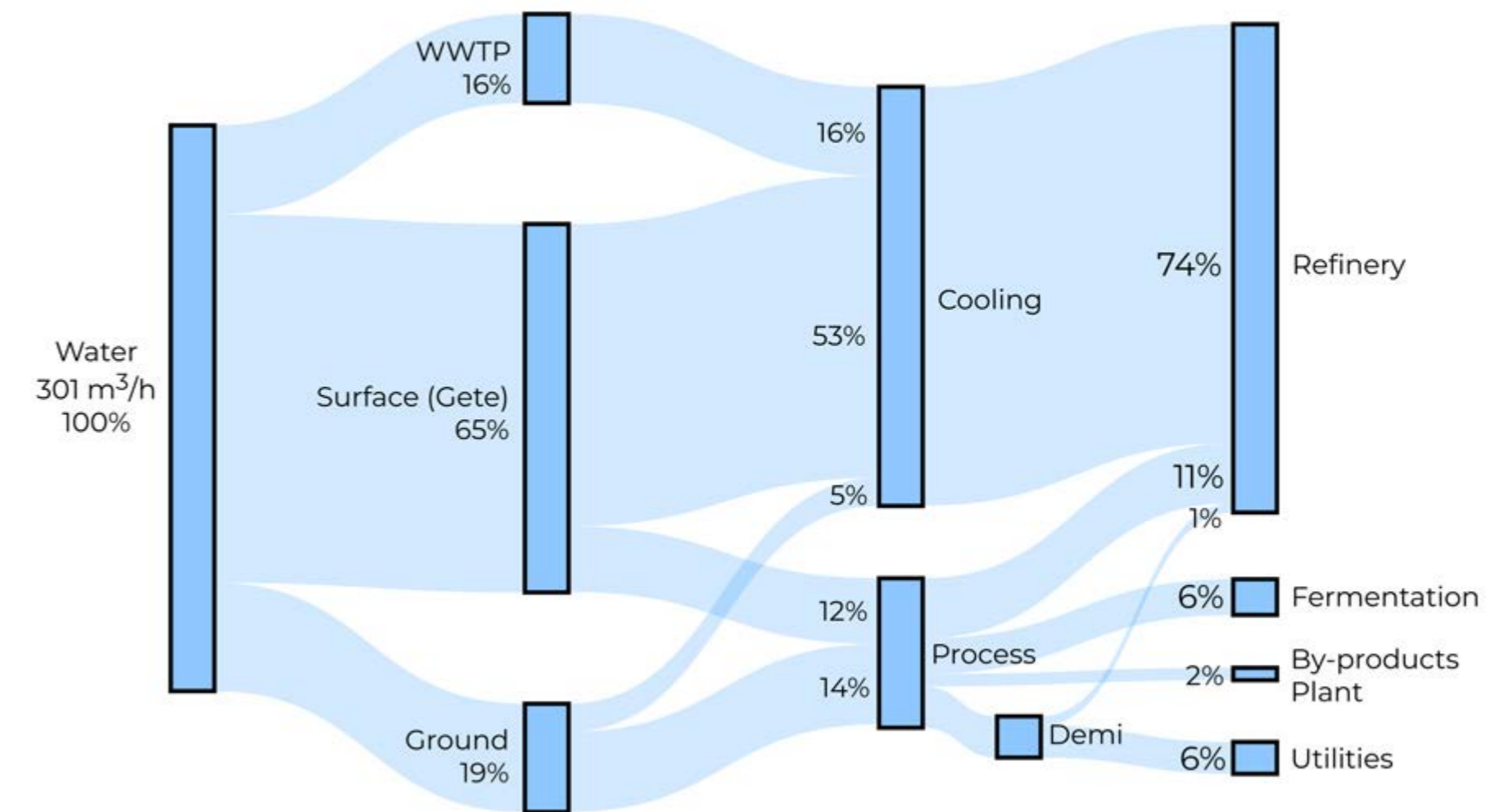
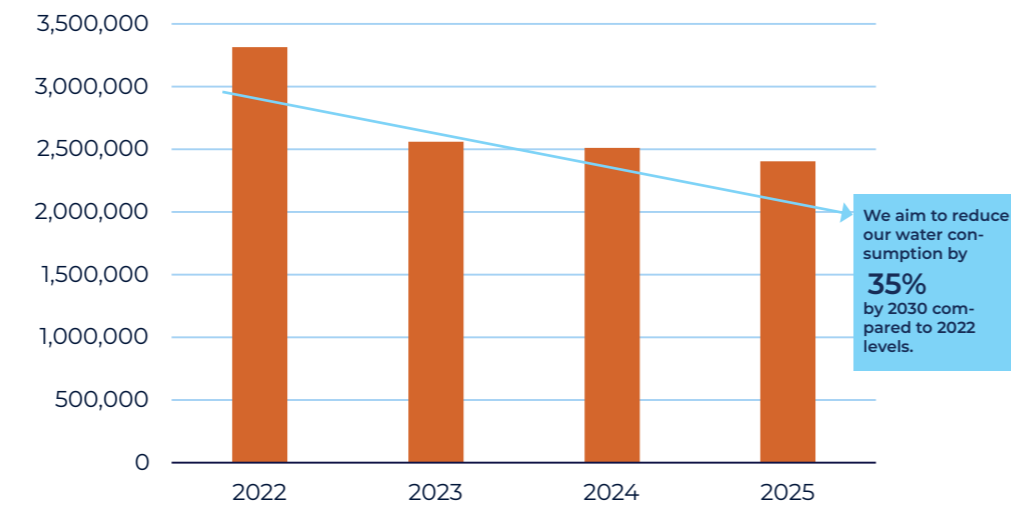
Water is essential to our production processes. Around 30% is used for processing and 70% for cooling, while household water use represents only a very limited share of our total consumption. Although we are not located in a water-scarce region, we remain mindful of climate-related challenges and continue to focus on efficient water management and local ecosystem preservation. Our biological wastewater treatment helps purify discharge water before it is returned to the environment.

#### We reduce our water use

Our total water consumption has shown a clear downward trend in recent years. From around 3.3 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2022, water use decreased to approximately 2.6 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2023, followed by a slight further reduction to about 2.5 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2024. In 2025, total water consumption declined again to roughly 2.4 million m<sup>3</sup>.

This continued decrease reflects our ongoing efforts to improve water efficiency across our operations. In line with our broader sustainability ambitions, we aim to reduce our water consumption by 35% by 2030 compared to 2022 levels.

TOTAL WATER CONSUMPTION (M<sup>3</sup>)



Employees working at the wastewater treatment installation.

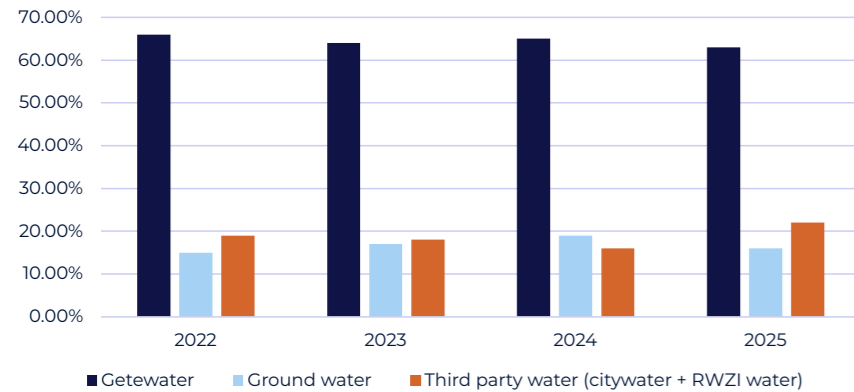


## We use less ground water

Historically, groundwater was Citribel's main water source. In recent years, however, we have taken clear steps to reduce our dependence on groundwater by introducing new water production facilities and diversifying our water supply.

Between 2022 and 2025, groundwater use declined significantly, from around 80% of total water consumption to about 70%. Over the same period, the share of third-party water increased from approximately 20% to 30%. This shift reflects our strategy to make more sustainable use of available water sources, including treated municipal wastewater and increased water reuse.

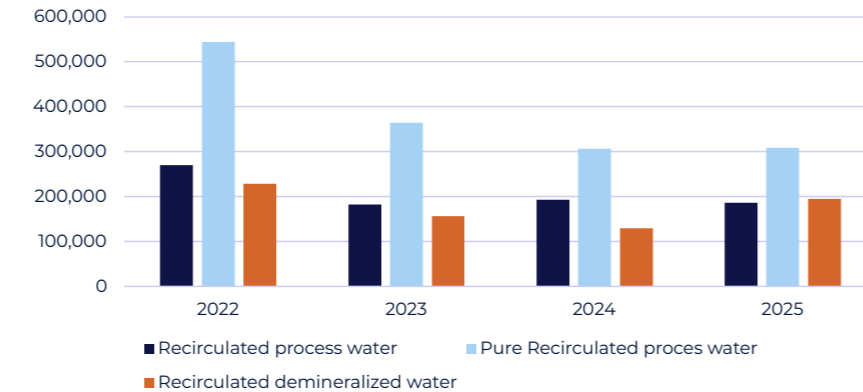
WATER USE BY SOURCE (%)



## We reuse our water

Citribel has been actively enhancing its water reuse practices, incorporating various types of recycled water into its operations. Over the recent years, we have made significant strides in reusing process water, pure recycled process water, and recycled demineralized water. Our commitment to increasing water efficiency is evident from the growing volume of reused water, especially in the categories of pure recycled process water and recycled demineralized water. By optimizing our water recycling processes, we not only conserve valuable resources but also contribute to sustainable water management within our production facilities.

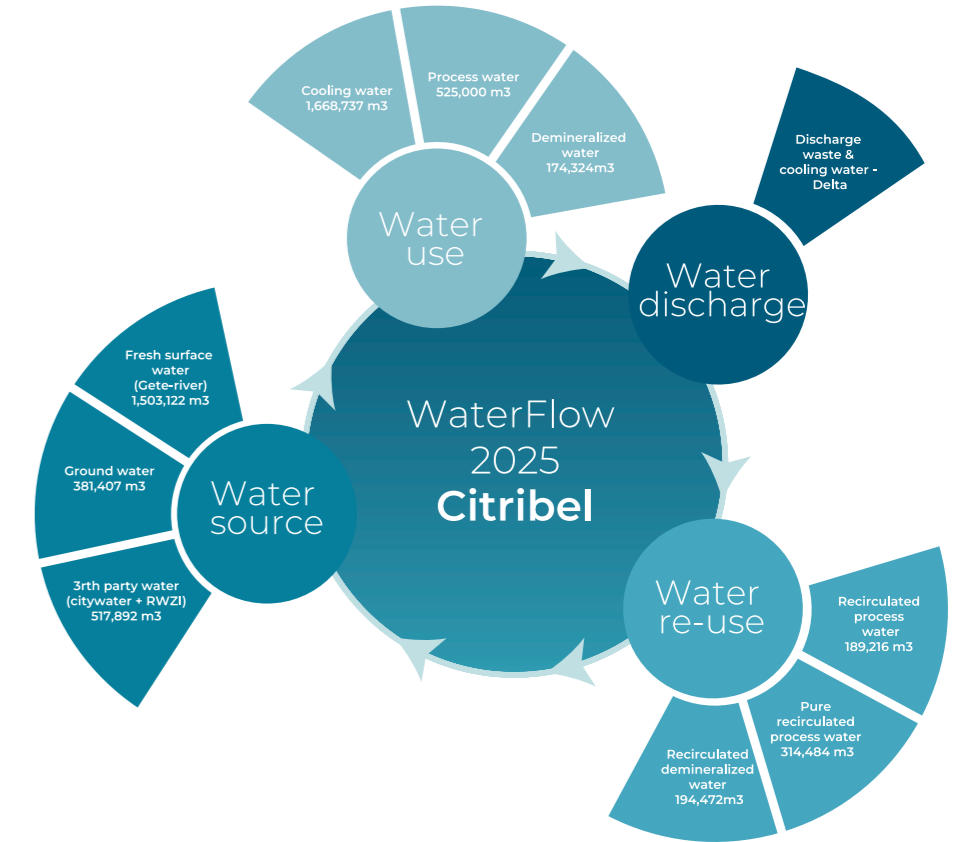
REUSED WATER (M3)



In alignment with our circular mission, we actively promote the reuse of our treated wastewater by local farmers. Our biological water treatment facility ensures that wastewater is meticulously purified, guaranteeing that only pristine water is returned to the natural environment. During instances of water scarcity, we extend this valuable resource for irrigation use within agriculture, horticulture and public landscaping



## Waterflow Citribel 2025



## 4 Avoiding waste and pollution

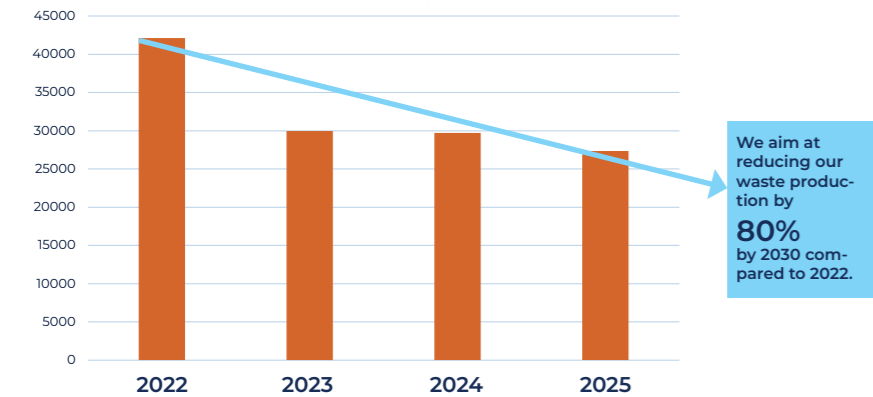
Circularity and maximum use of residual flows are at the core of our DNA. We place a strong emphasis on waste stream minimization and are committed to overall reduction of waste, air pollution and water pollution.

### We reduce waste

At Citribel, waste is minimized by converting most waste streams into valuable products. As a circular company, we're committed to achieving full circularity, including efficient use of the small amount of residual waste. Inevitable waste, such as scrap, wood, and packaging, is collected and processed to the highest standards. Packaging presents a key challenge, and we strive to use low-carbon, recyclable materials.

We aim at reducing our waste production by 80% by 2030 through the implementation of new state of the art technologies that will enable Citribel to avoid waste production.

TOTAL WASTE STREAMS (TONS)



## We strive for clean air, noise reduction and odor control

We have implemented an air emission management plan to prevent and mitigate emissions, especially given our location near residential areas. Combustion emissions from our CHP plant are continuously monitored. Noise and odor emissions are also managed, with a permanent noise measurement system at our site boundaries.

Our main raw material, sugar beet molasses, is sourced from nearby processors to reduce transportation emissions. This local sourcing supports both our production needs and our commitment to minimizing environmental impact.

### We strive for clean water

Citribel operates a large wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that purifies wastewater before releasing it into a nearby water body, helping protect downstream freshwater ecosystems. Our unique "colleagues" goldfish assist by testing water quality before it returns to the environment.

## 5 Strengthening biodiversity

Citribel recognizes the importance of biodiversity in maintaining ecosystem health and is committed to reducing its environmental footprint. We actively work to limit emissions to air and water, with measures like our wastewater treatment and CHP plants. To conserve water, we have reduced groundwater use by 50% since 2016, encourage stormwater infiltration in new projects, and avoid pesticides in outdoor maintenance.

Additionally, Citribel responsibly manages a former landfill, supporting vegetation and wildlife development to further promote biodiversity.

Biodiversity is essential for healthy pollinators, including over 20,000 bee species. At Citribel, we support local pollination with a bee hotel in our green zone, promoting biodiversity and climate resilience. Bees play a crucial role in pollination, which sustains 35% of global agriculture, including local crops like sugar beets that produce sugar molasses. Our bee hotel, though small, is a meaningful part of our supply chain.



## 6 Circularity of our incoming & outgoing materials

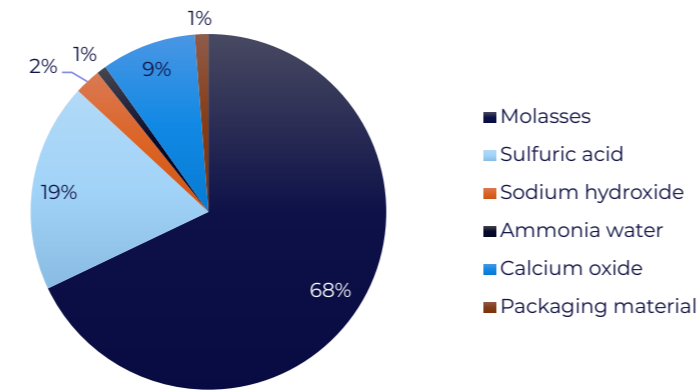
With our unique production process, we efficiently convert raw materials into valuable products for our customers. Our primary inbound material is molasses, a co-product of sugar production, while our outbound materials include citric acid, citrates and other value-added products. Our core operational focus remains on transforming residual streams into practical solutions, significantly reducing waste.

### Circularity of incoming materials

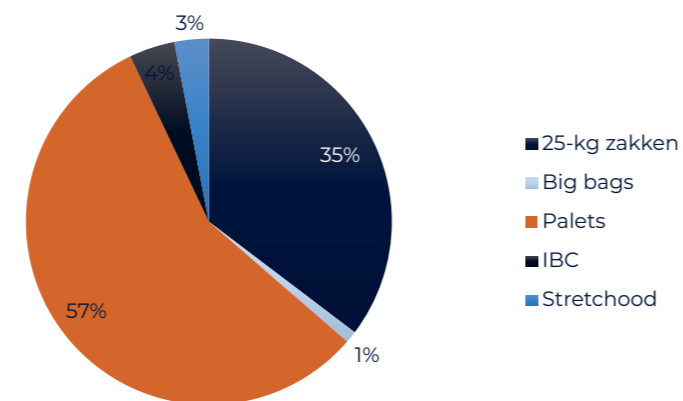
In the year 2025, our incoming material intake continued to reflect a strategic focus on key raw materials. Sugar molasses remained the predominant component, representing 60% of the total volume. Sulfuric acid accounted for 19%, while calcium oxide represented 9% of our incoming materials. Smaller shares included sodium hydroxide (2%), ammonia water (1%) and packaging material (1%).

In our packaging needs, pallets dominated with 57% of the total packaging weight, followed by 25-kg bags at 35%. IBCs accounted for 4%, while stretch hood and big bags represented 3% and 1% respectively. This distribution reflects our ongoing approach to balancing packaging performance, functionality and sustainability. Through close collaboration with our suppliers and clients, we strive to minimize the use of packaging materials while maintaining stringent hygiene standards and optimizing logistical efficiency.

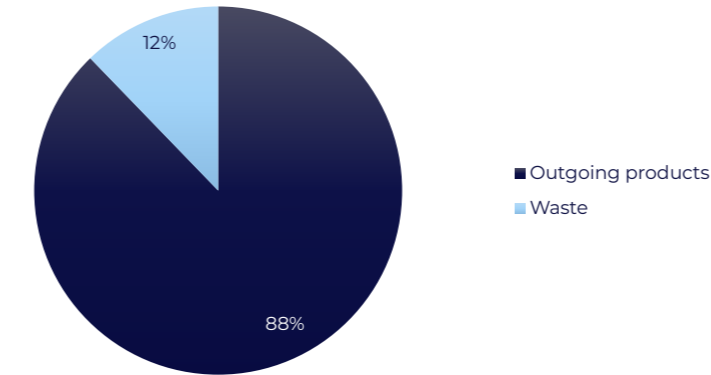
MAIN INCOMING MATERIALS (% BASED ON WEIGHT) 2025



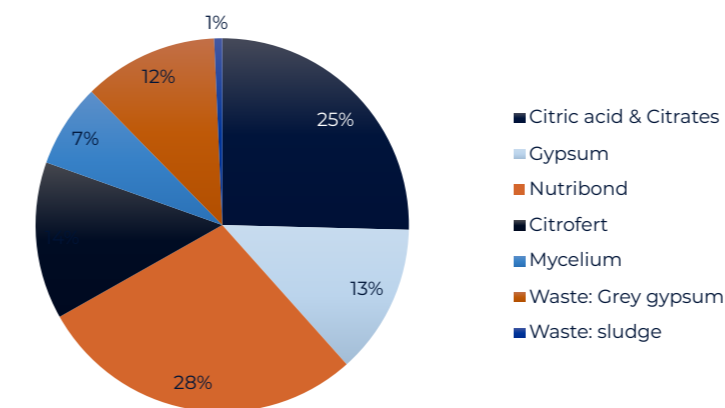
DIVISION PACKAGING MATERIAL (% BASED ON WEIGHT) 2025



MAIN OUTGOING MATERIALS (% BASED ON WEIGHT) 2025



OVERALL OUTGOING MATERIALS (% BASED ON WEIGHT) 2025



### Circularity of outgoing materials

In 2025, our outgoing materials totaled 240,884 tons, encompassing both products for our customers and waste materials. Products destined for our customers made up the majority, accounting for approximately 88% of the total volume, while the remaining 12% was classified as waste.

Our production process yields a diverse array of products. Citric acid and citrates represented 25% of our outgoing materials, while gypsum accounted for 14% and Nutribond for 28%. Additional circular products included Citrofert at 13% and mycelium at 7%. Waste streams consisted mainly of grey gypsum at 12% and sludge at 1%. These figures reflect our continued focus on maximizing the valorisation of side streams and reducing waste through efficient and circular production processes.

# Care for our People

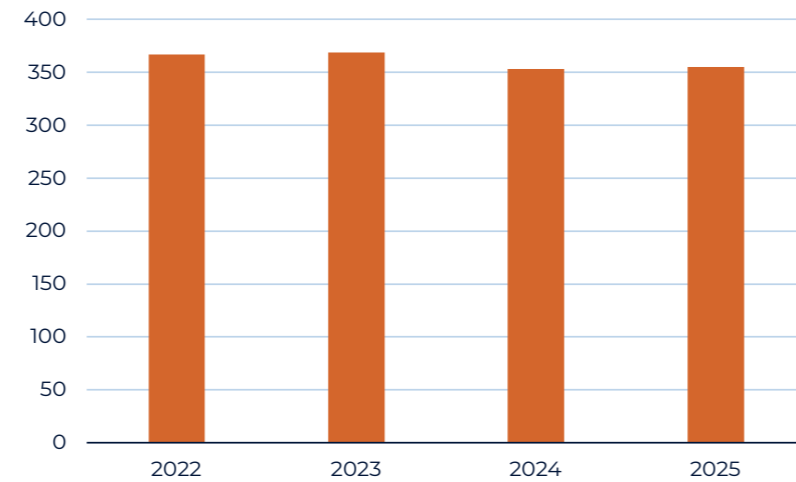
Citribel has a dedicated workforce of approximately 355 employees, showing only limited evolution over the past years.

We place strong emphasis on the well-being and development of our employees by providing a safe, comfortable and purpose-driven working environment. Health and safety remain an important priority, supported by targeted training and continuous attention across the organization. Our HR team contributes broad expertise, helping to create a respectful and inclusive workplace while ensuring compliance with Belgian labour law and addressing individual needs. In addition to safety-related initiatives, employees have access to a wide range of learning opportunities, covering both technical skills and leadership development.

We also attach great importance to constructive social dialogue. Through the Works Council, the Safety Committee (CPBW) and union delegations, employee representatives and management remain in regular contact, supporting collaboration and balanced decision-making throughout the organization.



NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES (HEAD COUNT)



## 1 Focus on health and safety

The safety and well-being of our employees, partners and visitors on site are extremely important to us. As a production company operating heavy machinery, we place a firm emphasis on this topic. We are dedicated to constantly improving the safety culture by various initiatives, such as infrastructure enhancements, continuous education and the systematic implementation of preventive measures. Our goal is to ensure that Citribel is and remains a secure environment for all.

### We monitor and reduce health & safety risks

Health and safety risks are monitored and addressed through frequent and comprehensive risk analyses. These analyses allow us to continuously identify and mitigate the most significant risks. In 2025, a total of 10 work-related incidents were recorded. The most common causes were slip and fall accidents. To reduce these risks, investments were made in infrastructure improvements and additional awareness training. These measures help resolve structural safety issues and strengthen prevention efforts. In addition, thorough maintenance of our installations ensures operational reliability and contributes to reducing potential safety risks.

## Training prevents accidents

Safety and well-being comprises roughly 70% of our training programs. We emphasize inclusivity, as each individual person on our site and every single job or task are relevant when it comes to safety. It is a collective responsibility, shared and carried as a team. While some training courses are mandatory and require periodic renewal, we strive to exceed legal compliance: for instance, forklift training is provided every 5 to 6 years, even though it is legally required only once for every driver. Similarly, we provide VCA training (Safety, Health and Environment Checklist contractors) to all employees, including desk workers.

Our training curriculum covers various health and safety topics such as routine risk assessment, hand safety, slip-, trip- and fall prevention and maintaining a healthy lifestyle during shift work. Further focus areas include confined space procedures, evacuation protocols, heat management and hands-on sessions on fire safety. Additionally, evacuation exercises are organized regularly. To maximize the effectiveness of our training and communication, we employ different methods, including information panels on 8 locations throughout the company to reach non-email users. Our strong commitment to health and safety was recognized during our successful SMETA audit, where this topic is intensely covered.

### The importance of day-to-day -information

During a visit to our site, you will notice information panels strategically placed on various locations. These panels serve as an accessible means of sharing information on health, safety and environmental topics. In addition, they also serve as a source of lighthearted information such as notifying everyone in case of hot weather conditions and fresh ice cream in the company fridge.



An employee driving a forklift at Citribel.



## We attract talent

Citribel is an important employer in the region of Tienen, employing 355 people in 2025. During the year, we welcomed 33 new colleagues, of whom 88% were male and 12% female. In the same period, 31 employees left the company.

Citribel continues to attract candidates who value stability, local presence and a production model with a clear circular focus. For many new employees, these elements are an important part of the company's appeal.

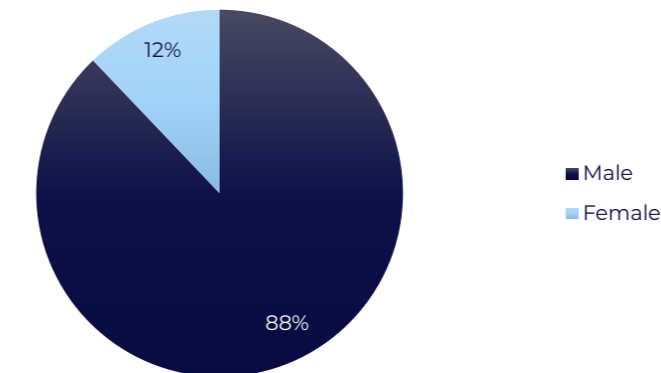
Our onboarding process helps new hires integrate quickly into the organization. From their first day, they are introduced

to the HR team, their colleagues and key internal contacts. They receive a personalized development plan, are assigned a mentor and take part in the "Journey through Citribel" program, which offers insight into our circular production process.

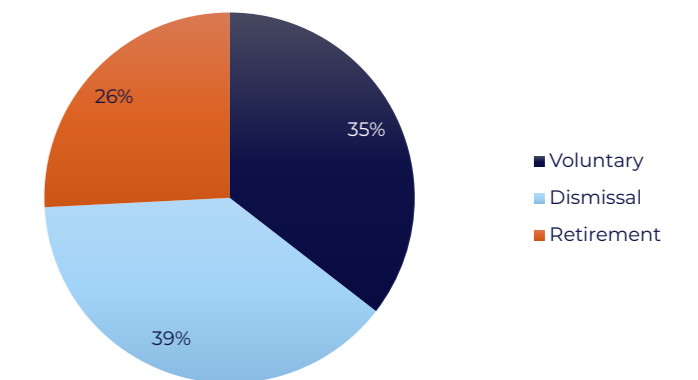
We also offer competitive pay and benefits, including meal vouchers, commuter allowance, insurance, flexible work arrangements and a cafeteria plan.

In 2025, the main reasons for employees leaving Citribel were dismissal (39%), voluntary departure (35%) and retirement (26%).

Newly hired employees per gender (33 total) in 2025



Reasons for employees leaving Citribel in 2025




**"We don't just attract talent – we welcome it, grow it and watch it thrive."**

Irena Coenen - HR Administrator-Recruiter





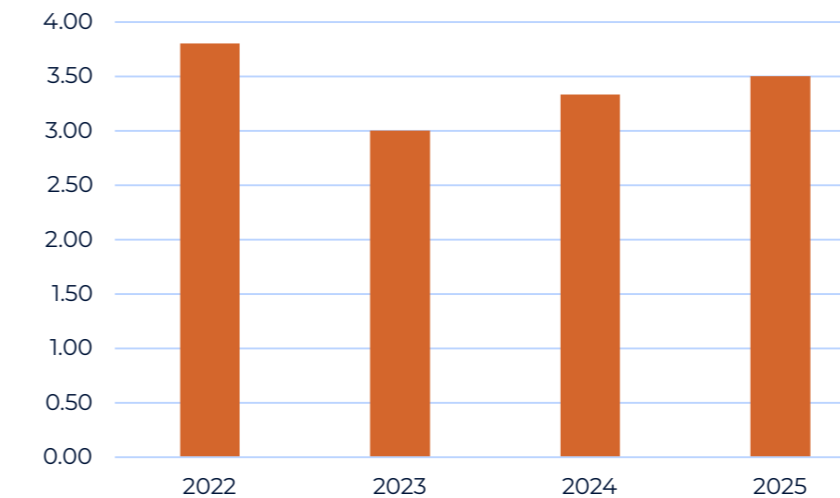
Citribel's HR team. 


## We develop talent

Our training program focuses on three priorities: safety, professional growth and personal development. Employees can strengthen both technical and soft skills, explore other departments and take part in practical training delivered by external experts or in-house specialists. Recent programs, such as Impact for managers, have focused on communication and feedback.

The average number of training days per employee increased from 3.0 in 2023 to 3.3 in 2024 and 3.5 in 2025, showing our ongoing commitment to continuous learning.

Average number of training days in 2024



Citribel's IT team. 

We highly value the interactions within our teams and allocate an annual budget for team-building activities. We also encourage our employees to engage in a range of activities, from leasing electric bikes and playing darts with colleagues to participating in team walks, table tennis, and table soccer games. Additionally, our employees enjoy discounts on a variety of products and events through the 'Benefit at Work' program.

#### Yearly Red Cross Blood Donation Initiative

Our employees also have the opportunity to contribute to community service projects organized by Citribel. One such initiative is our annual blood donation day, hosted in collaboration with Rode Kruis Vlaanderen and neighboring companies. Tiense Suikerraffinaderij, Citribel, BENE0, TMS Industrial Services, and Kim's Chocolates once again joined forces for the sixth edition of their yearly blood drive.

This valuable initiative, organized on the grounds of the Tiense Sugar Refinery, has become a strong tradition since its launch in 2018 and reflects the collective commitment of these companies to corporate social responsibility. In 2025, the initiative recorded its most successful edition to date, with a record number of donors participating.

The blood drive aims to support the Red Cross in maintaining an adequate blood supply, particularly during December when donations typically decline. By bringing blood donation directly to the workplace, the participating companies make it easier for employees to contribute, resulting in a consistently strong turnout and fully occupied donation chairs.

At the end of the event, all donors receive a goodie bag filled with small gifts from the participating companies as a token of appreciation and recognition for their contribution.



Scan the code to review an article about our yearly bloodcollection for redcross



### 3 Improve equality, foster diversity and inclusion

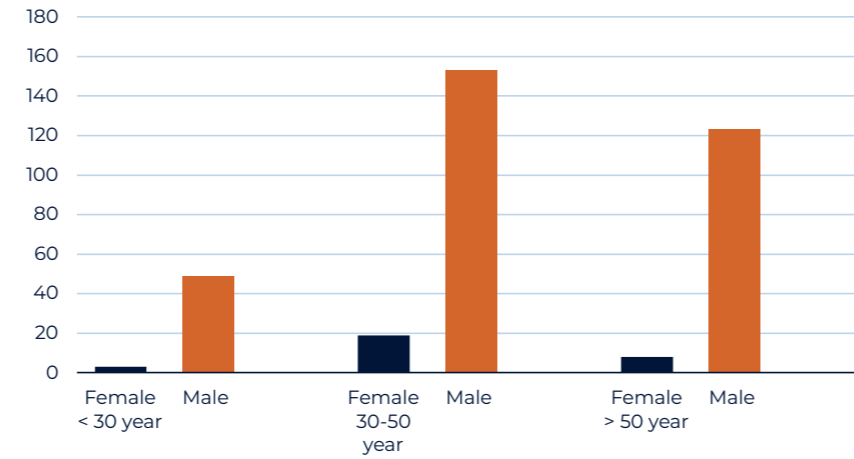
Citribel values equality and aims to foster diversity across genders, cultures and generations. In 2025, our workforce continued to span different age groups, with 15% of employees under 30, 48% between 30 and 50, and 37% over 50. Our workforce remains predominantly male, with 92% male and 8% female employees, reflecting the profile of an industrial production environment. At the same time, we remain committed to strengthening diversity and inclusion across the organization.

We continue to invest in an open and respectful working environment where employees can raise concerns and seek support when needed. In the event of challenges or conflicts, employees can turn to designated confidential counsellors, both internally and externally to the organization. These counsellors receive specialized training to provide attentive listening, advice and mediation support where appropriate.

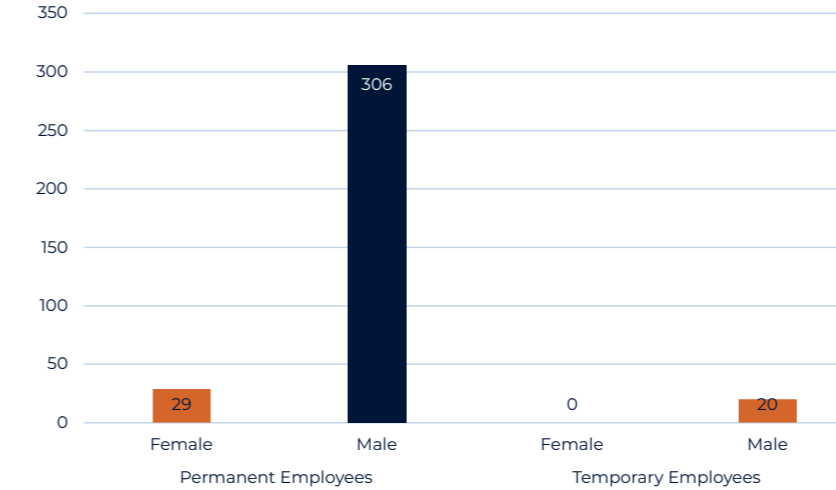
Most of our employees work on a full-time basis (89%), while 11% work part-time. Our workforce also includes a strong majority of employees on longer-term contracts, contributing to stability and continuity across the organization.

Our team is multicultural and brings together a variety of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. We continue to see diversity and inclusion as important elements of a respectful workplace and a strong company culture.

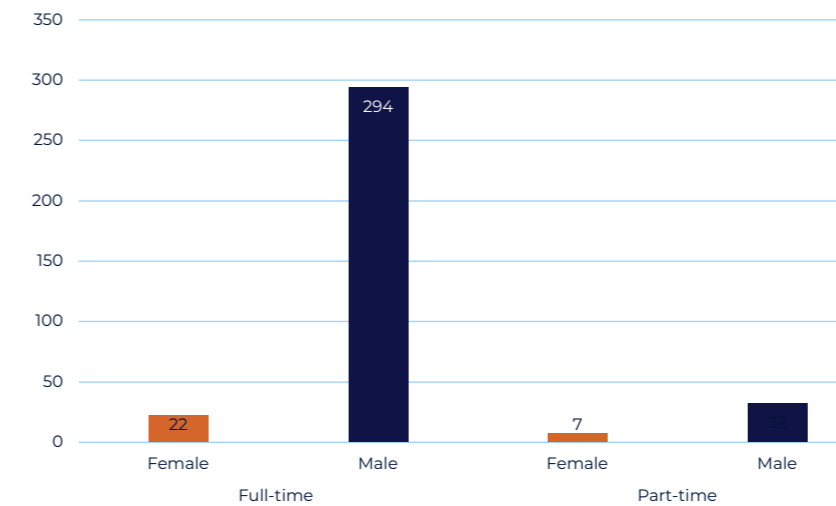
Employees per Age & Gender



Employees permanent vs temporary per gender



Employees Full-time vs Part-time per gender



# Sustainable Procurement

## 1 A responsible & sustainable procurement policy

Our corporate responsibility extends beyond internal operations, including a commitment to improving our environmental and social impact in collaboration with our suppliers. While responsible procurement is central to our values, we view full integration as a continuous journey of learning and enhancement. We expect all our suppliers to endorse our Supplier Code of Conduct.

This Supplier Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that suppliers, third-party suppliers and subcontractors meet our principles and commitments to ethical practices, while fostering a sustainable and resilient supply chain. These principles are in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations in force. We have incorporated the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact (UN GC) into our strategies, policies and procedures. These are all in alignment with our longstanding commitment to contributing to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and to our Code of Conduct which are communicated to all our stakeholders. Citribel expects its suppliers to comply with relevant legislation and internationally recognized environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards, including those contained in our Supplier Code of Conduct. Suppliers must collaborate along their supply chain to continuously improve and protect the environment as well as to respect human rights. All our efforts will enable us to decrease our overall environmental footprint and ensure sustainable and responsible business throughout the entire supply chain.



Citribel's marketing Team.

Our recently updated Code of Conduct, built on 11 core principles like "non-excessive working hours," "payment of a living wage," "equal opportunities," and "environmental protection," applies to our workforce and extends to our customers and suppliers.

We prioritize local collaboration, working with regional contractors on-site and sourcing materials locally whenever possible. Employees can also reach out to trained internal and external confidants for support on any workplace concerns.



Scan for our supplier code of conduct



Scan for our code of conduct



# Good Governance

Founded in 1919, Citribel builds on a strong history while looking to the future. Good governance is key to our long-term sustainability and success. Sustainability and circularity are central to our organizational structure. For over 20 years, we have invested in a dynamic R&D team focused on circular solutions, supported by collaboration across departments.

As our core business revolves around circularity, sustainability is ingrained in our strategic framework and consequential choices. It is essential that our teams are supported by a dedicated management team and a board with a strong focus on sustainability. Employees can turn to designated confidants, both internal and external to the organization. These confidants undergo specialized training to offer attentive listening, advice and mediation services in response to inquiries, grievances or workplace conflicts.



Citribel's confidants.

## 1 Business ethics & business conduct

### Code of conduct

Citribel emphasizes ethical business conduct as a key part of our corporate governance. We are committed to eliminating corruption, including bribery, fraud, conflicts of interest, and money laundering. We expect all stakeholders to uphold the highest standards of equality, respect, and honesty, avoiding anti-competitive practices and espionage. These principles form the foundation of our Code of Conduct, which includes 11 guiding principles for ethical standards. Employees, clients, and suppliers are expected to comply with this Code. Specific training sessions help our employees understand and apply these principles, while suppliers are asked to endorse our Code or provide equivalent documentation.

### Whistleblowing system

Citribel takes a proactive approach in enabling stakeholders to voice their concerns throughout the entire value chain, both within and outside the organization. To facilitate this, a whistleblowing portal has been established, providing a confidential and anonymous way to manage concerns and complaints. Our "Speak-up" initiative has been introduced to our employees through a newsletter and communication boards and has been incorporated in our Code of Conduct.



citribel.  
speakup.  
report/  
whistle-  
blowing



## 2 Process management & operational excellence

### Operational excellence

Efficient operations are key to achieving Citribel's sustainability goals. We focus on operational excellence, continuous improvement, and fostering collaboration across teams to drive innovation and synergy.

Our Research & Development (R&D) team plays a vital role in improving circular processes by reducing water, energy, and raw material use. Their projects are developed in close collaboration with product managers to ensure practical implementation and scaling.

Innovation thrives across our organization through structured tools for documenting, scoring, and assessing improvement ideas. Additionally, we use LEAN methodologies, such as process improvement training and work boards, to enhance daily operations and track progress.

### Daily meetings for reflection and improvement

In our production departments, magnetic boards display daily operational data and action items. These boards serve as our workstations for documenting concerns and corresponding actions. Teams gather daily to discuss critical subjects such as safety, quality and potential issues, as such promoting a problem-solving culture where members take ownership and collaborate to share knowledge.

**“Citric acid production and biomass formation go hand in hand. Just like citric acid, the components of biomass potentially have thousands of applications. At Citribel, we explore how to extract these in an environmentally conscious way, ensuring Citribel can thrive for another hundred years.”**

Kiandro Fortuna – Project manager innovation



Citribel's innovation & fermentation laboratory team.



## Product quality, customer health & safety

Citribel provides raw materials for industries such as food, beverages, pharmaceuticals, and animal feed. Quality is a top priority, with rigorous assessments ensuring product safety and reliability.

Our Quality Assurance (QA) team oversees key tasks like approving raw materials and finished products, managing certificates and audits, and handling inquiries and complaints. Customer Service works closely with QA, with a dedicated team member managing client inquiries and supporting audit and certification processes.

We follow a 'first-time-right' approach, ensuring products meet standards before release. If issues arise, our QA team investigates promptly, aiming to resolve complaints within two weeks.

**“Sustainability is an inseparable part of our quality system. Our QA team is dedicated to always implementing the latest food safety standards, which today are heavily linked with topics such as food waste prevention, at which Citribel excels with its innovative co-products. We are continuously working on expanding the awareness and importance of quality and the creation of a strong food safety culture.”**

Nathan Lievens - QA Officer

To underscore and verify our commitment to quality, Citribel has obtained numerous certifications and quality labels, including ISO 9001, ISO 22000, FSSC 22000, GMP+, Non-GMO IP, Non-gmo project verified, Halal and Kosher. We also maintain compliance with the ISO 14001 environmental standards and have successfully completed both Ecovadis evaluations and SMETA audits.



### 3 ICT cybersecurity, privacy & innovation

Within our operational framework, we prioritize ICT security, privacy and innovation. We conduct thorough assessments of operational security risks and assure continuous cybersecurity training for both white and blue collars. We are fully GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliant and have a dedicated Data Protection Officer responsible for upholding all relevant guidelines. During all operations we stick strictly to all applicable rules. Our goal is not to use the latest technology but to use innovative technologies to help the company to reach its goals and to ensure a sustainable ICT infrastructure which decreases its carbon footprint year over year.

#### Cybersecurity & privacy

The implementation of technical cybersecurity solutions is very logical and the easiest part. But the important detail that is often forgotten is the 'human' firewall. We don't leave our users in the dark and make sure they get good cybersecurity trainings. Over 250 white collar employees are enrolled in bi-weekly online cybersecurity trainings. During this program they are regularly tested and if they don't pass a test they get additional training. Our blue collar employees get cybersecurity training in classroom format during the planned training days.

To ensure that the acquired knowledge is correctly applied we routinely conduct phishing tests. A simulated cyber-attack by ethical hackers is also part of our efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of our security measures. It speaks for itself that we have taken also all additional measures to become compliant with the European NIS2 guidelines.

We assure that, whenever we start a collaboration with another organization, the security aspect is integrated as of the start of the collaboration. Remote connections to our environment are only allowed through a Privileged Access Management system which has a strict enrollment procedure. Access to data is only allowed on when absolutely necessary and under strict conditions. Rights which are no longer needed are withdrawn asap.

#### Innovation

Our goal is not to use the latest technologies. But we use innovative technologies to help us to reach our company goals in the best possible conditions. A close collaboration with all the different business units ensures that we understand their needs and that we can be pro-active in offering the necessary solutions to help them. We always assure that any solution or platform we integrate help us to increase efficiency, decrease energy usage, thus our carbon footprint and help Citribel to become a better biotech company.

#### Closing the circle with a heart for digital inclusion and accessibility

As part of our corporate responsibility efforts, we donate outdated ICT equipment to social organizations: 'Close the Gap' and 'Digital for Youth'. 'Close the Gap' is an international organization dedicated to bridging the digital divide by providing IT devices to projects in developing and emerging countries. 'Digital for Youth' focuses on ensuring safe and easy access to digital resources for children and teenagers in Belgium.

**“Citribel’s ICT department is a privileged service provider helping the different business units to reach the company goals.”**

Geert Reynaerts - ICT Manager



## 4 Internal & external communication

### Internal communication

Strengthening Citribel's sustainability culture depends on effective internal communication. We use various channels to keep sustainability & circularity front and center, and we welcome feedback from our staff.

While circularity has always been part of Citribel's foundation, we have increased communication efforts in recent years to further embed these values. Internal communication is essential for engaging new team members in our sustainable practices.

We promote sustainability through information boards, displays/screens, orientation sessions, management meetings, team gatherings, and training programs. We have also created a company-wide SharePoint to share news and access important documents. Key announcements are communicated via email to ensure everyone stays informed. These efforts foster a strong sustainability culture, empowering employees to act as ambassadors for our values.



Citribel's process improvement engineer interviewed by VOKA.



### External communication

We take great pride in our sustainability initiatives and ensure to promote these efforts transparently to all our stakeholders.

Citribel and its circular journey frequently feature in the media. In the past years, articles have been published on platforms such as 'vrt news', 'Nieuwsblad' and 'ROB tv', highlighting our plans for the future. Additionally, 'Kanaal Z' aired a report on Citribel. We further advance our sustainability approach by participating in events organized by institutions such as 'Vlaio', 'Voka', 'Leuven Mindgate' and 'Etion', among others.

In addition to these extensive communication channels, we are dedicated to fostering an active and transparent relationship with our immediate community. This entails hosting information days and consultation sessions regarding upcoming projects, as well as conducting regular 'neighborhood committee meetings'. In these gatherings, we openly address inquiries and consider suggestions related to our daily operations. We maintain a 24/7 communication channel for our neighbors to reach out to us.



Joris Merckx, CEO of Citribel interviewed by scandinavian journalists.





## About this report

This document represents Citribel's third sustainability report and is the initial step in our trajectory towards aligning with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). Within this report, we present our sustainability strategy, disclose our ambitions, assess our performance and evaluate our activities throughout the calendar year 2025. Additionally, we underscore initiatives set for the near and medium-term horizon. Over time, we intend to progressively enhance the quantification of our sustainability objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs), while concurrently expanding the reporting scope in line with our sustainability priorities.

**Sustainability**  
Ruben Hoofwijk  
Emmanuel Raskin

**Content, graphics & layout**  
Sietske de Graaf

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**THANK  
YOU!**