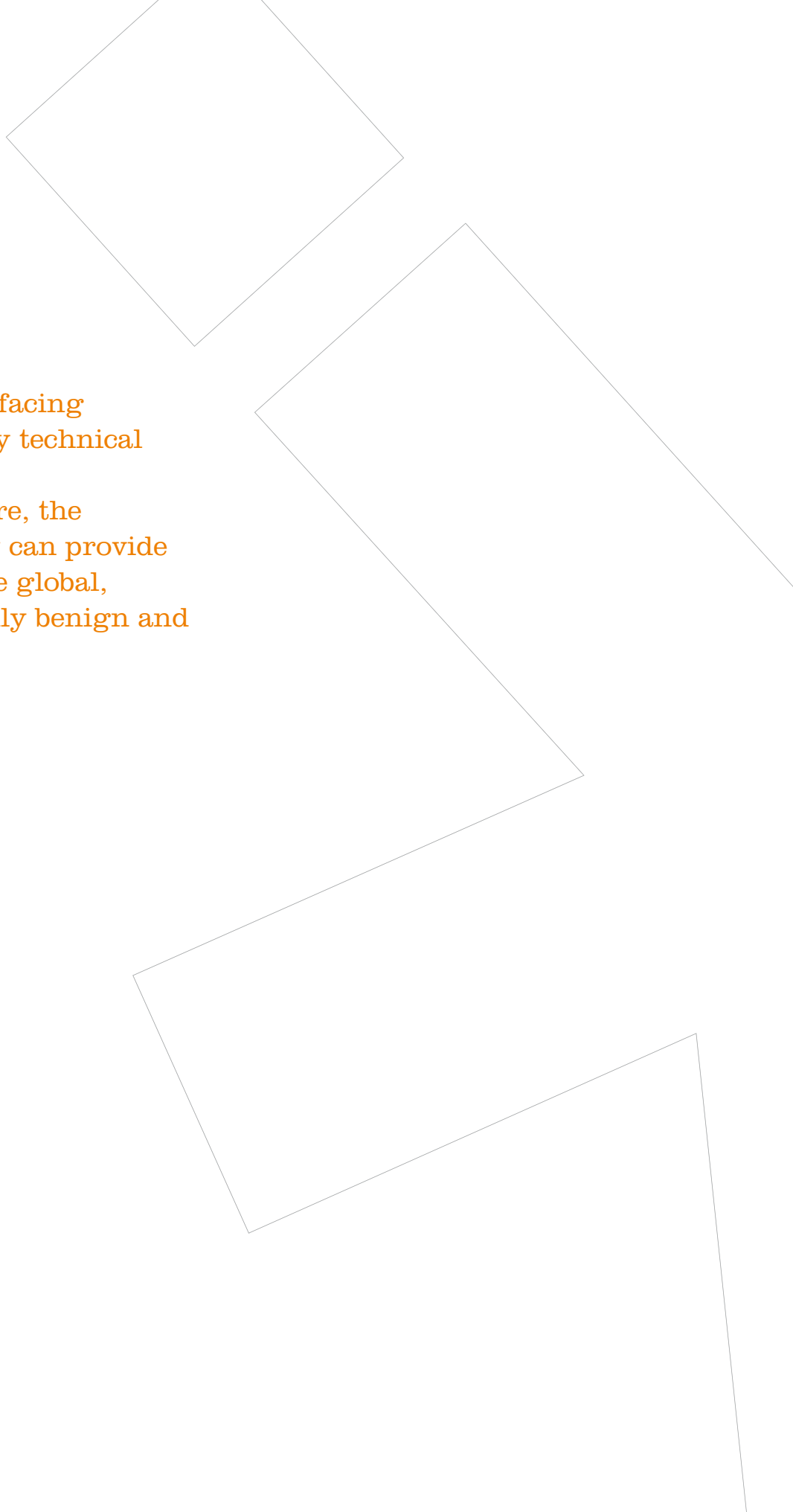




YRA

Type: GST20 Art. No. 206032
Leica AG, CH 9435 Heerbrugg
Manufactured: 02.1989

The background features several large, light gray, tilted rectangular shapes that create a sense of depth and movement. These shapes are arranged in a way that suggests a path or a series of steps, with some overlapping others. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

In the past, the challenges facing the railways were primarily technical or technological.

As they move into the future, the railways need to show they can provide transport solutions that are global, competitive, environmentally benign and socially acceptable.

Reconquering the railways

As the owner and manager of the Belgian railway network, Infrabel is developing the assets entrusted to it – the result of more than a century and a half of investment – and is helping to meet the mobility needs of present and future generations while respecting the environment.

There are many exciting challenges – including optimising the network so it can carry more freight and passengers, creating synergies with other modes of transport, meeting social expectations in terms of service quality, comfort, flexibility and accessibility, or maintaining an active and resolute involvement in the politics of sustainable development.

Infrabel is also working to enhance its offering by improving the way it allocates capacity in the Belgian railway network. It concentrates investment on projects with high value-added, with particular emphasis on developing intermodality and mobility in Belgium. It provides its customers with a safe, reliable and efficient network.

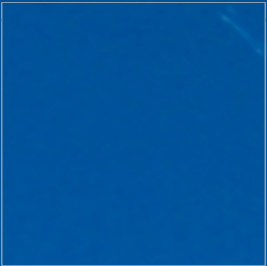
The 12,500-strong workforce are busy managing, maintaining, developing and promoting the network, daily reaffirming Infrabel's commitment along these lines.

This commitment will help turn Infrabel's network into a model of interoperability and efficiency, genuinely asserting its position as the crossroads of Europe.



Luc Lallemand
Chief Executive Officer

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luc Lallemand'.



29.74

74



1

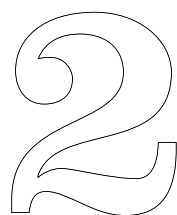
Infrabel

Who's Infrabel?

8

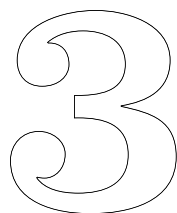
The future with BRIO

10



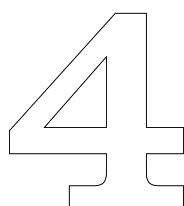
2

What we do



3

Infrabel at the heart of the economy



4

Infrabel – a key player in sustainable development

Who's Infrabel?

Infrabel manages, maintains, renews and develops the Belgian railway network. It also allocates paths to Belgian and foreign operators. The company was established on 1 January 2005 when European directives on the liberalisation of the railway network were implemented in Belgian law. It employs 12,500 people and has an annual turnover of around 1 billion euros.

Mission

→ **A Belgian autonomous public enterprise**, Infrabel's mission is to work within the European railway network to improve sustainable mobility and support economic and social development in Belgium. As the manager of the Belgian railway infrastructure, Infrabel is required to provide its customers with a competitive infrastructure that is able to meet existing and future needs. Against this backdrop it maintains, manages, extends and enhances the railway infrastructure. It is also responsible for traffic regulation and safety.



Values

- A sense of responsibility
- Integrity
- Commitment to the customer
- Attention to detail
- Team spirit and trustworthiness
- Open-mindedness, transparency and motivation

Vision

- Infrabel's ambition is to become the **crossroads of Europe**. Optimum **reliability** and **accessibility** in the network are the keys to achieving this goal. The company is therefore putting everything it has into developing high-performance technology that meets the needs of all the stakeholders while guaranteeing the best possible integration between the different modes of transport.

The future with BRIO

Belgian Railway Infrastructure Objectives

Ever since it was created, Infrabel has made a point of setting itself ambitious objectives. These objectives are contained in its strategic plan called BRIO, which defines its vision, its mission and the essential values it aims to cultivate within the company.



23 priorities



The result of wide-ranging internal and external consultations, the BRIO plan (Belgian Railway Infrastructure Objectives) identifies **23 strategic priorities** directly linked to the company's many responsibilities (technical, financial, commercial, etc.). Each of these priorities is subject to a **performance indicator** and an **implementation schedule**. A **steering committee**, the BRIO task force, is responsible for following up the implementation of every one of the priorities.



8 strategic directions

The global strategy of Infrabel is based on eight major strategic directions, which are closely linked to the public service obligations entrusted to Infrabel. Of course, **safety** is at the top of the list, followed by **punctuality** and **modernisation** of the assets. Next is the need to listen carefully to the requirements of **customers** and to meet their expectations. Infrabel also plans on becoming a leading player working for **sustainable mobility**. And it is aiming for further performance improvements in **management** and in the way it handles its **investment** projects, and for continuing financial stability in its activities. Finally its **human resources policies** give pride of place to knowledge transfer and to training.



Safety without compromise

For Infrabel, safety comes first. Painstaking infrastructure maintenance with regular inspections, improvement and modernisation of facilities, vigilance of the staff, strict adherence to procedures... After all, safety is the first objective of the strategic plan, in accordance with European Commission directives on railway safety.

For Europe, safety is everyone's business

The European Commission's policy of liberalisation of the railway has brought about a number of changes in the way railway safety is managed. Today, **safety is the responsibility of the infrastructure manager** (Infrabel in Belgium) **and the operators**. Indeed, the infrastructure as well as the rolling stock must be certified. To obtain authorisation to access the network, the operators also have to show that they are familiar with the rules and safety procedures that must be followed.

Preventive safety in the Belgian network

Infrabel operates a policy of preventive safety. A large number of safety and verification procedures guarantee passengers that their journey will be problem-free. A rigorous **reporting** system allows the main causes of incidents and accidents to be identified and acted upon. The railway infrastructure also undergoes **inspection** and **continuous maintenance**. The 3,400 km of track and their immediate surroundings are subjected to detailed inspections, along with bridges, tunnels and perimeter fencing. In addition, there is a plan of action specifically aimed at improving safety on level crossings. Level crossings tend to cause car accidents, so depending on the location, they are modernised or replaced with the safer options of tunnels or bridges.

Towards a standardised European railway network

With a view to further improving the safety and performance of railway transport in the region, Europe wants to harmonise the European railway network and impose greater interoperability, aiming to abolish the kind of technological boundaries that result from the diversity of equipment used by the national networks. For example, a standardised traffic management system called **ERTMS** (European Rail Traffic Management System) has been developed. It consists of a **digital mobile telephone network**, GSM-R (GSM for Railways), and a **signalling system called ETCS** (European Train Control System). ETCS allows trains to travel faster than 160 km/h in perfect safety – on the sections that allow these speeds – and also incorporates an automatic stop system to prevent signals being passed at red.



Punctuality: calling time on late running

Trains follow each other at different intervals depending on the time of day. The slightest delay can disrupt all the other traffic. That makes punctuality essential to the operation of a railway network. Especially as a staggering 500,000 travellers depend on the train to get them to their destination on time.

Knock-on effect?

The train timetable is based on the theoretical time needed to complete the planned journey. It also includes a margin to absorb any short delays, for example slow running for a short time, or waiting for connecting passengers to change trains. For optimum network management, the timetable must also take account of the speed of the trains and the number of stations served. And because one delay often causes another, providing regular traffic is a daily challenge!

Delay? Action!

Traffic Control, like a kind of airport control tower, constantly monitors traffic, taking immediate action if there is any departure from the timetable. To limit the repercussions of a delay, Traffic Control (national) coordinates the movement of trains by giving precise instructions to the **signal boxes** (local): prioritising trains, changing particular routes, altering connections, etc. The staff in the signal boxes then **inform** passengers in the station of any service alterations using speakers and displays.

Plan of action following detailed analysis

To **prevent** disruptions, **limit** their consequences and **inform** passengers as fully as possible, Infrabel has implemented a plan of action. The plan of action envisages installing **PA systems** at the halts, deploying **a senior manager** in the major signal boxes at peak times, establishing **rapid intervention teams** to repair technical breakdowns in the network as quickly as possible, etc.



Constant modernisation

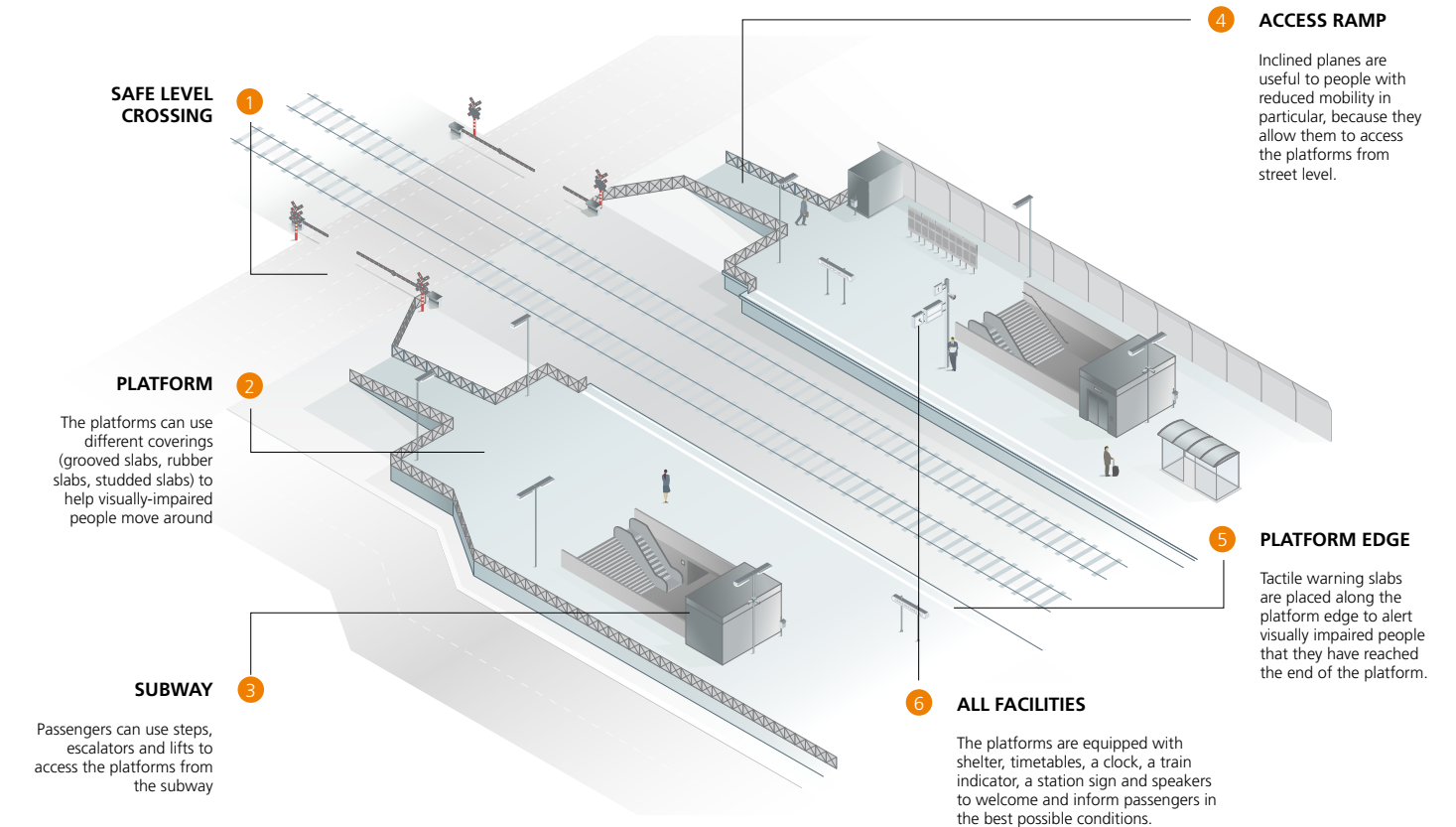
Because the technology is changing all the time, Infrabel can never stop modernising its infrastructure. This is how it manages to maintain the Belgian network, even increasing capacity and improving the coordination of traffic. It is a policy of modernisation that also seeks to improve the working conditions of the personnel and to bolster their safety as they carry out their day-to-day activities.

Making sections more productive

To keep its customers happy, Infrabel needs to be certain that its infrastructure allows passenger trains and freight trains to run according to their allocated paths. A path is the infrastructure capacity allocated to each train so that it can run. Major railway infrastructure work has been done to **raise the approach speed to certain stations** or **increase the number of tracks** in certain sections. This gains precious minutes.

Stations and halts that are accessible to all

At the stations and halts, Infrabel is working to improve access to all platforms. Indeed, Infrabel is responsible for construction of, equipping and maintenance of stations. It also plays an important part in improving the flow and distribution of passengers along the platform to optimise boarding and alighting. Access ramps, escalators and lifts, wider steps, single-level access, adequate shelter: everything is designed to help the able-bodied and less able-bodied move around easily. Need to change trains in a station you're unfamiliar with? Nothing must slow down the passengers. Good signage, an efficient announcement system and effective lighting all guide them to their train.



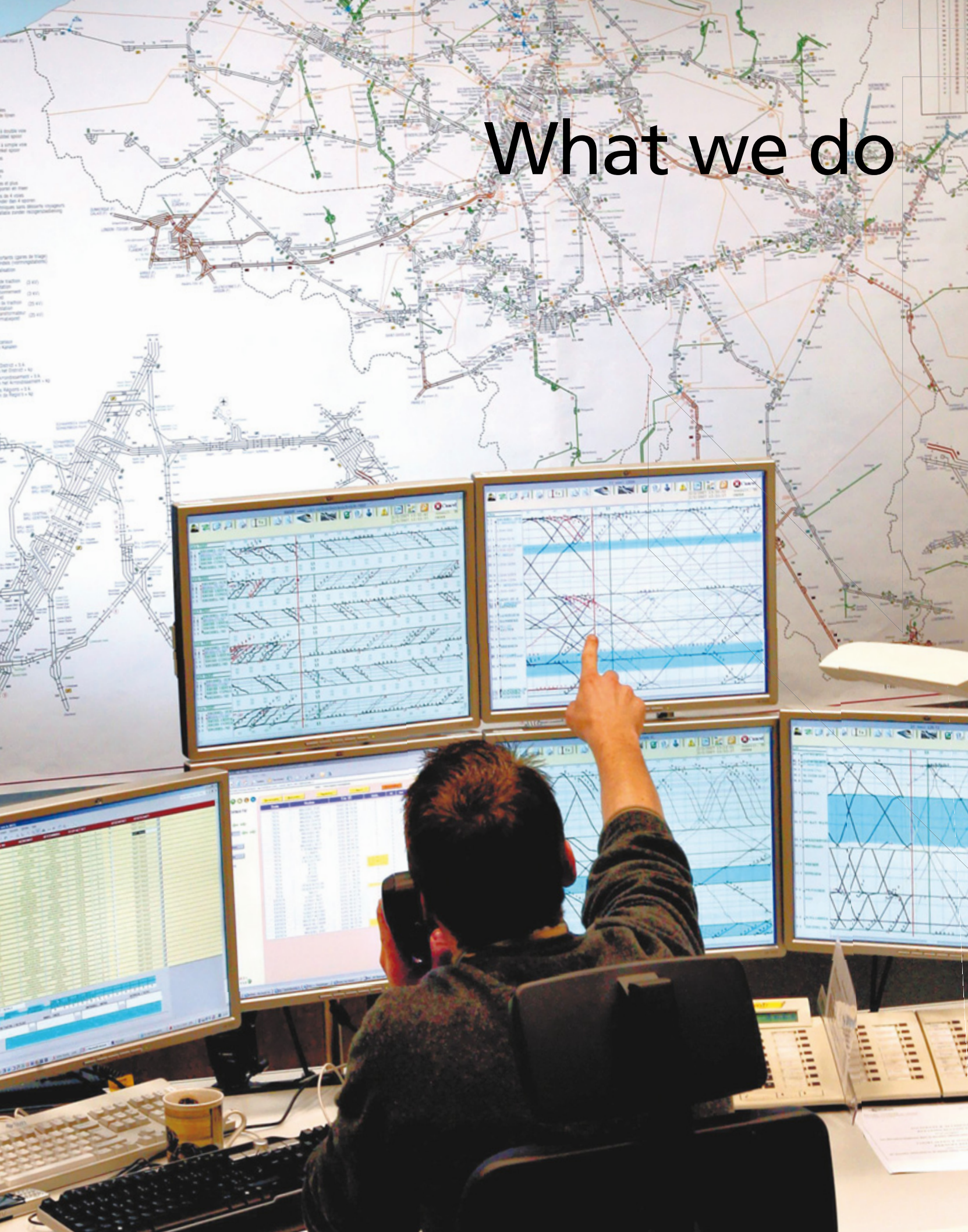
Modernising and consolidating signal boxes

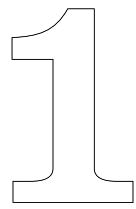
In order to reorganise the local control of railway traffic and to make sure it runs smoothly, Infrabel is grouping and modernising its signal boxes – the nerve centres of the railway network. Eventually the network will only have **31 large ultramodern signal boxes** (with standardised technologies, better acoustics, improved ergonomics and reliability, etc.) compared to 368 in 2005. They will all be equipped with **VDU-based control panels** to improve the way traffic is tracked. A **traffic management simulator** can be used to train personnel, in a realistic environment, how to manage incidents in their own area. A European first!

Reorganising the logistics centres

There are 70 **Infrastructure Logistics Centres**, responsible for construction, equipping, maintenance, upkeep and monitoring of the tracks, level crossings, overhead lines, points, etc. These centres are gradually consolidating and replacing the existing 200 or so facilities. The various infrastructure skills are all represented in each centre, making it easier to plan and coordinate work on the ground. This is also why Infrabel is investing in remote diagnostics equipment and in new tools that are compatible with new procedures.

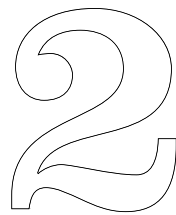
What we do





1

Infrabel



2

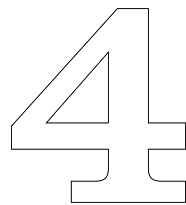
What we do



3

Infrabel at the heart of the economy

Encouraging commerce	32
Removing goods vehicles from the roads	34
High speed from border to border	42
Giving wings to Brussels National Airport	44



4

**Infrabel – a key player
in sustainable development**

Encouraging commerce

Railways provide a boost for commerce. They help people get to work. They encourage travel. They generate a large number of direct and indirect jobs. They can be used to deliver a range of goods. They provide companies with a way of exporting their merchandise. They are particularly environmentally friendly. In a word, the railways shift people, mentalities, the economy...





Railways – a vehicle of economic development in Belgium and Europe

Railway transport injects dynamism into trade and commerce between the regions of Europe. It also encourages the development of local economies and regional employment areas. The classic network, connected to high-speed lines, allows regions to be **opened up** and integrated economically with the European Union. Investing an annual average of one billion euros on developing the railway lines also makes Infrabel **one of the biggest investors and employers** in the country.

Intermodality for freer-flowing traffic

Road congestion and the negative environmental consequences that go with it require a new and more responsible way of managing trips. Abandoning the roads for other modes of transport needs to become **automatic** when it comes to moving people or transporting goods. In this context, too, Infrabel can play its part in taking up the challenge of mobility by helping – primarily through its investments – to strengthen intermodality with other modes of transport.

Planning ahead for better mobility

Infrabel has a long-term vision. Projects taking years or even decades can only be implemented if the **construction sites of tomorrow** are established now, able to respond to growing mobility requirements. Every day the offering grows – tracks are doubled, capacity management is improved, or work is carried out to increase the speed of the trains.

1

billion euros invested on average per year

12,748

railway workers looking after safety, maintenance and track modernisation, and managing train operations on a day-to-day basis.

8,000

km of congested roads in Europe.

Removing goods vehicles from the roads

Although at present road transport is the preferred mode of transport for freight, the predicted growth of European trade will have to rely on the development of other more sustainable modes.



Supporting the development of ports

Sea and rail are natural partners. That is why Infrabel aims to strengthen **sea-rail** intermodality by developing a railway infrastructure that is compatible with the future needs of ports. Ports account for an impressive **10% of Belgian GDP**. They are a perfect opportunity for the railways to show off their ecological and economic superiority when it comes to transporting freight. The scale of operations in the ports makes it less expensive to charter entire trains (because only one type of freight is loaded, and transport is between one sender and one recipient).

Freight and hubs

The **network of terminals** covers the whole of the country. The terminals are where the goods are assembled, sorted and then loaded onto international trains, lorries or barges. Infrabel is banking on the attractiveness of these hubs, which have the enormous advantage of meeting the growing demand for safe and environmentally-friendly transport.

European corridors

It is clearly necessary to develop international **freight corridors** – railway motorways dedicated to the transport of goods – in order to handle the growing number of containers arriving at the ports of Antwerp and Zeebrugge. Against this background, Infrabel is working on projects of an international scale, such as the reopening of the Iron Rhine (Antwerp-Germany) and the development of corridor C (Antwerp/Basle-Lyon).



700

million euros invested in creating a direct link between the two banks of the Scheldt river.

36

million euros allocated by the European Commission to develop Corridor C between 2007 and 2013

291,741

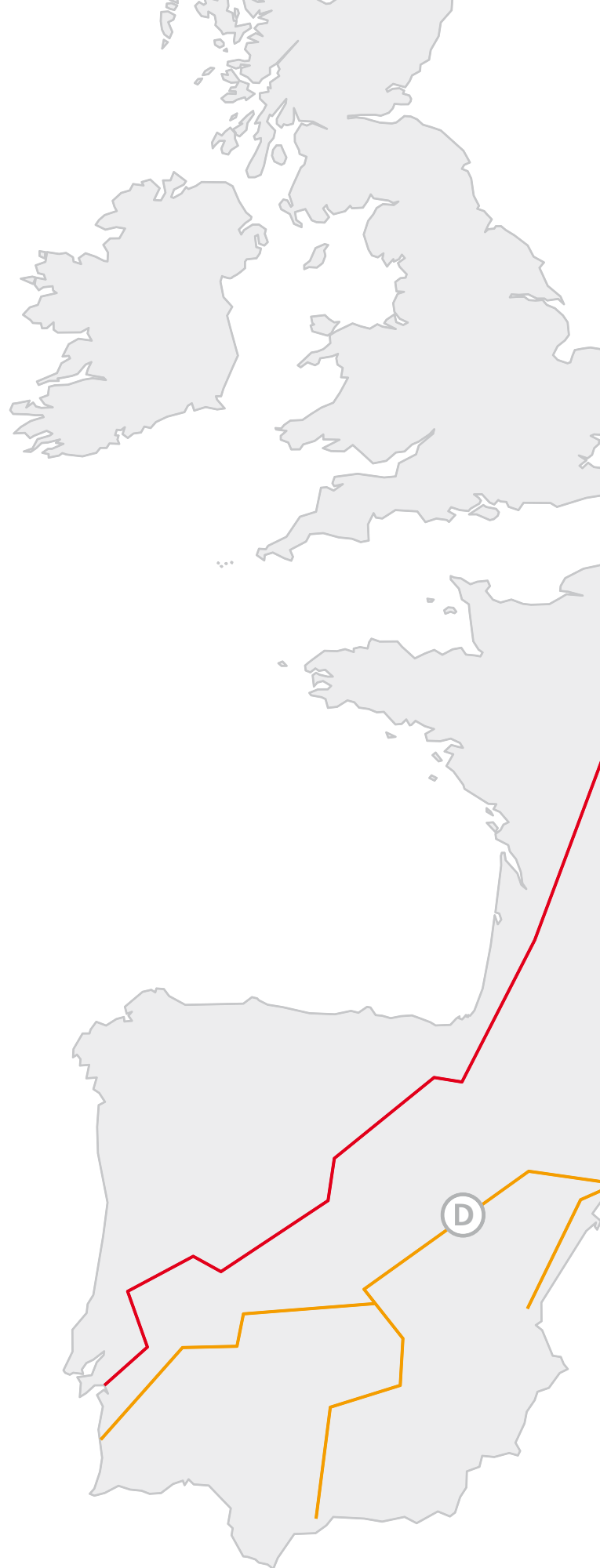
freight trains used the Infrabel network in 2007

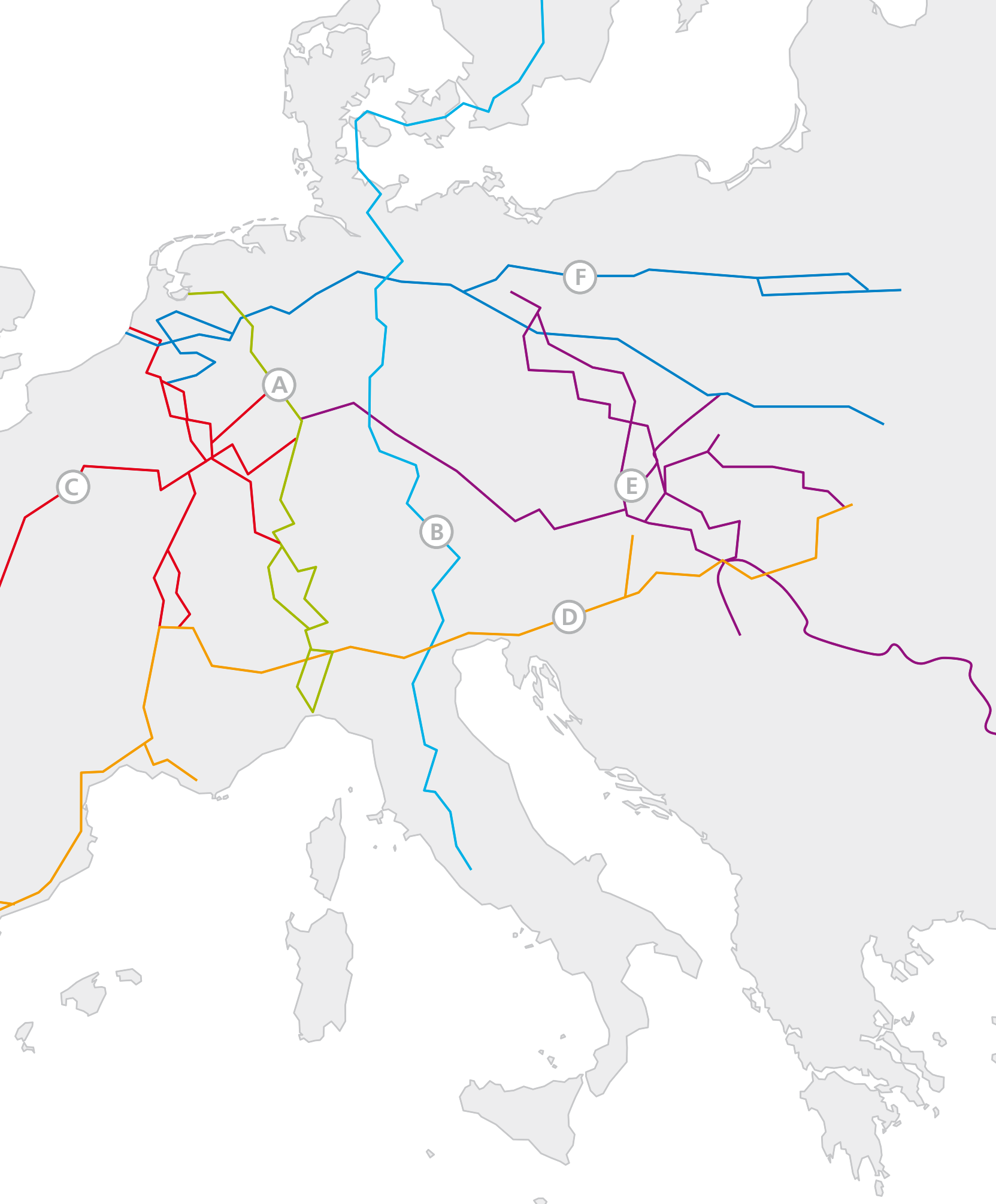
Freight across Europe

Transeuropean freight corridors with possible extensions

- A** Rotterdam - Genoa
- B** Naples - Berlin - Stockholm
- C** Antwerp - Basle / Lyon
- D** Seville - Lyon - Turin - Trieste - Ljubljana
- E** Dresden - Prague - Brno - Vienna - Budapest
- F** Duisburg - Berlin - Warsaw

Corridors enjoying financial support from the European Union to install the ERTMS system and initiatives to improve usage and interoperability.





The railways - preferred partner for the port of Antwerp

Eddy Bruyninckx

Managing Director of the port of Antwerp



Antwerp – more capacity to prepare for the future

The port of Antwerp performs a crucial function at European level, and makes a significant contribution to Belgian prosperity. With port activities constantly growing, and in order to further strengthen rail-sea intermodality, Infrabel has developed a strategy of concentric circles aimed at supporting this growth by increasing railway capacity on the left bank as well as the right bank.

Increasing the railway capacity in the port

Alongside major infrastructure projects, Infrabel is planning a series of investments which, although they are more modest, will significantly increase the railway capacity in the port of Antwerp. The investments include additional sidings, junctions or link curves (the Ghent curve, for example, directly connecting the left bank of the port of Antwerp to the port of Zeebrugge and to Ghent).

Linking the left and right banks

On the left bank of the Scheldt, the Deurganckdock generates considerable volumes of container traffic. To improve access to these facilities, Infrabel will build a direct railway link under the Scheldt (**Liefkenshoek**) between the port zones on each bank. This will provide an alternative to the congested Kennedy Tunnel, which is currently the only option to cross the river. The new link will also allow the traffic leaving the Deurganckdock to avoid the Berchem railway intersection and directly access the marshalling yard at Antwerp-North.

Second access to the port of Antwerp

A second access to the port of Antwerp is currently being studied, involving the construction of a new double-track line. Designed for freight traffic, this 28 km link will connect Antwerp-North station to Lier. It will offer greater flexibility for the transport of goods by railway, and increase network capacity to the east of the country.

Reopening the Iron Rhine

Infrabel is working on reopening the line linking Antwerp with Rheydt in Germany. Complementing the existing main line between Antwerp and Germany (line 24 via Montzen), the line is expected to allow goods to be moved between the port and the Ruhr valley with a shorter route and higher load.

The port of Antwerp is the second largest port in Europe and the fourth largest in the world. Now that the new Deurganckdock is operational, with its 5 kilometres of container cranes, the port can double its handling capacity to more than 14 million TEUs*. This provides port users and companies specialising in container transport with prospects for long-term growth.

Alongside the increase in container transshipment in maritime traffic, intermodal transport is rapidly becoming more important.

The railways and the barge are the modes of the future: first, the roads are full to capacity and second, public opinion will only accept increases in transport if it uses modes that are less harmful to the environment.

These developments are also supported by the creation of a network of logistics hubs in the hinterland. It looks like these logistics centres will become important distribution centres, and, increasingly, an extension of the sea ports. In this context, it is vitally important to develop effective freight corridors between the ports and these logistics centres. The transport of perishable goods, and locations outside the large ports, present valuable opportunities for the railways. Against this background, the railways are a preferred partner in promoting the development of this “sea port – hinterland” network.

The development prospects are particularly good, so there can be no doubt that the railways can play a crucial role in the years to come, allowing the traffic generated by the port of Antwerp to grow in a sustainable way. The dynamism demonstrated by Infrabel as the infrastructure manager strengthens our conviction that the railways will respond in an appropriate way to this combined challenge and invitation.

* Twenty feet Equivalent Unit



Eddy Bruyninckx
Managing Director of the port of Antwerp

Intermodal transport is rapidly becoming more important.

The railways and the barge are the modes of the future: the roads are full to capacity.

Zeebrugge - a railway infrastructure synchronised with port developments

Infrabel is carrying out major infrastructure work to support the rapid development of the port of Zeebrugge and increase the capacity of its railway infrastructure. As a result, it will be possible to improve the safety and productivity of the port facilities.

Increased capacity

In the coming years, the infrastructure of the **marshalling yard** at Zeebrugge will be modernised: its capacity will be increased by laying an additional set of sidings, while the existing sidings – currently separated by the running lines – will be merged. Other sidings used in the port of Zeebrugge will be extended or created. And finally, building the Ter Doest curve will allow Infrabel to link the east and west port areas directly.

Paths to growth

It will be possible to handle the increase in traffic thanks to the new **third track** to be built between Bruges and Zeebrugge, a very busy section for passenger and freight services. And to separate slow traffic from fast traffic, Infrabel will carry out the **four-tracking** of line 50A between **Ghent and Bruges**. This change is essential in light of the anticipated boom in freight transport to and from Zeebrugge.



High speed from border to border

Belgium is the first European country to complete its high-speed network. It occupies a natural position as the crossroads of Europe, thanks in particular to its direct links to London, Paris, Amsterdam and Cologne, supported by other links to France, Spain, Germany and Italy. The Belgian high-speed network consists of more than 300 km of lines, two-thirds of which are capable of handling a speed of 300 km/h. This means that the high-speed lines are the backbone of the Belgian railway network, upon which the local connections are based.

The western branch

This branch of the high-speed network links Brussels and the French border. It came into service in 1997, making it the **first high-speed line** to be opened in Belgium. The line speed is 300 km/h on the 71 km section separating Lembeek from the border. From Brussels-Midi / Zuid, trains run at 220 km/h on modernised conventional lines. The western branch is used by around a hundred trains – either Thalys trains going to and from Paris, Eurostars linking Brussels and London, or TGVs to various regions in France.



The eastern branch

This branch of the high-speed network links Brussels and the German border. Between Brussels and Leuven, high-speed trains travel at 200 km/h on a modernised conventional twin-track line. Beyond Leuven and until Bierset, trains run at 300 km/h on a new high-speed line opened in 2002. Work is now underway on the section beyond Liege towards Germany. The landscape of the region is very hilly, requiring a large number of **audacious** and remarkable **bridges and tunnels**, and other civil engineering works: cut-and-covers, viaducts, the Soumagne tunnel (the longest railway tunnel in Belgium). The high-speed trains emerging from the Soumagne tunnel continue to the German border at 260 km/h, mostly on segregated lines.

The northern branch

This branch links the Belgian and Dutch capitals. Between Brussels and Antwerp, Thalys trains travel 47 km on a conventional line that has been upgraded to allow speeds of up to 160 km/h. Beyond Antwerp, Infrabel is constructing a new line that can carry trains running at 300 km/h. The line runs alongside the road network to reduce the impact on the landscape. The northern branch has also made it necessary to build a rail link below Antwerp-Central. The **ultramodern station**, with its 14 platforms on three levels, has opened up Antwerp to the outside world, providing new possibilities in terms of mobility.

200

km of segregated high-speed lines.

6.53

km, the length of the Soumagne tunnel, the longest railway tunnel in Belgium.

5.2

billion of euros invested in building the Belgian high-speed network.

Giving wings to Brussels National Airport

The Diabolo project will place Brussels National Airport, a Belgian economic powerhouse, at the heart of the European railway network. With direct links to the Brussels-Liege-Germany and Brussels-Antwerp-Netherlands main lines, it will be much easier to get to the airport from all major cities in Belgium, as well as from several of the great European cities like Paris, Amsterdam and Cologne.

The national airport between rail and air

The growth of Brussels National Airport was threatened by recurring access difficulties caused by the constant growth in road traffic. The train is an efficient and environmentally-friendly mode of transport, making it the **obvious alternative** to the congested road network. A project was developed, aimed at opening up the airport site, with the focus on intermodality between air and rail.

Project in two phases

The project for the national airport is divided into two phases. The first phase involves building the Nossegem curve between the airport and the Brussels-Leuven-Liege line. A second phase will see the construction of a **new railway line** (line 25N) on the central reservation of the E25 motorway between Brussels and Mechelin. The line will be linked to the platforms in the airport station via two new underground junctions, **opening up the airport to the north.**

250

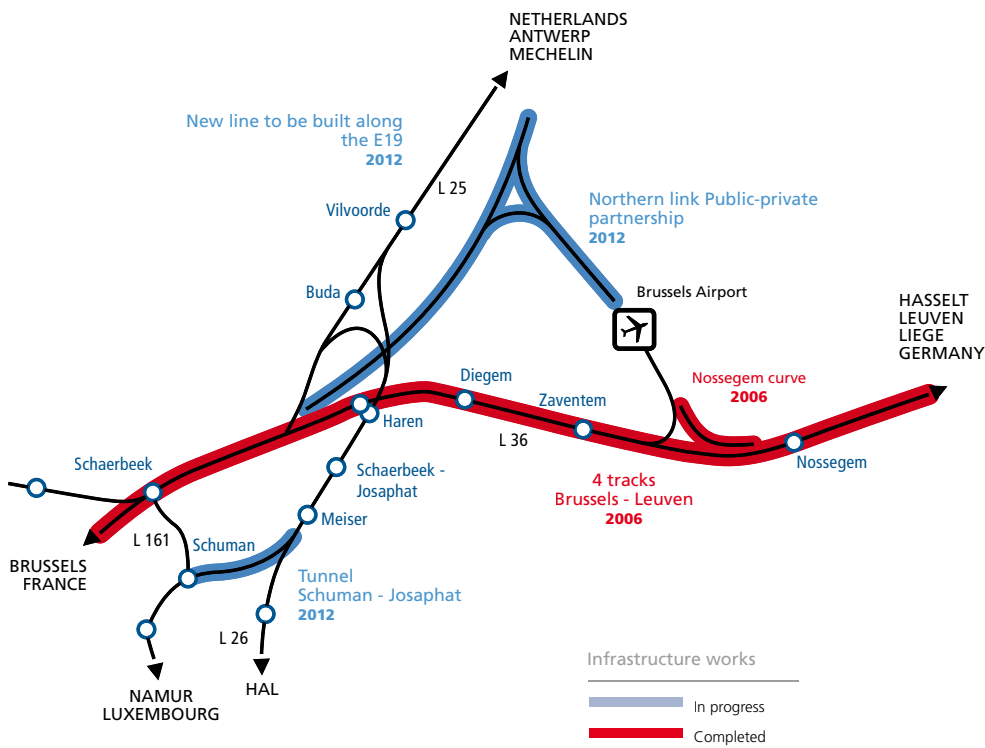
million euros invested by Infrabel in building a new line on the central reservation of the E19 motorway.

290

million euros financed by a public-private partnership, to create an underground link to the north of Brussels National Airport.

2012

date when Diabolo is scheduled to become fully operational



Innovative finance

The new line 25N will be constructed entirely by Infrabel from its own capital, whereas the link to the airport – the actual Diabolo project – will be financed by means of a public-private partnership (PPP). This form of cooperation between the public and private sectors will allow Diabolo to be completed in record time. This is the first time a PPP of such size has been used in a transport project!



Infrabel -
a key player
in sustainable
development



1

Infrabel

2

What we do

3

**Infrabel at the heart
of the economy**

4

**Infrabel – a key player
in sustainable development**

Promoting a low-pollution and low-energy mode of transport	48
Improving mobility around Brussels	50
Protecting the environment – an Infrabel pledge	52

Promoting a low-pollution and low-energy mode of transport

Mobility comes at a price: atmospheric pollution, land use, increased energy consumption... There is no avoiding it, whatever mode of transport used. However, for each of these categories, the figures for the train are better than for road or air transport.





Less CO₂

In Belgium, 19% of CO₂ emissions come from the transport sector. Only 2% of these greenhouse gas emissions originate from the railway. It is estimated that travelling by train produces 36 grams of CO₂ per passenger per kilometre. This is a fraction of the 125 grams of CO₂ per motorist per kilometre, assuming an average of 1.4 people in the car.

“Wind Train” starting in 2010

One by one, starting in 2010, twenty wind turbines will be installed along the high-speed line between Leuven and Ans, generating green energy for the railway network. On average, one third of the 100 gigawatt hours produced by the turbines will be used directly to power the trains. The rest will be injected into the electricity grid. This joint contribution by Infrabel and Electrabel to Belgium’s efforts to meet the Kyoto objectives will reduce CO₂ emissions by 60,000 tonnes per year.

Better land use

To carry a comparable number of people, the railways only occupy a **third of the space** needed by other modes of transport. The figures are even more impressive for freight transport, with the railways occupying a mere one sixth of the space. Do the maths: the more people and goods that are transported by train, the fewer queues and traffic disruptions there will be.

More efficient energy consumption

In terms of energy consumption, too, the ecological footprint of the railways is smaller. An IC train (with average occupancy) uses less than half the energy per passenger than a mid-size car. During the rush hour, this score is even better, with consumption equalling one tenth the consumption of a car. For the same quantity of energy measured in “kilograms of oil equivalent”, a passenger can travel an average of 172 km on a TGV, compared to 39 in a car and 18 by plane². Freight trains consume only one third of the energy used by a lorry per tonne transported. On their own, the modes of transport running on fossil fuels account for 71% of petroleum consumed³.

Air quality

Atmospheric pollution stems from the combination of polluting particles. The fact that trains run on electricity means that they are the mode of transport that best protects air quality.

¹ Source: Electrabel

² Source: RFF

³ Source: SUEZ Énergie Services

Improving mobility around Brussels

The need for a regional express network (RER) in and around Brussels has become all too evident. Once all the works associated with this major project are completed in around 2016, the RER will be able to make its full contribution to solving mobility problems in and around the capital. Infrabel is already working hard to meet the challenge.





Greater mobility in the capital of Europe

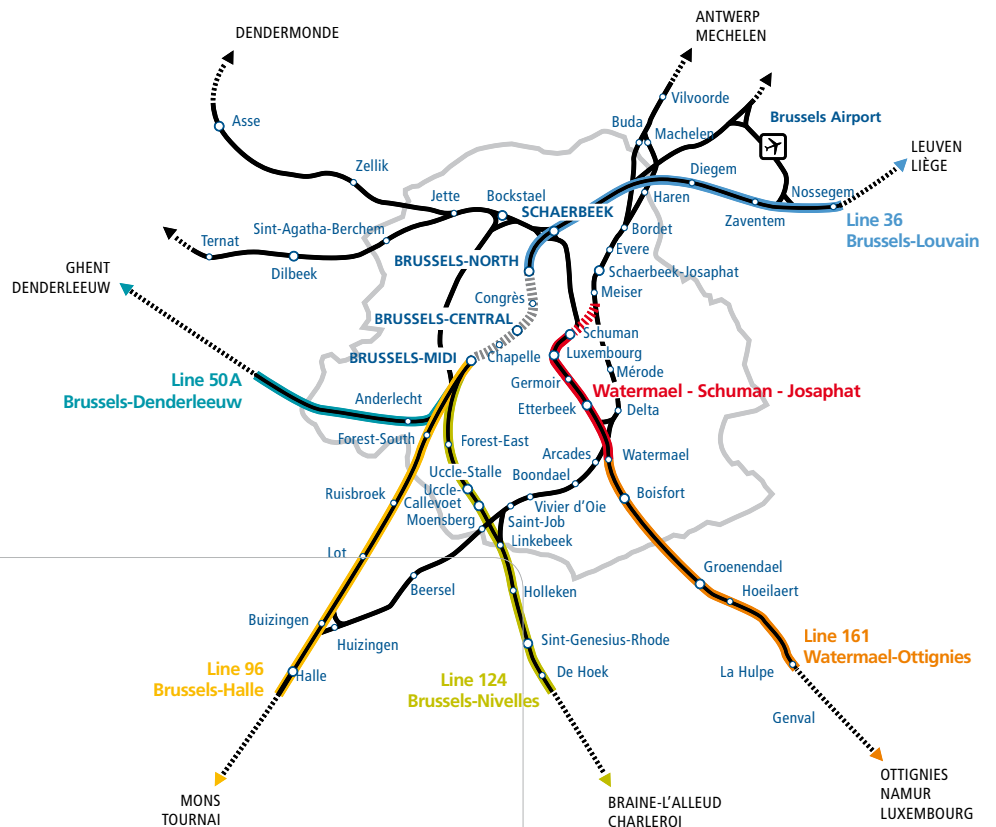
Relying on the way trains and the other modes of public transport can **complement** each other, the RER project aims to absorb the growth of traffic into and within Brussels, while stabilising the use of cars with their harmful environmental effects. For Infrabel, the RER involves **large-scale works** on a number of radial lines in Brussels, with a total investment exceeding 1.5 billion euros²⁰⁰¹.

Freer-flowing traffic

The **increased frequency** of rail traffic – the primary benefit of the RER project – requires most of the lines concerned to be upgraded from two-track to four-track. This upgrade will raise the **capacity** of the lines as well as improving the **flow**. In practice, two tracks are reserved for fast trains (IC-IR, fast commuter trains and, depending on the lines, high-speed trains), and the two other tracks are reserved for RER trains, slower commuter trains and local trains.

Modernising to attract more commuters

The RER is about improving train services, but it also means investing in **comfort** and **customer experience**. Infrabel is gradually modernising more than 120 stations and unstaffed halts, installing access ramps for people with limited mobility wherever possible. Equipment has been carefully designed to inform passengers of the slightest delay (monitors, display, PA systems) and is ready to be rolled out. Improving facilities in the suburbs and investing in the regional express lines will boost the competitiveness and attractiveness of the railways for day-to-day transport.



Protecting the environment – an Infrabel pledge

To guarantee the sustainable development of the railway network, Infrabel is taking concrete steps to reduce the impact of its infrastructure on the environment.



From the initial stages of the project

New Infrabel projects include a large environmental component, designed to protect the natural environments encountered and to maintain the biodiversity of animal and plant species. **Impact assessments** are carried out before work starts on a new route, taking account of the various economic and environmental factors. In this spirit, Infrabel works closely with different organisations and environmental authorities. Within the company, too, Infrabel encourages its personnel to reduce energy consumption. As a public service company working for the community, Infrabel understands that it is expected to set an example.

Preserving resources

The tracks and other structures are systematically analysed in an effort to **integrate** them as naturally as possible into the landscape. To protect certain species of animal, Infrabel incorporates wildlife passages, nest boxes, shelters, etc. It is also involved in the conservation of natural sites (for example Natura 2000), by recreating, for example, marshlands or old orchards. And finally, Infrabel is keen to **protect water resources** and the quality of soils and ground water, both by collecting the water used in new projects and by decontaminating soils polluted in the past.

Noise barriers and embankments

To improve the comfort of residents, Infrabel erects noise barriers alongside new infrastructure wherever necessary. These noise barriers may take the form of “green walls” consisting of depressions that allow vegetation to grow and create screens of greenery. In addition Infrabel is gradually introducing ecological management of the embankments and tracksides, but without ever compromising the safety of railway traffic. It has also considerably reduced the quantity and the harmfulness of the herbicides used to maintain the tracks.



Recycling equipment

Infrabel has detailed knowledge of the lifecycle of each piece of equipment and of the environmental risks associated with obsolete items, so it is well placed to handle equipment that has reached the end of its service life, using specific waste disposal or decontamination procedures. It has set up recycling programmes for steel, copper, etc. and makes sure that rails and sleepers are reused if they are not too worn.

Ideal travel conditions while respecting the environment

Marc Descheemaeker
Director of the SNCB

Since it was established in 2005, the operator SNCB has wanted to become more resolutely customer-oriented and even more ecological in the way it works. Day in, day out, the SNCB faces the ambitious challenge of balancing its mission and its social responsibility on the one hand, against the commercial reality in an increasingly competitive market on the other.

In the context of national as well as international traffic, the SNCB's most important mission is to offer a solution based on "sustainable mobility". This means using a high-quality offering and a high-quality service to transport as many people and goods as possible.

In this context, the SNCB and Infrabel have the same purpose: to guarantee the best possible travelling conditions to those who have decided to travel by train, in complete safety and in an environmentally friendly way.

When you find out that an InterCity train with average occupancy consumes, per passenger carried, less than half the fuel of a mid-size car and that a freight train consumed five times less CO₂ than a lorry, you can easily understand why thousands of commuters, business leaders and tourists have taken to this mode of transport. It is an ecological choice and a responsible choice.

Passenger numbers and tonnes transported are rising inexorably, and for the SNCB, besides performance, this is a way of helping to protect the planet for the benefit of future generations.

Alongside safety and punctuality, this is a crucial issue for SNCB.



Marc Descheemaeker

In the context of national as well as international traffic, the SNCB's most important mission is to offer a solution based on "sustainable mobility".