

Our Sustainable Handprint

Sustainability Report 2023





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We are a Finnish, open-minded construction design and consultancy company.

We help our clients succeed in designing and implementing a sustainable built environment.





Values are key

The year 2023 was not one of the easiest in the construction industry in Finland, but we have succeeded in tackling the challenges in line with our values – together and better. Furthermore, not even the economic downturn in the industry has stood in the way of the efforts in sustainability. Zero carbon emissions and biodiversity conservation and restoration are essential development trends in all construction.

AINS Group takes care of its own emissions. The real impact, however, lies in the work with our clients. We take pride in the way we demonstrate our environmental handprint, with which we take responsibility for our clients' environmental impacts.

This year, we made expanding our handprint part of our strategy 2023–2027, and included it to our performance bonus program. We want our clients to be able to count

on us in having something tangible to give to sustainable construction, even when we are not specifically requested to do so. In addition to environmental sustainability and client experience, our third priority is productivity, for it is the only way to make fully achieving our other objectives possible.

The economic environment and its turbulence will challenge us this year as well. At AINS Group, the individual is the most important actor in achieving sustainability. Our greatest thanks go to each and every one of our experts for their contribution to our work community and clients.

Together and better,

Kari Kauniskangas
CEO
AINS Group





About AINS Group – Your team for bolder and better construction

AINS Group is a Finnish design and consultancy company in the sector of build environment, a multi-disciplinary expert community of over 1,300 employees.

We serve clients in six areas of expertise in the built environment: construction management, architectural design, structural engineering, renovation engineering, industrial and building services, and civil engineering. In 2023, we worked on thousands of demanding construction and maintenance projects.

The volume of construction in Finland decreased significantly in 2023, especially in new housing production. The collapse in demand was also reflected in AINS Group as a decrease in design orders, especially in structural design and architectural design services. Despite the market challenges, our business turnover developed positively due to the growth of construction management services and new company acquisitions, being €130 M (+10%) in 2023. However, the relative profitability of the business subsided from 2022.



We updated our strategy in 2023. Our three priorities – productivity, environmental sustainability and client experience – will guide our actions and resources in the following years.

We design a sustainable built environment and promote the comprehensive implementation of environmental sustainability not only within our community, but also in our clients' projects. We are the only design and consultancy company in Finland to measure the positive environmental impact achieved by our experts, that is, their environmental handprint.

Our goal is to offer the best client experience in the industry. In achieving this, we rely on our high level of expertise and the AINS way of working on projects. The environmental handprint of an expert has an increasingly significant role in delivering the best client experience.

About the Sustainability Report

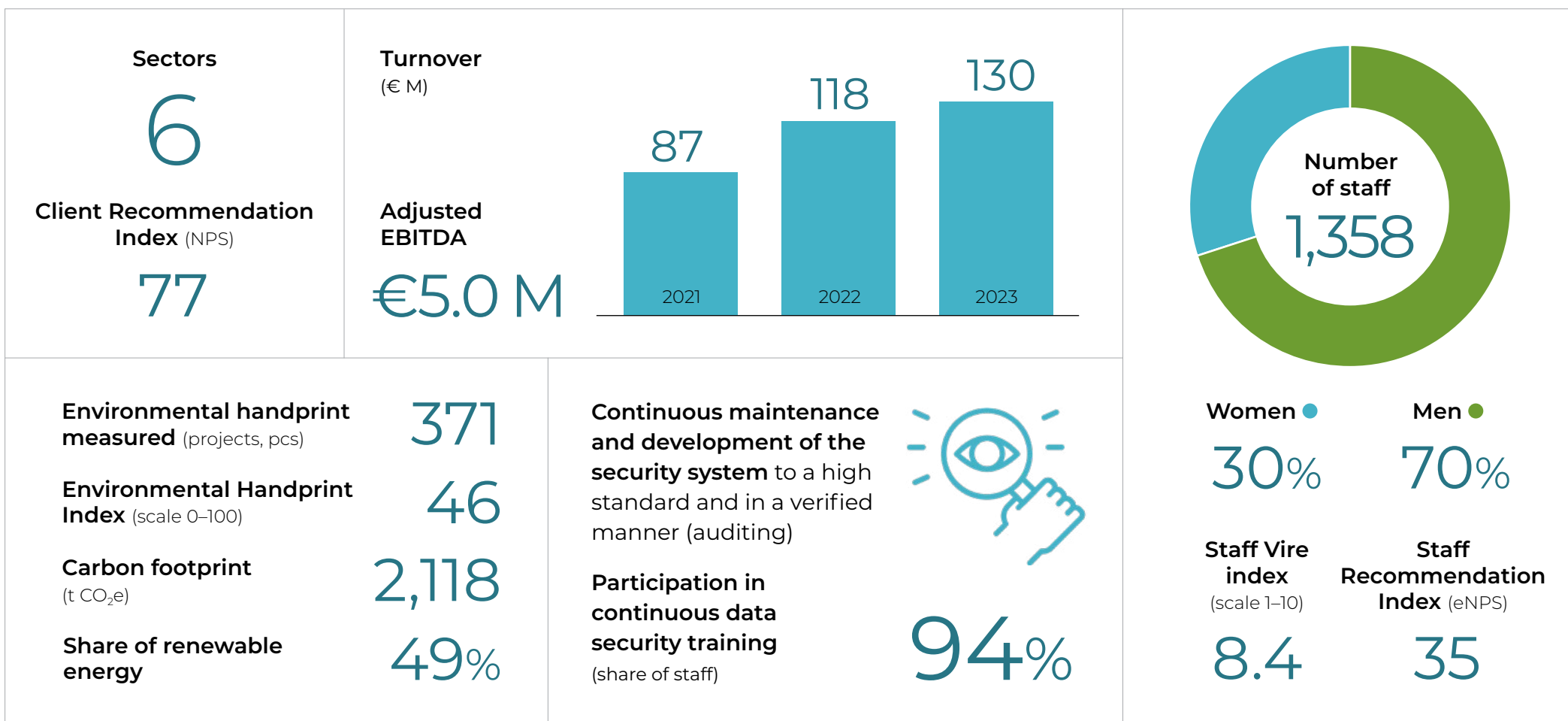
This is our third annual sustainability report. It is intended for our staff, clients, owners and all stakeholders interested in our sustainability work, its objectives and results. We also include in the report the commitments and actions we take to help achieve our objectives regarding work community, environment and fair business.

This report has been made in accordance with Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) reporting standard. In this report, we will refer to the GRI Standard's reporting guide from 2021 (GRI-Referenced).

➔ **The GRI Content Index is on page 36 of this report.**



AINS Group's year 2023 in figures





TOGETHER
AND BETTER

IMPACT

A THRIVING WORK
COMMUNITY

DATA
SECURITY

ENVIRONMENTAL
HANDPRINT

FROM A
PIONEER

EMISSION
REDUCTION

How we build impact

In 2023, we updated our strategy, making sustainability even stronger and more concrete. Our three priorities – productivity, environmental sustainability and client experience – will guide our actions and resources in the ongoing strategy period.





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EMISSION
REDUCTION

Sustainability in our strategy

In addition to the growth in our turnover and profitability, our goals are a strong reputation, high client satisfaction, positive work atmosphere and the growing environmental handprint of our experts.

We are the only design and consulting company in Finland to systematically measure the positive environmental impact of our experts in projects and other assignments. We encourage our staff to actively monitor their environmental handprint, and we have included it as one of the criteria for performance bonuses.

Our role is to lead the way as a domestic industry, to map the terrain in future target areas and to share our expertise with interested parties in industry forums.

Sustainable development requires understanding future challenges and possibilities from both our own and our stakeholders' viewpoints. The green transition is evident in the expectations and actions in the property, construction and industrial sectors in an increasingly concrete manner. Investors are demanding expertise in low carbon and circular economy, contractors are searching for lifecycle-wise partners and entire industrial plants are built to promote the green transition locally, regionally and globally.

At the same time, regulation is becoming more stringent. Sustainability objectives, which are slowly becoming commonplace, will be joined by new ones.

Sustainability management means continuous improvement. Here, our way of measuring our environmental handprint gives us an excellent starting point in promoting a wide range of developing goals not only in our assignments, but also in our field of expertise.





Sustainability management

Our key sustainability objectives are documented in our sustainability programme which guides our progress year by year.

Our annually set target levels take into account the progress of our strategy and our commitments. The Group Executive Committee approves the objectives of the sustainability programme annually. The implementation, development and reporting of the sustainability programme is led by the Group's sustainability and development manager, who reports to the CEO and is a member of Group Executive Committee.

Code of Ethics

We are committed to respecting the environment and people in our actions. We are bound and guided by the law, the ethical principles of the

design and consultancy sector and our own Code of Ethics.

At the heart of our ethical culture are

1. **Respect for people and mutual cooperation,**
2. **fair business practices** and
3. **bearing environmental responsibility.**

For more information on our ethical principles, please visit our website at

[→ Code of ethics | ains.fi](#)

It is the responsibility of management and frontline staff to ensure that staff are familiar with the Code of Ethics. It is the responsibility of every employee to comply with it.

Our staff and stakeholders have access to a whistleblowing channel, a statutory reporting channel for potential misconduct. It allows people to report suspected misconduct in confidence.

Certified quality and environmental systems

The development of our project activities is based on our experts committed to taking quality and the environment into consideration, and our audited quality and environmental systems.

Our structural design, renovation design, architectural design and construction domains have been awarded the RALA Quality certificate. In the fields of urban and environmental design and industrial and building design, our services are produced and developed in accordance with the ISO 9001:2015 standard.

The environmental systems of all six of our domains are certified in accordance with the ISO 14001:2015 standard. In 2023, we extended the ISO 14001 environmental system to cover our newest domain, renovation construction services also.



Our quality and environmental systems

- RALA Quality certification
- ISO 9001:2015
- ISO 14001:2015

Through certified project activities, we ensure that sustainability management is developed systematically through the organisation. We continually develop our environmental expertise, and the results are reflected in client projects.



Materiality in sustainability management

We have used a materiality analysis to select the main themes of our sustainability programme to focus on in our sustainability work.

The analysis forms the basis of our sustainability programme.

The materiality analysis involves assessment of the impact of our business on people, the environment and society. We mapped out the expectations of our most significant shareholders regarding the sustainability of our actions. Our 2021 Sustainability Report contains more details on our materiality analysis.

We will reassess our sustainability themes in line with the duality principles of the Sustainability Reporting Standard (ESRS) released in 2024, i.e., taking into account both our impact on the environment and society and our financial performance.

COMMUNITY

We foster a thriving work community

Our community is inspiring, it offers opportunities and appreciates people and the environment.

→ [Read more p. 12](#)

IMPACT

We increase our environmental handprint in client projects in a measurable way

Our impact on the sustainability of the built environment grows in our work as designers, constructors and experts.

→ [Read more p. 19](#)

ACTIONS

We ensure data security

We uphold high-quality data security processes and practices.

→ [Read more p. 17](#)

ACTIONS

We reduce our climate emissions in a goal-oriented manner

A concrete commitment to sustainable development is reflected in our actions.

→ [Read more p. 31](#)



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UN Sustainable Development Goals

Our sustainability programme is also in line with these UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which we have identified as the most relevant for our operations.



The built environment has a significant impact on human health. We create and maintain well-being through carefully designed indoor and outdoor environments.



Gender equality is the foundation of a diverse, equal and inclusive working environment.



A sustainable future requires a change in energy consumption and production. We are transforming the built environment from a consumer of fossil energy to a producer of renewable, emission-free energy.



Sustainable economic growth is based on a balance between people and the environment. We provide a high quality, respectful, equal and diverse workplace that provides wellbeing for its members, which we continue to develop.



Construction is an endless source of innovation. We, as experts, participate in creating the conditions for sustainable growth and development for people and businesses.



A sustainable urban environment enables a good life. We are involved in designing living environments that are inclusive, provide security and adapt to climate change.



We want to play our part in ensuring sustainable consumption and production practices. We will enable the built environment in our projects to make the transition to an efficient circular economy.



The construction sector is one of the largest industries contributing to climate change. Our goal is a carbon-neutral building stock and urban environment which is protected against the inevitable impacts of climate change.



Through sustainable design and construction, we aim to minimise the consumption of natural resources, protect precious biodiversity and maintain balanced land use for the benefit of all species.



Cooperation is power, and knowledge grows through sharing! We work together with our clients, the property and construction industry, organisations, legislators, research and education organisations to promote sustainable development.



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Commitments and collaboration networks



Science Based Targets

We committed to setting science-based emission reduction targets as part of the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) in 2022. In 2023, we built a science-based emission reduction programme that also takes into account value chain targets and their development. We will publish our emission reduction targets when they are approved by SBTi.



Building Life

We are an active member of the Green Building Council Finland (FIGBC) and a supporter of the European #BuildingLife project. The network and the project promote climate emission reduction and the circular economy in the construction sector in many areas.



Climate partner with three of Finland's largest cities

In 2023, we joined Espoo in a climate partnership to help address the city's challenges and make use of its opportunities in the city's climate work. We also continue to act as Climate Partners for Tampere and Helsinki, promoting carbon neutrality in urban areas.



Circular economy green deal

During the year, we participated in the Ministry of Environment's Circular Economy Green Deal commitment preparation group. We actively contributed to the creation of circular economy targets suitable for organisations in the property and construction sector.



We foster a thriving work community

We want to provide our experts with an excellent staff experience and a working community that they feel good about and want to commit to.

Results of staff surveys

PeoplePower **70.9**
(target: 78.3)

eNPS **35**
(target: 50)

Staff Sustainability Index (1-4) **3.2**



We foster a thriving work community

At the end of 2023, AINS Group employed 1,358 experts in the built environment. We value our people-centred working culture which is based on valuing and encouraging others.

We aim to maintain and develop a diverse, equal, and inclusive culture that values the individual. We measure and monitor our success in achieving our objectives through an extensive staff survey and through the Vire survey sent out every month.

Decline in staff experience in 2023

We gathered the views of our staff through a comprehensive staff survey conducted by Eezy Flow. In terms of the staff experience surveyed, we aim to achieve a better than good level (AA+ or overall index > 78.3) across our workplace.

In 2023, the difficult market situation in the construction sector was reflected in orders across the design

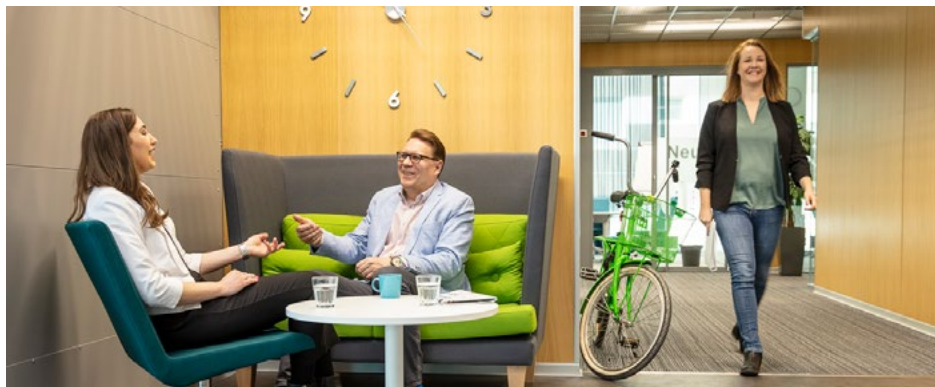
and consulting industry. AINS Group conducted several change negotiations during the year, the aim being to preserve employment relationships. To respond to the decline in demand, staff were laid off either part-time or full-time in units with a significant reduction in work.

The uncertainty affecting the entire industry and the change negotiations were also reflected in the staff survey. The staff's assessment of our work community fell to a satisfactory level. The overall PeoplePower Index stood now at 70.9 (2022: 78.3). This is a satisfactory A+ level, and slightly below the average for Finnish expert work during the last three years. The employee's likeliness to recommend the Group as an employer (Staff Recommendation Index, eNPS 35) was, however, still higher than the average recommendation score of peer companies.

Uncertainty in the field and change negotiations were reflected in staff experiences.

Our work community is considered socially responsible

The Staff Sustainability Index comprised staff survey questions, measuring experiences regarding the social responsibility of our work community. The result was 3.2 (in 2022: 3.3) on a scale of one to four. Despite the decline in the overall result, our staff felt that people are treated in a fair and respectful manner, they are heard when making decisions and that decision-making is efficient.





Monthly Vire survey

Once a month, we conducted the Vire survey to ask staff about their feelings on the factors that affect job satisfaction. The survey serves as an important, rapid-response feedback channel that our frontline staff use to guide management and identify development needs. In 2023, the average Vire Index score across the entire company was 8.4 (2022: 8.3) on a scale of one to ten.

A new indicator of early support was added to the Vire survey: the expert's own assessment of their capacity to work. The aim is to help frontline staff to proactively identify potential work capacity risks in the team and to engage in discussion and find solutions earlier.

Support for managing work

Our staff turnover rate during the year was 6.6%. Sick leave remained at the same level as the previous year. The sick leave rate was 2.3% in 2023.

In addition to comprehensive occupational health services, we supported our staff's overall wellbeing and job satisfaction with the Auntie service. Auntie provides accessible support for work wellbeing, mental wellbeing challenges and self-management. We also provided work management coaching for our frontline staff in cooperation with our partners in occupational health services and insurance companies.

Incentives for our staff

We expanded our staff recreation benefits and introduced a new commuting benefit. Our aim is to encourage the use of environmentally friendly, sustainable forms of transportation for commuting. Our employee benefits also include commuter bicycles. In 2023, 142 of our professionals used a leased bike. Thirty of our employees drove company cars.

In 2023, we paid our staff a total of nearly €2 M in performance bonuses for their work towards our common goals.

Women ●
30%



Men ●
70%

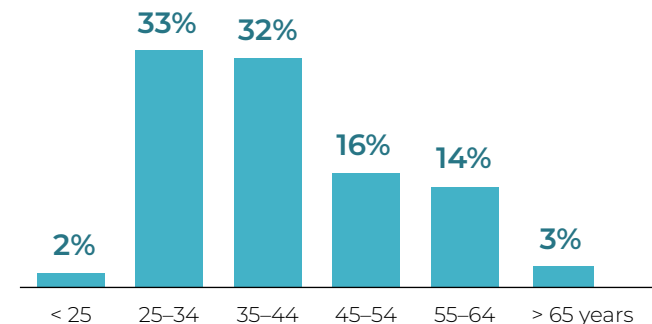
Form of employment relationship



Nature of the employment relationship



Staff age distribution





We develop diversity

Our value, together and better, provides an inclusivity-based foundation for developing a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI.

In 2023, we learned about diversity management and DEI work in a workshop organised for our management team by the consultancy DeiDei. Diversity, equality and inclusiveness are already linked to many aspects of AINS Group's corporate culture and strategy.

We drew up a diversity plan for our development path. The plan

Together and better values are realized in a work community perceived as equal.

identifies the management and operational processes and areas of knowledge and skills that we will develop over the next few years to strengthen diversity, equality and inclusion in the workplace.

We surveyed the views of our staff on the implementation of equality in a staff survey. The vast majority of respondents felt that equality in our services was well implemented, regardless of a person's background, beliefs, language, personality or personal characteristics. The score on a scale of one to four was 3.6 (in 2022: 3.6).



Diversity

- Recruiting from diverse backgrounds
- Diversity in different roles
- Diversity in teams

Equality

- Introduction and skills development
- Career development
- Employment benefits



Inclusion

- Business culture
- Products and services
- Leadership



A thriving work community

GOAL	TARGET 2023	2023	2022	2021
Healthy, enthusiastic, engaged staff, PeoplePower Index	> 78.3	70.9	75.6	75
Healthy, enthusiastic, engaged staff, eNPS	> 50	35	59	59
The experience of employee sustainability, PeoplePower survey	Increased value	3.2	3.3	–
Diversity, equality and inclusion in work culture	Plan made	Plan made	–	–
We employ people with developmental disabilities	1 person	1 person	1 person	1 person
Sustainability training completed (% of all staff)	90%	58%	70%	–

We invest in building the skills of our experts

We aim to continually develop the skills of our staff, especially in staff wellbeing and sustainable built environments. In 2023, we invested in skills development with an average of three training days per expert.



Project manager training

In 2023, we renewed our popular project manager training programme. The aim of the programme is to broaden the coherent, professional and client-focused approach to project management and to support the development of leadership and interpersonal skills. Sixty project managers from all over Finland participated in the renewed coaching programme.

Supervisor training

We organised regular training sessions for supervisors, focusing on the role and responsibilities of the supervisor, work capacity management and early intervention.

Deployment of the learning environment

In 2023, we launched AINS Akatemia, an e-learning platform, an important platform for internal training.

Support sponsors – so everyone can be part of a team

We donated our Christmas gifts to the staff's chosen organisation, Tukikummit Foundation. The organisation offers children and youth in Finland opportunities to engage actively in hobbies and sports.

The donations collected by the Tukikummit Foundation are used to prevent the marginalisation of children and youth living in Finland.



We ensure data security

Our expert work often relates to investment projects or other confidential projects. We are committed to protecting our clients' project, business and personal data carefully and reliably.

Data security figures 2023

We uphold the continuous maintenance and development of our data security management system to a high standard and in a verified manner (auditing).

Participation in continuous data security training, Hoxhunt
(% of all staff)

94%
(target: 95%)





We ensure data security

We maintain high-quality data security processes and practices to protect personal and project data from unauthorised and illegal processing and unintentional disclosure.

This also ensures high-quality continuity of our services and minimises disruption. All our employees are committed to complying with our confidentiality guidelines.

Continuous monitoring for security threats

Maintaining and continuously improving a secure environment requires real-time situation maintenance and monitoring. Cybercrime and the security policy situation is also reflected in AINS Group's field in the form of attempted data breaches of information systems and employee user accounts.

We monitored security threats and occurrences with a 24/7 security team, and with the support of an external service provider's data security centre.

We organised exercises to practice physical and digital security disruptions and to develop our preparedness in 2023 also. In maintaining our situational awareness, we also focus on liaison with authorities and external threat intelligence. We are involved in cybersecurity development groups, such as those of the National Digital and Population Agency.

Focus on data security training

During 2023, we achieved external approval of national and international requirements for physical and electronic security, which will allow us to work on projects requiring high security.

We audited our information security system in line with our objectives in 2023.

In maintaining a secure environment, we invest in building a strong security culture through employee engagement. Our goal is to have all our employees participate in the ongoing HoxHunt security training

and complete an updated security orientation every year. We did not quite reach our targets in 2023.

Our main development tasks in 2024 will be to achieve the target levels of our trainings, meet the requirements of the NIS2 cybersecurity directive and implement the ISO 27001 security management system.

Data security

GOAL	TARGET 2023	2023	2022	2021
Continuous maintenance and development of the security system to a high standard and in a verified manner (auditing)	Executed	Executed	Executed	Executed
Participation in continuous security training, Hoxhunt (% of total staff)	95%	94%	91%	97%
Completion of security training (% of new employees)	100%	76%	-	-
Completion of security training (% of all employees)	85%	67%	-	-



We design and build in an environmentally sustainable way

Our experts have a unique opportunity to promote and implement emission reductions, circular economy, biodiversity etc in their projects. We increase our environmental handprint in a goal-oriented and measurable way.



Our experts' environmental
handprint in practice

Tikkurila
Competence Campus **79**

Stadin AO Helsinki
Vocational College
and Adult Institute
Roihupelto Campus **90**

Oulu
Courthouse **52**



From goals to measurable actions

The built environment plays a critical role in achieving national and international environmental goals. We want to take care of the environmental objectives of our client projects as if they were our own.

AINS Group's handprint can be seen in buildings, streets, bridges, power plants and the built environment all over Finland and beyond.

This is why it is important that each of our experts is not only an expert in their own field, but also in sustainable built environments. In this way, it is not necessary for developers or our other clients to know or define exactly how sustainable development is taken into account in the work of an architect, construction consultant, structural engineer, electrical

engineer, process engineer or road and street designer. Our experts are here to guide you.

Aiming to increase the measured environmental handprint

Our opportunity to contribute to a sustainable built environment is so significant that we want to lead with purpose.

Our goal is to increase the handprint, or the positive environmental impact of our experts in our clients' projects, every year. We systematically measure our environmental handprint on projects as part of our way of working.

We started to develop environmental handprint metrics in 2020. We have

been systematically measuring our environmental handprint since 2022.

In 2023, we made the environmental handprint part of our strategy and its objectives: an environmental handprint assessment will be conducted for all our contracts above EUR 15,000 for which the metrics are applicable. We have also included a comprehensive assessment as part of our performance bonus criteria.

In 2023, we assessed the environmental handprint of 371 projects.

In 2023, the environmental handprint was assessed in 371 client projects, which includes 25% of our larger assignments. The average handprint index for the year on a scale of 1 to 100 was 46 (39 in 2022).

Assessing the environmental impact of a project at an early stage makes the potential for sustainable construction visible. At the end of the project, we measure the environmental handprint again to see how the measures have been implemented and what impact our experts have had on their implementation.

The 2023 handprint measurements will provide a good basis for environmental impact management, skills development and the use of accumulated data for new environmentally sustainable projects.

We aim to a comprehensive environmental handprint and a growing environmental handprint index.



Measuring the environmental handprint: making the positive environmental impacts visible

The environmental handprint refers to the solutions or choices made in the design, construction or expert work that reduce the environmental damage or increase the positive environmental impacts of a project.

We measure our handprint in all our major projects using a method we developed ourselves.

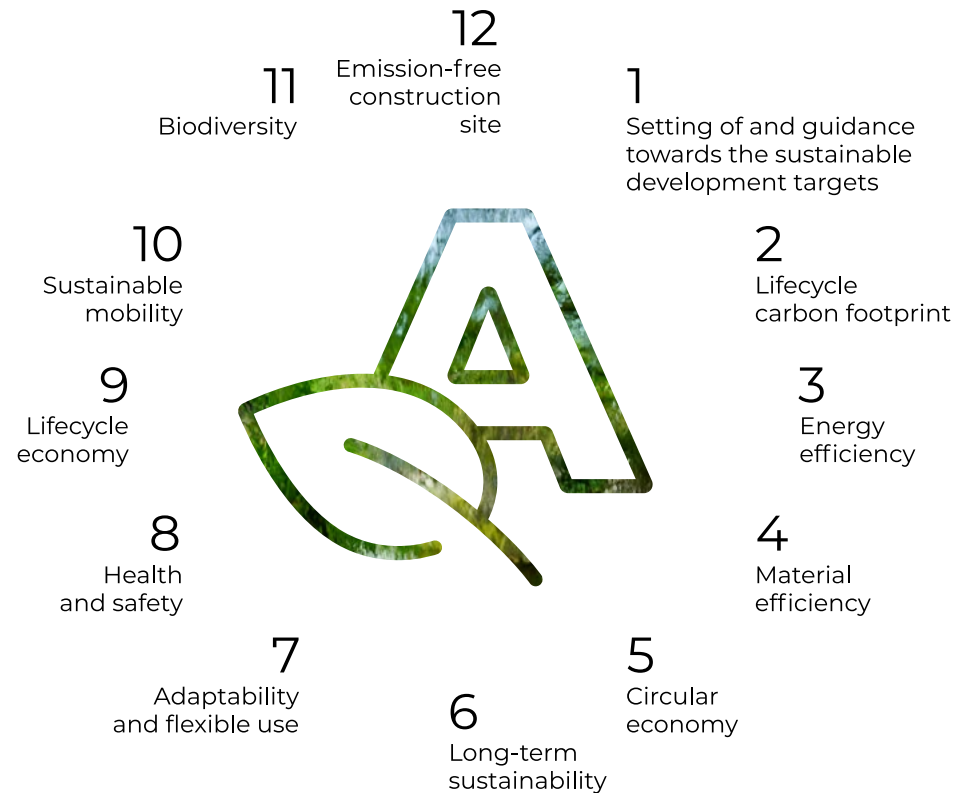
We assess the implementation of 12 areas of sustainable development based on self-assessment.

At the beginning of the project, our project manager or expert will give their assessment of the potential to execute the 12 dimensions of sustainable development (on a scale from 0 to 100), and at the end of the project, the role of our team (passive, neutral, active) in fulfilling this potential.

The areas to be assessed vary slightly depending on the service area and the project. The size of the handprint is expressed as an index from 0 to 100.

The real question is: how can the productivity of a project be increased by strengthening sustainability?

➔ [From a pioneer p. 30](#)





Environmental sustainability in projects

GOAL	TARGET 2023	2023	2022	2021
All service areas have an environmental system certified according to ISO 14001 (pcs)	6 (100%)	6 (100%)	5 (100%)	3 (100%)
Environmental handprint metrics are widely used for assignments over €15,000	Comprehensive use (> 50%)	371 assignments (25%)	65 assignments	20 assignments
Increasing environmental handprint index (in 2027 > 60)	Increased value (> 39)	46	39	–
Increasing client satisfaction with our environmental expertise in all our activities and assignments ("we helped you achieve the environmental objectives of your project(s)", % of clients)	Increased value (> 63%)	55%	63%	36%
Recommending a basic training course on the carbon footprint of the built environment and the circular economy for all project experts	Provided	Provided	–	–



Client experience of environmental expertise

Our aim is to help our clients achieve their environmental objectives.

As part of our project-specific client feedback survey (NPS), we ask our clients how we have succeeded in this objective as a project planner or expert. In 2023, 55% (2022: 63%) of our clients felt that we contributed to achieving their environmental objectives.

Many respondents who gave a different assessment saw no environmental objectives in the assignment. We want to see things differently and take a leading role in considering and managing the environmental impact of a project as part of our core role – even when it is not specifically requested. This will be weighed in the client experience.



TOGETHER
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Our handprint in practice

OUR EXPERTS'
ENVIRONMENTAL HANDPRINT

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A vehicle-free green central campus rises along the railway line

A major new knowledge campus for educational institutions and companies is being built in Jokiniemi, Vantaa, with resource wisdom and the preservation of natural values as the guiding principles of the design. The central districts along the main railway line in Tikkurila are mainly vehicle-free.

Our multidisciplinary team of experts is also exploring the use of vibration control structures as foundations for the water and sewage network in the area. Multi-use underground co-structures can save significant amounts of materials, emissions and other resources.



→ **Read more:**
[Ains.fi](https://ains.fi)
(In Finnish)

Photo: Tietoa Finland Oy

OUR EXPERTS'
ENVIRONMENTAL HANDPRINT

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Circular economy highlighted at Finland's largest vocational school

The Stadin AO Vocational and Adult Education Centre will have new premises in Roihupelto, Helsinki, to meet the changing needs of vocational learning. Our structural engineers and experts are building the giant campus in a low-carbon way, aiming for a long lifespan.

Bricks from a maintenance building on a former industrial site have been reused in the walls of the campus' technical facilities. This was made possible when our experts demonstrated on a site-by-site basis, for the first time in Finland, that the reuse of bricks is safe and healthy in new construction.



→ **Read more:**
[Ains.fi](https://ains.fi)
(In Finnish)

OUR EXPERTS'
ENVIRONMENTAL HANDPRINT

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Oulu courthouse is a pilot of low-carbon construction

In 2023, new modern premises were opened for eight offices in Oulu's city centre, in the area of the courthouse. The project was a low-carbon construction development project between Senate Properties and AINS Group, and a pilot site for Senate's carbon footprint calculation

Our construction experts' carbon footprint calculation methods and project management aiming for low carbon emissions allow for well below-average climate impacts.



→ **Read more:**
[Ains.fi](https://ains.fi)
(In Finnish)



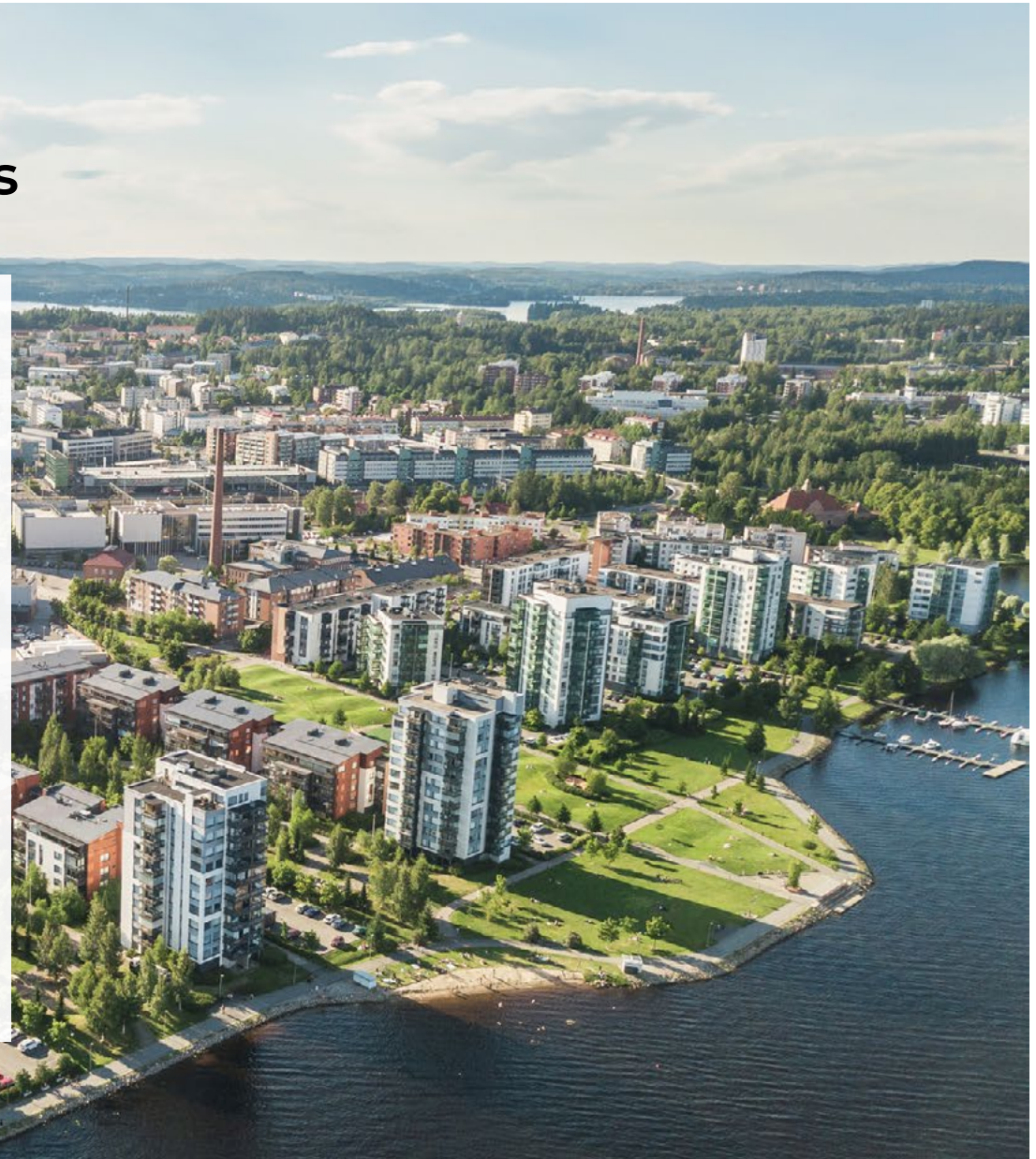
Towards a built environment within the planetary boundaries

The built environment is increasingly taking over more of the Earth's land surface, and construction accounts for a third of Finland's emissions. This question is critical: how do we leave the planet in better condition than when we started using it?

As experts in the built environment, our most important contribution to sustainability is to offer our expertise in sustainable development in the form of proposals, choices and innovations for projects. In this way, we maintain the well-being of nature and mitigate global warming.

From a pioneer

- [Good outdoor lighting is possible with less than at present](#)
- [Future architectural design within the planetary boundaries](#)
- [Operational control can render significant environmental and life cycle benefits](#)
- [Independence from virgin raw materials by the year 2070?](#)
- [Making the overall impacts of urban development visible](#)
- [Sustainable construction produces economic value](#)





” FROM A PIONEER

Good outdoor lighting is possible with less than at present

There is a lighting replacement boom in streets, parks, sports fields, roads and courtyards, as the high-pressure sodium lamps that illuminate our outdoor spaces will be removed from the market in 2027. Replacement is not something to be taken lightly: proper lighting design can save euros, energy and the environment.

Oversizing in outdoor lighting is surprisingly common — uniform lighting with the correct intensity is often possible with less than at present.

A sustainable lighting design aims to achieve better lighting with fewer resources. A significantly improved energy efficiency can be achieved simply by replacing energy inefficient high pressure sodium lamps with

LED lamps. Dimmable LEDs achieve 25% savings in energy consumption, and relying on an intelligent control system will reduce consumption by a further 5%.

Light luminating beyond the intended area is detrimental to people and the natural, cyclical activity of animals and plants. This disturbance can be controlled by adjusting the colour of the light.

Uniform lighting is more important than luminance, as the human eye adapts to uniform lighting. Correctly measured lighting is important for comfort and safety, which can only be harmed by overexposure. In the dark, additional light is actually needed very little, as long as the lighting is uniform.

The next development might be moving from LEDs to lasers. Powerful and controllable, laser light can be directed exactly where it is needed, and there is less interference light than with LEDs. LED luminaires already allow lighting to be controlled, for example, depending on the time of day, i.e., to adjust the colour and brightness of the light according to the time of day.

A luminance camera allows the system to adapt to the environment. Modern luminaires already have the sensor positions in place, so controls can be easily introduced later as well.

Mika Saari

Head of Unit, Lighting Design,
AINS Group



A sustainable lighting design aims to achieve better lighting with fewer resources.



” FROM A PIONEER

Performing future architectural design within the planetary boundaries

The will of clients to build in an environmentally sustainable way has increased. Resale risk and more stringent regulation make sustainability a profitable investment. However, target setting is usually reduced to the usual: environmental rating, scoring and tinkering.

The role of the architect is to be an innovator in sustainability and to

challenge, with justification, outdated assumptions. It also takes courage to say when a project is not needed, or that the timing is wrong. Sometimes, for example, a transport system must be developed before the area can be sustainably built.

We need bolder choices about whether we want a building to be long-lived or demountable.

Designing for a conventional 50-year life-cycle target cannot achieve either with total sustainability.

We are already calling for resource-wise renovation and recycling of structures for reuse from demolition sites. We need to be able to use building materials longer.

Building within the limits of the earth's carrying capacity requires the courage to experiment. We can already build on the desktop a house that heats itself, captures carbon dioxide from its environment and uses it to grow food for its inhabitants.

Biomimetic solutions can make buildings work by mimicking the mechanisms of nature. Regenerative building improves the natural environment and simultaneously improves the built environment.

Juha Lehtonen and Liisa Tuohimaa
Principal Architects,
AW2 Architects – part of AINS Group

Tuomas Seppänen
Principal Architect,
B&M Architects – part of AINS Group

Jaakob Solla
Executive Vice President,
Architectural Design, AINS Group



A project where all targets are met is disappointing. In that case, the targets have been set too low.



” FROM A PIONEER

Operational control can render significant environmental and life cycle benefits

Energy efficiency is the core competence of an expert designer of refrigeration and heat pump systems. Every property owner should identify the energy saving potential of their property, which lies in optimising and repairing the building's technical systems.

There is a surprising amount of waste in these systems, an easy example being ice rinks, which are usually cooled and heated at the same time. When a system is designed according to circular energy principles, the condensation heat generated from cooling is used to heat the space, with little need for purchased energy for heating.

The more complex the building's technical system, the more important it is that it works. Investing in a system without optimising its use and conditions management is a waste.

Operational control is increasingly being applied to systems, such as geothermal systems and ice rinks, and can save up to 20% in energy consumption and costs, while extending the lifespan of the system.

In practice, operational control examines the automation system's historical data, identifies irregularities and anomalies in temperature conditions, for example, and detects incorrect settings and sensible operating temperatures. The investment required for this work is usually very small compared to the life-cycle cost benefits it achieves: the savings are high. This is particularly the case for ice rinks, shopping centres and commercial buildings. Keeping societally important buildings' technical systems in good condition, durable and efficient, for example in the food and pharmaceutical logistics sectors, is also a matter of security of supply.

As climate change progresses, the need for cooling will increase and heat pump solutions will become more common. My dream is to see industrial and district heating systems move away from natural gas and other fossil solutions with more efficient and hotter heat pumps. The use of geothermal and other free energies for cooling will also become more important. These requirements will inevitably lead to more complex systems, requiring seamless collaboration between clients, designers and contractors from the design stage onwards.

Markus Laine

Special Designer, AINS Group



Operational control can reduce energy consumption by up to 20%.



” FROM A PIONEER

Independence from virgin raw materials by the year 2070?

Monitoring and measuring climate emissions is already relatively common, but there is still a lot of work to be done to create a viable circular economy. Bold innovations, financial investments and a shift away from old ways of thinking are needed. We may be facing a future where the value of a company or project is linked to the emissions and natural resources required in production and to achieve the outcome.

The construction sector is being called upon to adopt a new approach to sustainability and to act in a way that is sustainable for nature’s recovery. Our dependence on the consumption of non-renewable resources must be broken. Some building product



A greater initial effort is needed to enable conversions from demolition material to new building material.

manufacturers are already working to meet this challenge, but we need to scale up and use products that already exist in the building stock.

At present, the market for reusable products does not function yet. Market renewal requires the development of the entire value chain with the common objective of reusing construction products. For the reuse of construction products to succeed, a greater initial effort is needed to enable conversions, for example from demolition material to new building material.

The well-being of the planet and people is based on a diverse natural environment. Sustainable construction will increasingly take into account

the needs of other species — alongside humans. In the coming years, we will see new ways of measuring and managing this important goal.

Sonja Laasonen

Sustainable Construction Expert, AINS Group and Young Consultant of the Year 2023

[Construction materials reuse expert Sonja Laasonen is the Young Consultant of the Year 2023 | Ains.fi](#)
(In Finnish)



” FROM A PIONEER

Making the overall impacts of urban development visible

The built environment is a complex entity, only part of which comprises buildings. Climate impact management currently focuses on individual buildings or on the emissions of entire cities without construction. Regional design has an enormous impact on how people move around, what kind of municipal infrastructure is built, how energy is produced and what it is used for.

In 2023, we worked with the Green Building Council Finland to develop [the definition of a carbon-neutral built environment](#) (In Finnish), a new tool for guiding the climate impacts of regional planning and zoning. Used by cities and municipalities, the method gives a comprehensive view of emissions in regional construction, only about half of which are related to buildings.

When planning a new area, many choices are made that have an impact on climate emissions in both the short and long term. In the hunt for ideal soil or foundation conditions, a location may be found that is not accessible by environmentally friendly modes of transport. Similarly, a carbon-neutral building in terms of energy consumption and materials can be built, but the solutions will be wasted if it does not serve its intended purpose.

The planning phase should also consider the resilience or adaptability of the area. How will the area be able to meet not only current needs but also future living and working needs? In addition to functional adaptability, technical adaptability is needed to [cope with rising temperatures and increasing rainfall](#). (In Finnish)



Regional design must also consider the resilience of the area, i.e. its ability to adapt.

As water volumes increase, there is a need for functional systems across property boundaries, and as temperatures rise, there is a need for natural shading by vegetation.

The focus of regional development should increasingly shift towards developing existing sites and making use of existing facilities and buildings.

Emissions must be considered through the overall impact. For this reason, regional development projects and options should be examined with reliable calculations that consider all relevant aspects and perspectives.

Roosa Roisko

Senior Life Cycle Specialist,
AINS Group



TOGETHER
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IMPACT

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COMMUNITY

DATA
SECURITY

ENVIRONMENTAL
HANDPRINT

**FROM A
PIONEER**

EMISSION
REDUCTION

” FROM A PIONEER

Sustainable construction produces economic value

Sustainable development is a particular challenge for the built environment, where life cycles are long and impacts on the natural environment are high. Demonstrating the economic value of sustainable solutions brings the discussion of sustainability into the familiar world of project bases and money.

Minimising harm is a key aspect of sustainability thinking. It has been easy to justify this objective, especially in the case of energy use, where saving on consumption also saves costs.

However, the equation will remain incomplete if we do not learn to look at sustainability investments through the value produced by sustainable choices also. It is only recently that the property and construction sector

has begun to see sustainability in terms of economic value creation, driven by changing valuations and tighter controls.

At AINS Group, we were the first in Finland to publish a study on the economic returns of sustainable construction. We showed how sustainability investments both increase the value of a property and protect it against future depreciation. An example of the former is the investment in environmental rating, which increases the interest of aware companies in the premises and helps them find a tenant more quickly. An example of the latter could be investing in a much smaller life-cycle carbon footprint than the benchmark to reduce the future risks associated with more stringent standards or carbon emission pricing for real estate.

Sustainable construction investment appraisal looks at the financial equation of a construction project from both a sustainability and future returns perspective. The economic importance of sustainable choices will only increase in the future, and investments will increasingly be viewed from this angle. In the future, we will learn to see economic value in terms of factors that we cannot yet measure, for example, the impact of a real estate project on biodiversity or overall social sustainability.

The real question is no longer what has to be done with the project, but how to improve the value of the project by increasing sustainability.

Anssi Salonen

Project Development Director,
AINS Group



Sustainability increases the value of the property and protects it against depreciation.

➔ [Download the report: Sustainable construction – how profitable is it?](#)



We reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in a goal-oriented manner

We are committed to setting our emission reduction targets in line with what is needed to keep global heating below catastrophic levels and reach net-zero by 2050 at latest (SBTi).

2,118,448 kg CO₂e

Our carbon footprint is equivalent to the carbon footprint of a 2 000 m² apartment building over a 50-year life cycle.

1,560 kg CO₂e
/employee

The carbon footprint corresponds to a return flight from Helsinki to Seoul.



We reduce our climate emissions in a goal-oriented manner

We aim to reduce climate emissions in all our activities. We are committed to reducing direct and indirect emissions in our own operations.

The main measures relate to heating and electricity consumption in our premises, staff mobility and procurement. We are aiming for approval of our science based (SBTi) emission reduction targets during 2024.

Carbon footprint of AINS Group 2023

The carbon footprint of AINS Group has been calculated according to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG protocol). Our calculation covers all our activities for scopes 1 and 2 and relevant activities for scope 3. We use an operational boundary as the organisational boundary for the calculation.

Scope 1: Emissions directly caused by AINS Group's own activities.

Direct emissions are caused by vehicle fuels.

Scope 2: Indirect emissions of purchased energy associated with AINS Group's activities, caused by energy production.

These emissions are related to the consumption of electricity and district heating in AINS Group's offices and other properties. In the calculation, emissions are reported on a market and location basis.

Scope 3: Other indirect emissions caused by AINS Group's operations and the products and services we buy.

The coverage and content of our calculation in this category have varied from year to year due to the availability of data and emission factors. For 2023, the calculation covers major purchases (including fixed assets) and purchased services, transportation, in-house waste, water consumption, business travel and commuting, and fuel and energy-related activities not reported in scope 1 or 2.

Unit of account

In the calculation of the carbon footprint, greenhouse gas emissions are expressed as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e). The carbon dioxide equivalent describes the climate warming effect of different greenhouse gases converted into the equivalent warming effect of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Results

The total carbon footprint (Scopes 1–3) of AINS Group was 2,118,448 kg CO₂e in 2023 (2022: 2,126,035 kg CO₂e). Relative to the number of employees, emissions were 1,560 kg CO₂e per employee. Emissions per employee decreased from the previous year (2022: 1,731 kg CO₂e).

The growth of the company and the number of employees will challenge reduction of our overall emissions. We are constantly striving to improve the quality of our emissions calculations, so annual emissions figures are not fully comparable.



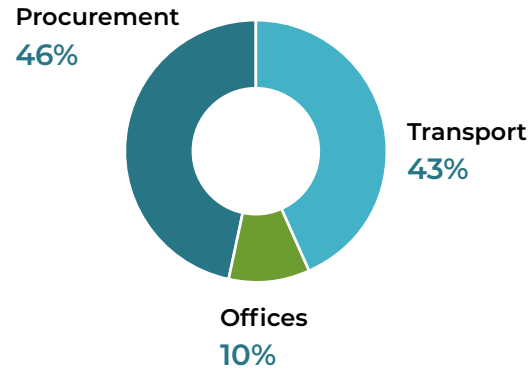
Towards lower emissions

We promote cycling and public transportation as our staff's means of transportation. We have a commuting and commuter cycling benefit and keep sustainable transportation at the forefront of our commuting policy. In our offices, we aim to create high-quality working environments in less space. We invest in renewable energy and central office locations. We require our subcontractors and suppliers to be environmentally sustainable and we target our procurement towards climate-friendly alternatives when possible.

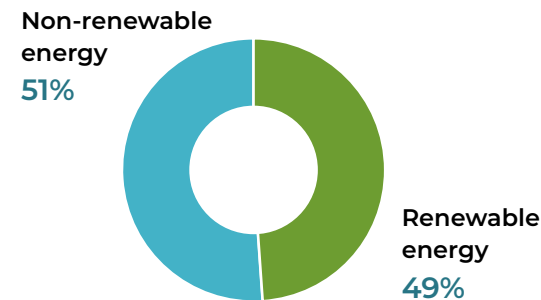
We set science-based emission reduction targets in 2024

We are committed to setting science-based emission reduction targets (SBTi). Once the reduction targets are approved, we will publish our more detailed emission reduction programme.

Distribution of emissions 2023



Shares of renewable and non-renewable energy 2023



Scope 1 and 2 emissions, CO₂e per employee

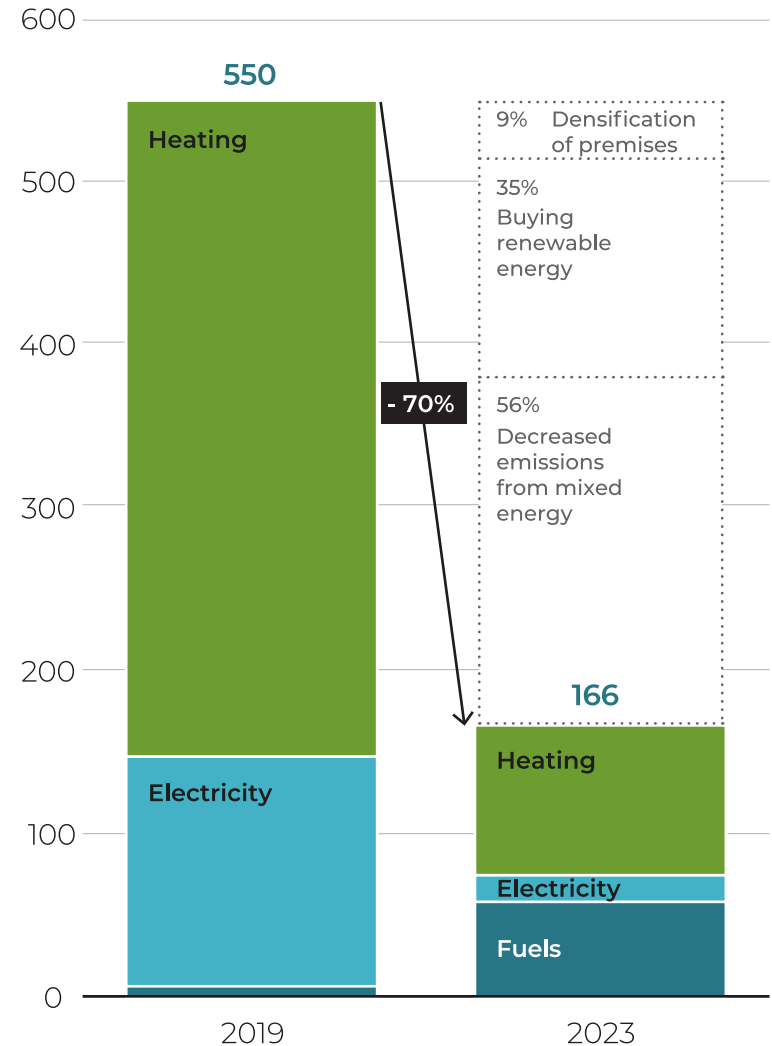




Table 1. Emissions of AINS Group, tonnes CO₂e

t CO ₂ e	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	DESCRIPTION
Scope 1: Direct emissions	4	5	5	53	79	We are working to increase the share of electric and hybrid cars in our car fleet.
Scope 2: Electricity, market based	109	81	86	14	22	We have systematically chosen renewable electricity for our offices' electricity contracts from 2021 onwards. Some of the electricity contracts of the businesses we have bought have been with non-renewable energy, which we will replace with renewable energy. *
Scope 2: Electricity, location-based					43	From 2023, we will report emissions from electricity consumption by location.*
Scope 2: Heat, market based	309	233	224	161	124	Emissions from using district heat have decreased as a result of lower emission factors for district heating companies. We will increase the share of renewable energy as our landlords have the capacity to provide it.*
Scope 2: Heat, location-based					182	From 2023, we will report heating emissions by location.*
Scope 3: Business travel	308	184	186	461	334	We favour lower-emission business travel and part of the need to travel is replaced by virtual meetings. The coverage and quality of emissions calculations for business travel have been improved.
Scope 3: Commuting	473	268	224	490	531	The share of remote work has decreased compared to the Covid years, but some of our jobs require transportation.
Scope 3: Fixed assets	87	95	126	255	207	The coverage and quality of the emissions calculation have been improved over the years. In 2022 and 2023, we included furniture and ICT purchases.
Scope 3: Emissions from primary production, transmission and distribution losses	1	1	1	42	55	The coverage of emissions from primary production was improved in 2022 to include emissions from primary production of electricity and district heating.*
Scope 3: Waste	0.1	0.1	7	26	29	The coverage of the emissions calculation was improved for waste in 2022.
Scope 3: Services and products purchased	0	2	2	623	733	In 2023, the calculation included insurance, cleaning services, breakfast and meeting catering, office supplies, site equipment, subcontracting, gifts and commemorations, and a summer party for all staff.
Scope 3: Transport and distribution	0	0	0.3	0.0	2.9	We developed the calculation of transport and distribution in 2023, which led us to reintroduce them into the calculation.
Scope 3: Water consumption	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.4	1.7	The coverage of the emissions calculation was improved for water consumption in 2022.
Total	1 291	869	861	2 126	2 118	
Number of staff	768	828	888	1 228	1 358	
Carbon footprint per employee, t CO₂e	1.68	1.05	0.97	1.73	1.56	

* Calculated using the latest available emission factors as of 11 March 2024



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**EMISSION
REDUCTION**



Carbon-neutral AINS Group in 2024?

As supporters of the #BuildingLife programme, we are committed to working towards a carbon neutral built environment by 2035.

This is an ambitious goal, as zero-emission building has not been invented yet and is unlikely to be invented during the next decade either. Our carbon neutrality targets, like those of others in the sector, are based on, for example, offsetting the emissions that we cannot reduce.

We have been committed to offsetting emissions from our own operations from 2024 onwards. We have not yet identified a method that is credible and appropriate to our emission structure, while meeting the criteria of an effective and mathematically correct offset method.

Hence, we will continue to work this year to find a method we can use to offset the climate emissions caused by our business. We will primarily aim to tie it to Finland's built environment.



GRI Content Index

Statement of use: AINS Group has reported the data cited in this GRI Content Index for the period 1.1.-31.12.2023 with reference to the GRI standards.

GRI 1 used: GRI 1: Foundation 2021

GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	LOCATION	COMMENTS
GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021	2-1 Information about the organisation	p. 4	
	2-2 Entities included in the organisation's sustainability reporting	p. 9	
	2-3 Reporting period, frequency and contact point	p. 4	
	2-4 Restatements of information		No significant changes.
	2-6 Activities, value chain and other business relationships	p. 4, 5	
	2-7 Employees		
	2-14 Role of the highest governance body in sustainability reporting	p. 8	
	2-27 Compliance with laws and regulations	p. 8	
	2-28 Membership associations	p. 11	
	2-29 Approach to stakeholder engagement	p. 9	
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-1 Process to determine material topics	p. 9	
	3-2 List of material topics	p. 9, 10	
	3-3 Management of material topics	p. 8	
GRI 201: Economic Performance 2016	201-1 Direct economic value produced and distributed	p. 5	

GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	LOCATION	COMMENTS
GRI 205: Anti-corruption 2016	205-1 Activities with an assessed risk of corruption	p. 8	
	2205-2 Communication and training about anti-corruption policies and procedures	p. 8	About us – Sustainability – Code of Ethics AINS Group
GRI 302: Energy 2016	302-1 Energy consumption within the organization	p. 33	
	302-4 Reduction of energy consumption	p. 34	
GRI 304: Biodiversity 2016	304-2 Significant impacts of activities, products and services on biodiversity	p. 21	
GRI 305: Emissions 2016	305-1 Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions	p. 34	
	305-2 Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions	p. 34	
	305-3 Other indirect (Scope 3) GHG emissions	p. 34	
	305-5 Reduction of GHG emissions	p. 33	
GRI 403: Occupational Health and Safety 2018	403-6 Promotion of worker health	p. 14	
GRI 405: Diversity and Equal Opportunity 2016	405-1 Diversity of governance bodies and employees	p. 14, 15	



We want to make our clients' environmental objectives our own, and aim to a level where each of our experts, whether an engineer, architect or cost analyst, is also an expert of sustainability.

Liisa Jäätvuori

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www.ains.fi/en/sustainability