



We Are Ernest.



Strategic Plan 2021-2026
Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management, ULB

Sustainable Transformation ■ Internationalization ■ Co-creation



Solvay Brussels School
Economics & Management

We Are Ernest.

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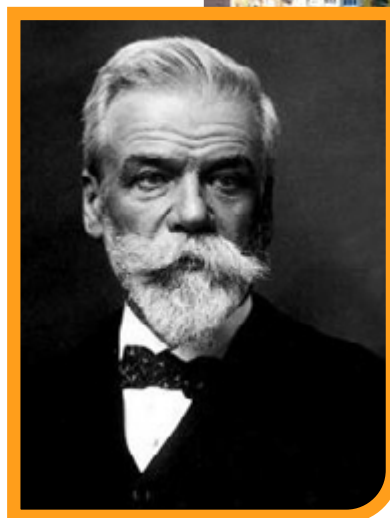
Ernest's Legacy

Talents from different walks of life develop into the business leaders of tomorrow. But we need to prepare the future to remain successful. We need to secure a faster transformation of our society of our School, and ourselves. Ernest Solvay is the inspiration for our strategic plan 2021-2026 of the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management. Up to each and every one of us to be more Ernest!

Ernest Solvay (1838-1922), the founder of the School, was ahead of his time. The ammonia-soda process he developed and patented in 1863, laid the foundations for a thriving international chemical company. His drive for excellence and entrepreneurial spirit still stands at the core of our values today.

“Knowledge is the fundamental factor that influences the upward journey of humanity to social progress.”

Ernest Solvay, speech at the inauguration of Maison de l'Education, 22 December 1913



Ernest's flagship enterprise, Solvay & Co, was founded in partnership with small-scale businesses and by family members and local entrepreneurs. This sense of co-creation still permeates all the cooperation initiatives of the School today.

As pleurisy prevented him from attending university, he felt as no other the importance of **resilience, knowledge and free enquiry**. That's why he created and sponsored several laboratories, institutes – like the Sociology Institute (1902) – and the Solvay Business School in 1903, both hosted by ULB. He also brought illustrious scientists together at the Solvay Conferences, such as Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr... We proudly continue his **science-based and multidisciplinary knowledge** building today.

Ernest Solvay advocated for an economy that benefits the well-being of all. Both as an entrepreneur and a policy-maker, he pushed for **equal opportunities and democratic governance**. Following on from his legacy, the Solvay Brussels School nurtures a long tradition of corporate social responsibility, ethics and diversity. Free access and intellectual merit are the cornerstones of our educational institution. ■

Our core values

- **Free enquiry**
critical thinking and open minds
- **Excellence**
in education and research
- **Entrepreneurial spirit**
initiative, innovation, leadership
- **Multidisciplinarity**
blending disciplines and expertise
- **Equal opportunity**
access for all
- **Democratic governance**
gives all stakeholders a voice
- **Societal relevance**
social responsibility, ethics, diversity, and sustainability

The Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management

Stylized facts	2012/13	2021/22
Student intake - Degrees	3005	4877
% of women in degree programmes	30%	41%
% of international students in degree program	15%	25%
Core faculty size	56	97
Number of 4 months credited internships	0	146
Adjunct faculty & contributors from industry	347	358
Repec Global Ranking of business schools	10	11
Google citations to publications, yearly	13,000	16,000

Of strengths and opportunities

Our society and economy are facing existential challenges. We need to reconcile **economic development**, **social progress** and the **preservation of our planet**. And as Ernest did in his time, the Solvay Brussels School has the ambition to contribute to addressing today's most pressing challenges for business and society.

Thanks to the support of the **Solvay Foundation**, the faculty has launched the sustainable development initiative in 2018. Our degrees have progressively integrated the following '**sustainability tracks**': energy and climate, circularity, human wellbeing, socially sustainable organisations and responsible capitalism. Nowadays, about **3,200 students** have been exposed to the sustainable development challenges in organizations.

Starting from our strengths

The School has a **long-established tradition of excellence**, both in economics and management education and research. **Analytical rigour** and **science** have always been our strengths. We operate in the most analytical and multi-disciplinary areas of our field: economics and business engineering.





Our School benefits from a **dynamic and entrepreneurial ecosystem**, notably thanks to its vibrant student and alumni communities, and also through its **links to the corporate world**.

It is as well solidly anchored in the Université Libre de Bruxelles, a **leading multidisciplinary research university** founded on the principles of free enquiry and critical thinking. We are located at the heart of Brussels, in close proximity to European, Belgian and regional policy-makers.

Seizing opportunities

Today's societal challenges are also opportunities.

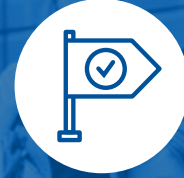
If there is a call for **more sustainability** and **digital transformation**, we need to cater for those demands. We should as well **meet the demands of younger generations** for more and earlier **internationalisation** and **mobility**. And if companies and institutions are looking for skilled leaders, we should provide **(lifelong) training** for them.

Based on our strengths, we enthusiastically grasp the opportunity to respond to these needs. ■

“In every period of its development, civilization has progressed because of knowledge and because of the precision of knowledge.”

Ernest Solvay, speech at the inauguration of Maison de l'Education, 22 December 1913

ULB



Founded in 1834



6 Nobel prizes



30.000 students at ULB



450 partners around the world



1 student out of 3 financially supported by ULB

Our mission and vision

Mission

To have a decisive and positive **impact** on how economic, business and societal challenges are addressed. With a strong emphasis on **quantitative methods**, we produce **pioneering research** and educate women and men to become true **leaders and entrepreneurs** in their respective fields.

Vision

Our School aims at being a leading European school in economics and management, as enabler of the sustainability transformation of our **society**.

Integrated in a multi-disciplinary research-based university, the SBS-EM is intensively collaborating with its entire ecosystem and combines a unique blend of scientific rigour, contextual engagement, and problem-solving skills, with an ambitious European and global reach.





5 strategic axes

Starting from our mission and vision, we have defined 5 strategic priorities to address today's major challenges and seize new opportunities. By building knowledge, developing talents and sharing passion, we want to:



become a recognised leader in the **sustainability transformation** of society



expand our School's **internationalisation and mobility** offer



enhance our **multidisciplinary platforms co-created** with other stakeholders in our ecosystem



make our core business management and economics activities **future-proof**



strengthen our School' **organisation** and simplify its **governance**

- **Sustainable Transformation**
- **Internationalization**
- **Co-creation**

Each of these 5 priorities is applied to the following 3 pillars that reflect the core activities of our academic community:



Leading edge Education Programs



Thought leadership: research and outreach



The School as a Living Lab

Where these strategic ambitions and pillars meet, a team of professors, researchers, staff and students will make sure that the topics of Energy & climate, Circularity, Human wellbeing and Socially sustainable organisation are addressed. This transversal co-creation is unique in its kind. ■

In true democratic tradition, this strategic plan has been built on the hard work of many stakeholders.

*A warm thanks goes to all people involved in this process and to Bain & Company for their methodological support. Now that the strategy has been finalised, it is time to take the next step and implement it. With the 120th anniversary in mind, this is the **perfect occasion** to leverage Ernest's legacy and **shape our school for the future.***



A sample of 5 initiatives

To achieve our 5 strategic ambitions, more than **20 different projects** have been formulated, spread over the 3 pillars. Each of these projects has a set of **key milestones** and a team that sets out to reach them. We'll zoom in on 5 examples of highly innovative ventures to give you an idea, all of them are **conceived through a collaborative approach**.

You can request the complete list of projects on a confidential basis, from the deanship.

International mobility opportunities in our flagship bachelor degrees

Strategic ambitions: internationalisation, multi-disciplinary cooperation with leading business schools and universities

In a world where businesses and economics are increasingly interconnected, management graduates need an **international mindset**. The sooner we provide international experience the better. That's why we will expand our School's internationalisation, from the bachelor degrees onwards.

International bachelor degrees (e.g. in English) and Brussels' appeal as Europe's capital will attract more foreign students. We will introduce more international mobility and double degrees to give our students an **earlier international experience**. These bachelor ventures are naturally build through a co-creation with international partners.

Advanced Master in Biotech & MedTech Ventures

Strategic ambitions: internationalisation, multi-disciplinary and researchbased (with i3H) innovation, entre-preneurial

There is a **shortage of talent** for management positions in the **Biotech** and **MedTech** industry. With this Belgian-rooted Advanced Master with European ambition, the Solvay Brussels School helps to develop a stronger Biotech and MedTech **ecosystem** in the long term.

The Master will be connected to our **i3H multidisciplinary research center** and built through an open collaborative approach with faculty members from other Belgian and European universities and a partnership with VIB (Flemish Institute for Biotechnology) and other networks. 75% of the content will be delivered jointly with industry experts and leaders.





Executive Master in Future-proof Real Estate

Strategic ambitions: sustainability, internationalisation, multidisciplinary cooperation, future-proof

The real estate sector is undergoing **unprecedented changes**, as sustainability and digital management of buildings calls for new skills. This Executive Master addresses today's and tomorrow's real estate needs and will help participants manage **industry challenges** and **generate positive change**.

This unique multidisciplinary intra ULB cooperation between the Solvay Brussels School, Ecole Polytechnique de Bruxelles (EPB) and the Architecture faculty uses a **30/30/30 methodology**, mixing theory, practice and exchange. Some of the classes will be taught in places that are undergoing an exemplary green transition.

Ernest Learning Lab

Strategic ambitions: sustainability, community engagement and upskilling, experimentation

It is not only businesses and the economy that need to change, **we all have to change**. We are part of the change and can learn about business and organisational transformation by **experimenting, sharing knowledge** and **experience**.

The Ernest Learning Lab is a new School-wide series of activities and events aimed at the **entire Solvay community** (staff, instructors, researchers, students and alumni) to share good practices and learn from each other on topics related to our core missions: **education, research** and **service to society**. It aims to make the Solvay Brussels School for Economics and Management a true learning community, where everyone contributes and benefits from the ecosystem. Recent topics include sustainability in education, creativity, how to reduce my carbon footprint, and digital inclusion.

Public Policy House

Strategic ambitions: action-based research, multidisciplinary research-based (with all research centers), better connection with the European governance ecosystem, visibility

The faculty is already active in several policy projects. The Solvay Public Policy House aims at expanding this dynamics through the provision of **innovative advice** to policymakers, especially at the European level, based on **multidisciplinary research**. It wants to facilitate actions for complex times, raising awareness on long term objectives while promoting rapid action. Eventually, it aims at advancing mutually beneficial solutions for free societies with healthy ecosystems.

The structure of the PPH relies on **collaborations** between academics from diverse research centres, and will **extend** to other research institutes. ■

A Sample Of Key Performance Indicators for 2026

9



Number of double and joint degrees

>40



Number of courses participating in the SDI*

>100



Size of core faculty

>100



Number of enrolled PhD students

>30%



% of credited internships abroad

>30%



% of master theses with an SDI* angle

2023: 120th anniversary

It was in 1903 that Ernest Solvay created our School to train talented men and women to become **business leaders**. In its history, a plethora of illustrious people studied and worked at our School. In 2023, it is time to celebrate **120 years of Ernest's legacy**.

Our School can be proud of its achievements, however it should not rest on its laurels. With our **new leadership team** and **strategic plan**, we want to become ever more relevant in these rapidly changing times.

We Are Ernest.

This is the slogan for the **120th anniversary of our school**. We invite you to join our celebrations.

We can get our inspiration from Ernest's work and even further reappropriate him, reincarnate him, **let us reinvent Ernest in the 21st century!** ■

*"So, let's all together cheer:
up to the future!"*

Ernest Solvay, speech at the 25th anniversary of Solvay & Co, 1888



Dedicated team



Bruno van Pottelsberghe

Dean of the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (ULB)



Catherine Dehon

Vice-Dean of the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (ULB)



Bram De Rock

Vice-Dean Research



Estelle Cantillon

Professor of Economics and Academic Director of the Sustainable Development Initiative



Pinar Celik

Vice-Dean for academic career and well-being



Laurent Hublet

Deputy Dean Lifelong Learning



Romy Genin

Head of Faculty Administration



Karin Doguet

General Manager Solvay Lifelong Learning



Valérie Urbain

President of the International Advisory Board



Edouard Janssen

Vice-President of the International Advisory Board



Lucas Portugaels

Président du Bureau Etudiant Solvay



Eline Sherif

Vice-Présidente Opérationnel du Bureau Etudiant Solvay



Charlie Coeckelberghs

Président du Cercle Solvay



Helena Mendiola

Vice-Présidente Interne du Cercle Solvay

and many more key actors of our ecosystem to be discovered in the near future

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