

BRAZIL

TRADE MISSIONS 2027

VUB TRADE MISSION SOLVAY BUSINESS SCHOOL

SOLVAY BUSINESS SCHOOL

INISOL

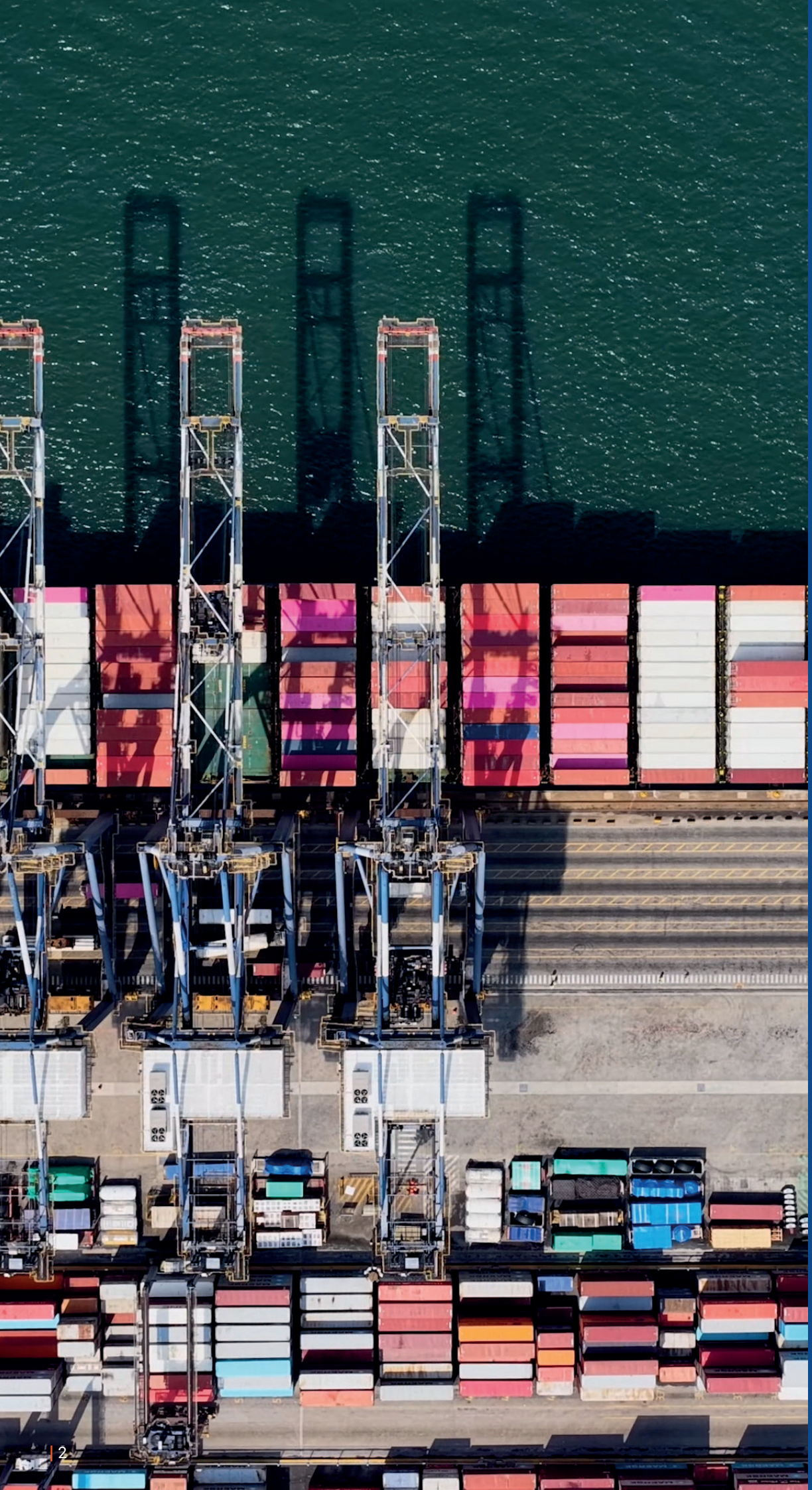


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INTRODUCTION

Our adventure began in 1978, when a group of enthusiastic final-year business engineering students from the Solvay Business School at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) came together to establish the Initiatiefgroep Solvay, known as Inisol. This association, founded for and by business engineering students pursuing their master's degrees, has since 1991 annually organised successful trade missions. Over time, the project has been professionalised and fully integrated as a master's thesis for the Master of Business Engineering and Business & Technology. Since 2019, it also serves as a practical course for master's students in Applied Economics, International Business, Communication Sciences, Political Sciences, Photonics, (International and European) Law, Bioengineering Sciences, and Sport Management.

This academic year marks our 37th edition. Due to the success of previous years and the growing demand from companies and students, multiple missions have been organised since 2020 to meet this increasing demand. Therefore, during the spring of 2027, two missions will take place, with each mission lasting three weeks.

Brazil, Chile and Uganda are three important emerging economies on the global stage, brimming with undiscovered opportunities and potential. These countries provide a dynamic environment in which your enterprise could explore new markets. This brochure takes a closer look at Brazil, examining its economic environment, key sectors and emerging opportunities for businesses seeking to establish or strengthen their presence in the country.

Brazil combines the scale of a market of more than 213 million people with abundant natural resources, a diversified economy and a strong position in global food and energy markets. As Latin America's largest economy, it offers access to a large domestic consumer base, an established industrial sector, globally competitive agriculture and a rapidly developing services and technology ecosystem.

Brazil is also entering an important phase of economic transformation. Investments in infrastructure, renewable energy, digitalisation and industrial development are opening new opportunities across the economy. Its resource base, expanding renewable-energy capacity and leading role in global food production provide important long-term advantages, while reforms and a growing innovation ecosystem are supporting the development of higher-value activities. The phased implementation of the EU–Mercosur Trade Agreement is expected to further improve Brazil's access to international markets and strengthen trade with the EU. Brazil's regional diversity creates opportunities across a broad range of industries. São Paulo is a major financial, industrial and technological hub; the Centre-West is at the heart of the country's agricultural economy; and the Northeast is emerging as a leading location for wind, solar and green-energy projects. Agriculture and food processing, renewable energy, aerospace, life sciences and automotive manufacturing therefore stand out as particularly promising sectors.

Although regulatory complexity, infrastructure gaps and fiscal pressures remain important challenges, Brazil's market scale, sectoral diversity and strategic resources make it a compelling destination for international companies seeking long-term growth in Latin America.

PROMISING SECTORS
BRAZIL

- Agriculture & Food Processing
- Renewable Energy
- Aerospace
- Lifesciences & Healthcare
- Automotive

The Trade Mission offers students the opportunity to gain international experience while supporting Belgian companies in exploring new markets and business opportunities. Through thorough preparation and in-depth market research, our multidisciplinary team helps participating companies identify opportunities, establish valuable local contacts, and gain practical insights into the business environment of our destination countries.

For companies, the Trade Mission offers a unique opportunity to explore international markets with the support of dedicated master's students and the academic expertise of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. As Project Leaders, we aim to create an environment where every team member can learn, grow, take ownership, and contribute their strengths to delivering tailored, actionable insights that create real value for the company.

Together with the academic team, we are committed to giving our very best and to supporting every participating company in achieving its international ambitions. We look forward to working together and building lasting partnerships that contribute to sustainable international growth.

On behalf of the Trade Mission Team,

Project Leaders Trade Mission 2027



Arin Rens
Project Lead trade mission Chile



Lucie Pham
Project Lead trade mission Uganda



Otto Janssens
Project Lead trade mission Brazil

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Please refer to our website for the online version of the brochure and the full versions of the letters of support.

MARK ANDRIES & PIET DEMUNTER - Director General VLAIO & CEO FIT*

"For participating companies and students, this initiative will provide valuable learning opportunities and broaden their perspectives in many ways. Through the students' professional approach, companies will gain valuable insights into and identify new opportunities within these emerging economies, which may otherwise remain unfamiliar to them."

BART DE WEVER - Prime Minister of Belgium*

"The VUB Trade Mission serves as a valuable bridge between academia and the business community. It fosters new collaborations and creates opportunities for Belgian companies to expand their presence in three strategically important and rapidly growing markets."

MATTHIAS DIEPENDAELE - Minister-President of the Flemish Government and Flemish Minister for Economy, Innovation and Industry, Foreign Affairs, Digitalisation and Facility Management*

"Projects that bring students and businesses together in an international context deserve particular recognition. They not only strengthen the practical experience of young talent, but also contribute to the international ambitions of our companies. I am therefore pleased to support the 37th edition of the VUB Trade Mission programme. These three destinations offer promising opportunities for Flemish companies across a wide range of sectors and provide a strong foundation for further international economic cooperation."

MATTHIEU LABEAU - Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Uganda, Head of Delegation

"INISOL's economic missions provide master's students with practical internship opportunities in emerging markets. They are designed to build global business connections, uncover new market potential, and sharpen international business skills for both students and their representing companies."

HUGUES CHANTRY - Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Kampala

"Over the years, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel Trade Mission has grown into a successful initiative that brings together innovative ideas, academic expertise, entrepreneurial spirit and international cooperation. This unique combination makes a valuable contribution to strengthening economic partnerships between Belgium and partner countries."

CHRIS HOORNAERT - Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Brasília*

"The planned trade mission to Brazil will give students the opportunity to gain hands-on international experience while offering Belgian companies a unique opportunity to explore the Brazilian market. I am pleased to support this important and unique initiative by VUB."

CLAUDIA ROLIM - FIT representative Brazil

"As the largest market in Latin America, Brazil offers substantial opportunities for Belgian and Flemish companies across a wide range of sectors. Its market scale, diversified economy and evolving business landscape make the country an important destination for companies seeking to develop their activities in Latin America."

MARIA ELENA DUARTE VILCHES & NATHALIE SURMONT - FIT representatives Chile*

"Chile is particularly interesting in this regard. It offers promising opportunities in sectors where Flemish expertise aligns with Chilean needs, including mining and critical raw materials, renewable energy, ports and logistics, sustainable aquaculture, coastal protection and nature-based solutions, infrastructure, and specialised technologies for the mining value chain. Beyond these key sectors, trade flows in recent years also point to interesting opportunities for Flemish companies in areas such as food and beverages, agriculture and agro-industry, machinery and equipment, chemicals and

pharmaceuticals, as well as the creative industries. In this regard, Flanders can build on its strong position as an innovative, export-oriented supplier of technology, expertise and high-quality products."

BART BUYSSE - CEO UNIZO*
"In recent years, this approach has proven its success, with our SMEs showing a clear interest in exploring new markets with the support of students. Moreover, it may encourage students to pursue a future as entrepreneurs or as managers within exporting companies."

FRANK BECKX – Chief Executive Officer Voka*
"I wholeheartedly support this initiative and encourage you to consider taking part with your company. Driven students with an interest in entrepreneurship and international trade deserve every opportunity to develop their potential. After all, for an open Flemish economy, exports and internationalisation remain essential drivers of sustainable growth and prosperity."

MAXIME PRÉVOT - - Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs & Development Cooperation
"I would therefore like to commend the students of the VUB Trade Mission for their commitment and professionalism. I am confident that this initiative will lead to rewarding exchanges and valuable experiences for all participants."

THEO FRANCKEN - Minister of Defence and Foreign Trade*
"These missions offer Belgian companies a unique opportunity to expand their international activities and forge new partnerships. As Minister responsible for Foreign Trade, I wholeheartedly welcome this initiative. It is precisely through initiatives like these that our companies grow, innovate and showcase Belgian expertise on the global stage."

JAN JAMBON - Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Finance, Pensions, National Lottery & (Federal) Cultural Institutions*
"The destinations of this year's edition, Brazil, Chile and Uganda, offer numerous opportunities for economic cooperation and entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as this strengthen the links between education and entrepreneurship, contribute to Belgium's international profile and foster the exchange of knowledge and innovation."

VINCENT VAN PETEGHEM - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Budget, responsible for Administrative Simplification*
"The idea of organising encounters that can act as a catalyst for bringing students and businesses together is something I have always championed throughout my academic career. Extracurricular activities are an essential part of every student's experience, enriching their time at university beyond the classroom."

DAVID CLARINVAL – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Employment, the Economy and Agriculture*
"I firmly believe in the added value of this initiative, as it connects young talent with international markets and gives students the opportunity to translate their academic knowledge into valuable hands-on experience."

FILIP VANDEN BULCKE – Acting Director General for Geoeconomics and Economic Diplomacy*
"Initiatives such as the VUB Trade Mission closely align with these joint efforts. They contribute to a better understanding of foreign markets, strengthen the international competencies of future professionals and foster connections between Belgian companies and foreign economic partners. In an increasingly competitive international environment, initiatives such as these are of great value

JO BROUNS – Flemish Minister for the Environment and Agriculture*

"The upcoming trade mission will focus on three dynamic emerging markets: Brazil, Uganda and Chile. These countries offer not only significant economic opportunities, but also play an important role in addressing challenges related to food security, sustainable agriculture, climate adaptation and the green transition."

CIELTJE VAN ACHTER – Flemish Minister for Brussels and Media*

"I am delighted to express my support for the 37th edition of the VUB Trade Mission. This initiative brings together the very things that make Brussels strong: young talent, knowledge, entrepreneurship and a distinctly international outlook. As the Flemish Minister for Brussels, I believe it is particularly valuable that students from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel can translate their academic knowledge into practical international experience."

ELÉONORE SIMONET - Minister of Middle Class, Self-Employed and SMEs*

"Brazil is the largest economy in Latin America and has a broad and diversified industrial base. Uganda, meanwhile, is among the fastest-growing economies in East Africa, with young populations and a growing demand for expertise in agriculture and food, energy, infrastructure and digitalisation. For Belgian companies, these markets offer genuine opportunities, but they can also be challenging to explore independently. This is precisely where the added value of your mission lies: it lowers the barriers to entering these markets, particularly for SMEs that do not have their own international structures."

CHARLES MICHEL - Minister of State, Former Prime Minister of Belgium, President Emeritus of the European Council*

"Initiatives such as the VUB Trade Mission make a valuable contribution to this effort. They bring together academic knowledge, young talent and entrepreneurship, while giving students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of international trade and economic diplomacy. At the same time, they provide companies with an additional opportunity to explore new markets and build sustainable partnerships."

MATHIEU BIHET - Federal Minister for Energy*

"By offering young talents the opportunity to gain hands-on international experience while supporting Belgian companies in their international expansion, this initiative contributes to strengthening both the skills of our youth and the international position of our companies."

BORIS DILIÈS - Minister-President of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region*

"In a region such as Brussels, which is open to the world and strongly internationally oriented, it is essential to encourage young talent to develop their openness, initiative and understanding of global economic challenges. The VUB Trade Mission makes a significant contribution to this by bringing academia and the business community closer together."

AUDREY HENRY - Secretary of State for Spatial Planning, Urban Development, Public Cleanliness and Energy*

"Direct collaboration with Belgian companies and their local partners will enable students to develop entrepreneurial, intercultural and professional skills that will prove invaluable in an increasingly internationally oriented working environment."

DIRK DE SMEDT – Minister for Finance and Budget, Public Administration, Digitalisation and Dutch-language Education*

"Entrepreneurship and international trade are the backbone of the Belgian economy. It is therefore crucial that our companies have the opportunity to explore new markets, establish sustainable partnerships and leverage their expertise on an international scale."

OLIVIER WILLOCX - Member of the Brussels Parliament, Deputy Parliamentary Group Leader*

"Initiatives that bring together young talent and entrepreneurship therefore deserve our full support. In an economy that operates within an international context, openness to foreign markets is not a luxury, but a necessity."

JAN DANCKAERT - Rector VUB

"These trade missions undoubtedly deserve your attention, support and encouragement. I am confident that our students will provide you with all the guidance and information you need to make the most of this opportunity."

JOËL BRANSON - Dean Faculty Social Sciences and Solvay Business School

"As Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences & Solvay Business School of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), I am pleased to endorse the 37th edition of the VUB Trade Mission. Through this long-standing initiative, our master's students support Belgian companies in exploring international business opportunities by conducting tailored market research in selected foreign markets."



*Translated to English (original versions of the letters of support can be found in the digital version of our brochure)

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRADE MISSION

Following our annual tradition, we offer you the opportunity to have your company represented in growing economies with numerous opportunities. This edition has chosen to explore what the Brazilian, Chilean and Ugandan markets have to offer through a three-week visit.

During the trade mission, an academic team guides the students in carrying out a company-specific assignment. Each participating company in this year's mission will receive a detailed report with the results of the project. For the step-by-step procedure of our project, please refer to our "Action Plan" section.

As in previous years, students from various fields of study are chosen to maximise the exchange of knowledge. This year's team consists of 42 committed master's students in Business Engineering, Business & Technology, Communication Sciences, Political Sciences, (International & European) Law and Bioengineering Sciences. The project itself is led by three project leaders and a motivated and competent core team. The students are supported by Prof. dr. Michaël Dooms and Prof. dr. Magali Geerts, who both participated in the trade mission as students and have, respectively, since 2007 and 2015, supervised all projects along with their academic team, which consists of two academic assistants.

The academic team assists students during the preparation, on-site execution, and the drafting of the final report. Additionally, we collaborate with Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), the Belgian embassies at the destinations, the Belgian Foreign Trade Agency, and our network of Solvay Alumni to obtain professional advice and establish the necessary contacts.

All three trade missions will take place in spring 2027 from early March to late April. However, preparations begin as early as the summer months of 2026. Practical matters such as accommodation, local transport and communication tools will all be arranged before travelling. By following this approach, we ensure that during the three weeks on location, full focus can be dedicated to executing the mission and completing the business assignment. To guarantee thorough communication and progress tracking, interim reports are submitted to the client before, during, and after the mission. The final report is submitted within eight weeks after returning.

The academic evaluation of the mission outcomes differs depending on the student's field of study. It is more demanding for students in the Master of Business Engineering and the Master of Business & Technology, as the final report in two programmes will function as their master's thesis, which counts for 18 ECTS credits. For all other students, the final report will be based on a practical course, counting for 6 ECTS credits. In both cases, the primary focus is the successful completion of the assignment established in consultation with the company.



Trade Mission Egypt, 2025



Trade Mission South India, 2026

OBJECTIVE OF THE TRADE MISSION

We offer your company a wide range of services and possibilities to explore and capitalise on the markets of Brazil, Chile and Uganda, including:

- Market research
- Research and recommendations for a successful marketing mix
- Identification of potential suppliers and customers
- Analysis of distribution and warehousing opportunities
- Research into strategic opportunities within your sector
- Collection of documentation on goods, services, legislation, projects, etc.
- Pre-feasibility analyses of foreign investments
- Inspection and internal control of your branches in Brazil, Chile and Uganda
- Organisation of conferences and conventions
- Site engineering
- …

This list is not exhaustive and is intended to provide a general idea of the types of assignments our team can carry out on-site. Therefore, it is important to specify the assignment accurately in advance to avoid misunderstandings or unrealistic expectations.

Organised cooperation is essential for a successful mission. Therefore, a meeting will be held before departure to the mission destination, involving a representative of your company, a representative of Flanders Investment & Trade, the participating student, and the academic team.

Our trade missions offer several benefits for your company. They can serve as a catalyst for significant growth in market share and business networks. Companies that have participated in previous VUB Trade Missions have reported notable success in the years following their involvement in our project. For more insights into their experiences, please visit the "Testimonials" section.

WHY IS THIS A PRIME OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR COMPANY?

- We are a motivated team of master's students nearing the completion of our academic careers, seeking one final challenge to prepare us for the job market;
- We are eager to transform our theoretical knowledge into practical experience through an impactful project that delivers sustainable results;
- We will leverage our acquired economic, technological, and linguistic skills to execute the assignment with the utmost professionalism;
- The contacts we have established with various economic institutions ensure professional support from field experts;
- After analysing several emerging countries, we have chosen Brazil, Chile and Uganda as destinations for our trade missions. These choices are supported by Flanders Investment & Trade and we are convinced that these regions offer strong opportunities for our Belgian companies;
- Cost of participation per student: €4.500, all travel and accommodation costs included.

In agreement with Flanders Investment & Trade, part of these costs may be subsidised. For more details, please visit the "Financial support FIT" section.

TRADE MISSION APPROACH

SIMPLE FORMULA

If you wish to participate in our project, a student from the Trade Mission Team will carry out your assignment and work in close collaboration with your company. The exact nature of the assignment will be mutually agreed upon to ensure it meets the needs and expectations of both parties. We strongly recommend that your company provides adequate in-house training to complement the student's independent preparation. The student will submit a preparatory report no later than one week before departure.

STRONG SUPPORT

The Trade Mission Team operates under the academic supervision of two professors: Prof. dr. Michaël Dooms and Prof. dr. Magali Geerts. They are supported by a team of academic assistants with extensive experience as students and supervisors. Prof. dr. Dooms has supervised the last 19 editions, providing significant on-site support, while Prof. dr. Geerts has nine years of experience in the same role. Thanks to Inisol and its extensive network, we also benefit from the support of Solvay Business School, its alumni, and sponsors such as Deloitte and BDO. Other long-standing partners of the trade mission include Flanders Investment & Trade, the Belgian embassies, and the Belgian Foreign Trade Agency. This network offers professional advice and assistance in establishing the necessary contacts.

CONTINUOUS GUIDANCE

During the trade mission, regular communication will be maintained between the academic team and the students regarding the assignment. This ensures proper guidance and allows for adjustments if necessary. For more details on reporting during the mission, please refer to the “Action Plan” section.

FOLLOW-UP

At the end of the trade mission, the students will prepare a detailed final report, which will later be presented and explained verbally. This presentation takes place in the presence of the student, a representative of your company, and either Prof. dr. Dooms or Prof. dr. Geerts. For more information, please refer to the subsection titled "The Final Report".

THE FINAL REPORT

The final report will detail all the actions undertaken to successfully complete the assignment. It will present the information gathered, analyses conducted, results achieved, and conclusions drawn in a structured manner. Consequently, your company will receive an accurate and thorough report covering all aspects of the defined assignment. We ensure the quality of this report by evaluating its content according to the students’ graduation requirements.

If the trade mission is conducted by final-year master's students in Business Engineering and Business & Technology, it constitutes their master's thesis. This means that students dedicate approximately 450 hours to the entire project, including extensive reporting during both the preparation and the on-site mission. The final deliverables include a comprehensive report in MS Word, accompanied by an MS PowerPoint presentation.

If the trade mission is conducted by master's students from fields such as Applied Economics, International Business, Communication Sciences, Political Sciences, Photonics, (International and European) Law, Bioengineering Sciences, and Sport Management, it serves as a practical component with an estimated study time of 300 hours. In this case, a more concise reporting format is expected, with a greater emphasis placed on fieldwork on-site rather than additional desk research.

Regardless of the form and scope of the report, the completion of assignments is always closely monitored. Students are informed of all specific academic expectations in a timely manner throughout the project. As a result, your company can be confident that the implementation and reporting of your project will be handled effectively.

More detailed information about the estimated time commitment is available in the study programme sheets, which can be accessed on the VUB website and are also included in the contract.



ACTION PLAN

OCTOBER
NOVEMBER

STEP 1: FIRST CONTACT

In the initial phase, we will establish contact to evaluate your interests. Subsequently, we will provide you with our informational brochure. Following this, we will engage to explore the potential for collaboration.

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER

STEP 2: MEETING/DISCUSSION

Should this project appeal to you, we will organise a meeting to discuss a possible assignment. We will then consider your expectations for the student prior to, during, and after the mission. A project brief containing this information will be prepared and presented for approval to the academic team.

STEP 3: CONTRACT AGREEMENT

As soon as there is an agreement on the assignment, a contract will be drafted, that will be signed by both parties. In this, the obligations of each party will be outlined.

DECEMBER

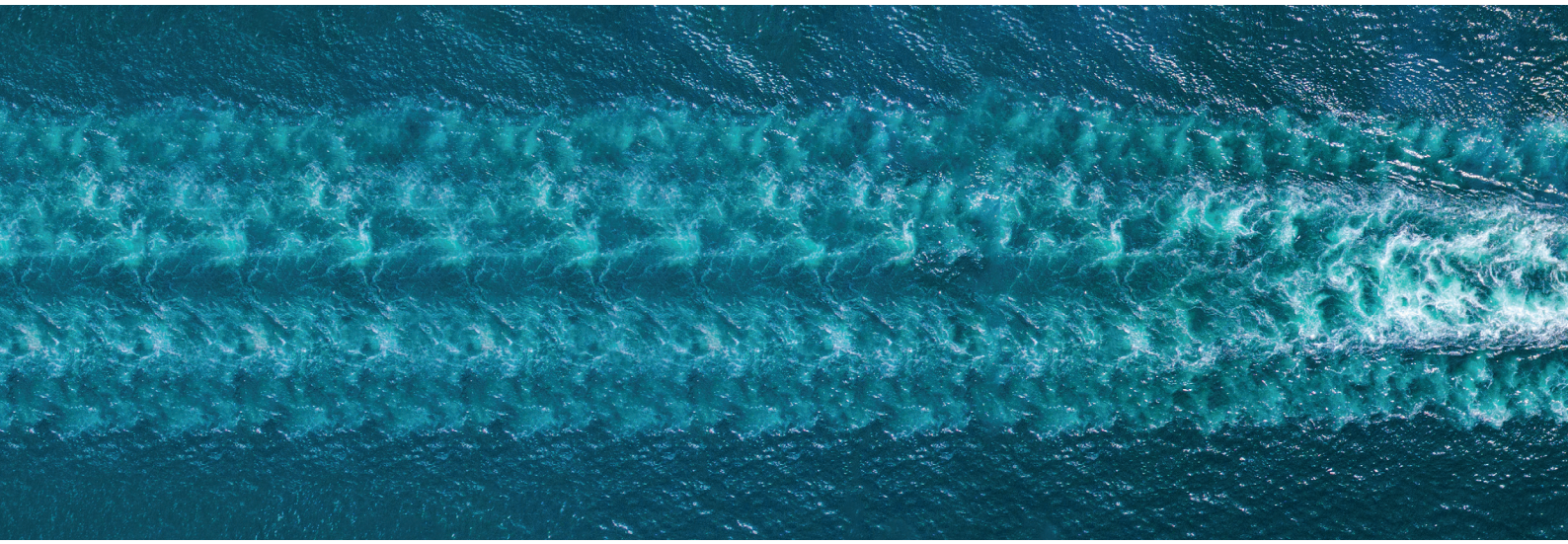
STEP 4: STUDENT ALLOCATION

The most qualified student for your assignment is selected. If desired, we can first present several profiles of potential candidates from which you can choose. After consultation with the academic team, the most suitable candidate will be selected. Please note that each student has already undergone an extensive and thorough selection process to ensure the quality of the project. Up to ten weeks before the start of the trade mission, this choice can still be adjusted in consultation with the academic team.

DECEMBER
JANUARY
FEBRUARY

STEP 5: MEETING WITH FLANDERS INVESTMENT & TRADE

It is essential to arrange a discussion with the assigned student, a representative from your company, a representative from the provincial office of Flanders Investment & Trade (based in the province where your company is registered) and a member of the academic team. This meeting is crucial to align the insights and expectations of all parties involved.



STEP 6: PREPARATION

JANUARY
FEBRUARY
MARCH

In the weeks prior to departure, the student will prepare for the mission thoroughly and document their preparations in a preparatory report. He or she will conduct the necessary research, including any potential training provided by your company. This preparatory report includes a detailed description of the assignment including the problem statement, research questions, objectives, methodology and expected outcomes, as well as a comprehensive market analysis.

Note: Although we remain flexible, we ask you to keep in mind that the student will be taking exams in January, which may lead to reduced availability during that month.

STEP 7: THE MISSION

MARCH

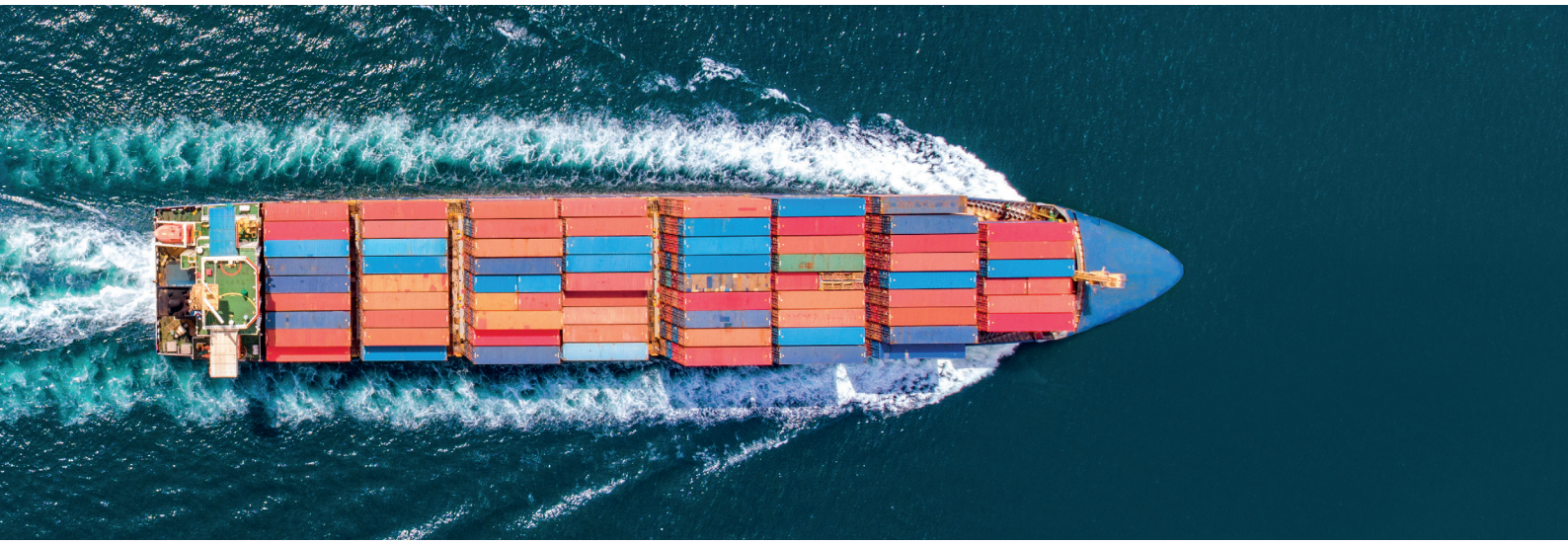
The mission on location starts in March and lasts three weeks (fifteen business days). You will be regularly updated on the progress. The student will provide you with interim reports after the first and second weeks. At the end of the stay, the student will submit a preliminary presentation with the initial results.

During these fifteen business days, the students will also participate in a few group activities, under which a gathering with Flanders Investment & Trade and a networking event at the Belgian embassy. We will also hold a closing and debriefing session with the Belgian representatives from Flanders Investment & Trade.

STEP 8: FINAL REPORT

MAY
JUNE

Approximately four weeks after the mission, the student delivers to you a draft version of the final report. At the latest eight weeks after the trade mission, the final report must be submitted. This report will be presented no later than 12 weeks after the mission and before 30 June 2027 by the student, in a presentation attended by Prof. dr. Dooms or Prof. dr. Geerts and representatives from your organisation.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT FIT

Financial support for which you can be eligible for this project falls predominantly under: 'Prospection trips outside the European Economic Area (EEA)' and the 'Starterspakket Internationalisering'. The following explanation is based on these subsidies*.

PROSPECTION TRIPS OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA)

For whom:
SMEs, entrepreneurial organisations and (bilateral) chambers of commerce that are not eligible for structural funding from FIT.

Conditions:
You can find all conditions and evaluation criteria in the official subsidy regulations.
Below are the key conditions:

- Your company or organisation has a Belgian company number;
- Your company has an operational headquarter in the Flemish Region;
- Your company or organisation complies with social and fiscal legislation;
- Your company or organisation has fulfilled all obligations towards FIT;
- Your company or organisation is registered as a client with FIT;
- You do not receive any financial support from another government institution for this prospecting trip;
- The prospecting trip must be to a country outside the EEA where your company currently has limited or no market presence;
- The purpose of the trip must be to develop a new sales market for your goods and/or services;
- The prospecting represents an added value for the economic business community in the Flemish Region.

Amount:
The subsidy is calculated based on fixed amounts for travel and accommodation costs. The travel costs cover both international travel to the destination country and domestic transport within that country. The accommodation costs are granted per overnight stay and consist of two components: lodging (60%) and daily allowance (40%).

Agreement Programme;
- Standard subsidy: 50% of fixed amounts;
- For SMEs with fewer than 4 approved subsidy applications at FIT since September 1st 2005: 75% of the fixed amounts.

Application:
To receive this support, the proof of incurred costs and a detailed travel report must be submitted to FIT's central office. This must be done no later than three months after the initiative; for this, you will receive maximum support from the Trade Mission Team. The application for financial support must be submitted by the commissioning SME no later than 7 calendar days before the departure date. Ideally, this should be done electronically and can be submitted throughout the year. It is important that this application includes the following elements:

- A fully completed application form including motivation and description of the project;
- Appointments programme;
- Travel and accommodation costs.

FIT will take the following factors into account:
- The completeness of the application;
- The added value to Flanders;
- The advice of your International Business advisor and the relevant Flemish economic representative.

Subsidy decision and simulation option:
Within 60 calendar days of submitting the complete application, FIT will decide regarding the allocation of the subsidy and the conditions for granting and payment. You will be informed of this via e-mail. If desired, our team can provide you with a simulation of the subsidy amount.



STARTERSPAKKET INTERNATIONALISERING

You can be eligible for the 'Starterspakket Internationalisering', which is introduced below.

For whom:

- Flemish SMEs that have never received a subsidy from FIT;
- Primarily innovative companies beginning to export.

The 'Starterspakket Internationalisering' supports Flemish companies with a one-time fixed amount of 9.000,00 EUR and modest guidance from FIT advisors, aiming to start export activities. The registration procedure is conducted online. Applications are open four times per year during specific call periods. To be eligible for this subsidy, you must submit a concrete export plan.

For additional information and conditions about FIT's subsidy instruments or to apply for the subsidy online, please refer to the Flanders Investment & Trade website: **https://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com**

IMPORTANT

Under no circumstances should these conditions be considered exhaustive. The listed conditions and details are a summary of the full texts and are therefore not legally binding for the assessment of your subsidy application. The Trade Mission Team aims hereby merely to provide an overview of the subsidies. For the most up-to-date information and procedures, please consult the Flanders Investment & Trade website: **https://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com**

** These subsidies are not guaranteed and are subject to certain conditions. Please consult FIT for further information and the applicable requirements.*

TRADE MISSION PORTFOLIO

Inisol was a pioneer in exploring international markets when they embarked on their trade mission to Russia in 1991. Over the years, the Inisol trade mission has evolved into a highly esteemed initiative within the business community. This is evidenced by the participation of several hundred SMEs and multinationals operating in various industries, a selection of which is listed below.

These companies operate across a wide range of sectors, reflecting the diverse services we can offer to participating companies. The variety of assignments in our missions allows for a broad spectrum of business needs to be addressed. The repeated participation of the same companies underscores their trust and satisfaction in our services.

- Aertssen
- Afix Group
- Agfa-Gevaert
- Aluro
- Ahlers
- Annabel Textiles
- Antea Group
- Antonio Lupi Distribution
- Ardo
- ArcelorMittal
- Arplas Welding BVBA
- Auctim
- Aviaco GSE
- Barco
- Barry-Callebaut AG
- BelOrta
- BeMedico
- Berghoff Worldwide
- BeSealed Boussey Control
- Bosal
- Brouwerij 3 Fonteinen
- Brouwerij Strubbe
- Brouwland
- Brussels Airport Company
- Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest
- Chemlab
- Close the Gap
- Coptermotion
- Cortina
- Dafra Pharma
- Deceuninck Plastics
- DEME
- Double Pass
- Duc D'O Chocolaterie NV
- Easy Systems
- Ecowater Systems Europe NV
- Elicio
- Fertikal
- FIST
- FKL Fertilizers
- Fomicom
- FPIM
- Fytofend
- Geldof
- Gilleman Textiles
- Goldschmidt
- GO NO GO
- Goveco
- Grand Belgian Specialities
- Haemers Technologies
- Halyard Health
- Hansen Transmissions
- Haven van Gent
- Herbavita
- Hexagon
- Hoge Raad voor Diamant (HRD)
- Huyghe Brewery
- IBM Belgium
- K&C Diving
- Lignavita
- Lindemans
- Lisam Systems
- Luciad
- Magcam
- Manuchar
- Medec International
- Meyland
- MBZNV (Haven van Zeebrugge)
- Middlegate Europe
- Pattyn
- Pandion
- Philips
- Procter&Gamble
- Racquet Plastics
- Recticel Insulation
- Remi Claeys Aluminium
- Reuse Trading
- Rubio Monocoat
- Salta Energy
- Samsonite Europe
- Sarens
- Secutec
- Sobeltec
- Sopura
- SQM
- Stabirail
- Steelduxx
- Steelforce
- Stoopen& Meeûs
- Synerglass
- Tracerco
- Technopol
- Ter Beke
- Unifly
- Unilin
- Upgrade Energy
- Vasco
- Vandewiele
- Veldeman Group
- Vertexco
- Vets Luc Diamant
- Viabuild
- Viasat
- VITO
- Victor Buyck
- Vlam
- Walvert
- Willy Naessens

Previous years' destinations include:
Mexico (2026), South India (2026), Egypt (2025), Tanzania (2025), Kenya (2024), Ivory Coast (2024), India (2023), Senegal (2023), Hungary (2022), Greece (2022), Romania (2021), Poland (2021), Vietnam (2020), Morocco (2020), Colombia (2019), Kenya (2018), Indonesia (2017), Malaysia (2016), Western China (2015), Kenya (2014), Colombia (2013), Turkey (2012) and Vietnam (2011).



TESTIMONIALS

PACKO INOX (SOUTH INDIA, 2026)

"Packo Inox is Belgium pump company part of the Verder Group, which has a factory and sales network globally.
One of our focus countries is India, where we have already managed to develop some business, but where we've been hitting the glass ceiling.
This made the trade mission to India the perfect opportunity to send an independent student to India to map out our pain points and objections in an unbiased way, and to build an action plan based on that.
The result was that we gained a number of valuable insights, which we were able to translate into a concrete action plan that our local and international sales organization is now working with — and one we hope will help us break through in the near future."

Kenneth Demeulemeester, Product Manager

LINDEMANS BREWERY (SOUTH INDIA, 2026)

"Participating in the VUB Trade Mission to South India proved highly valuable for Lindemans Brewery. Through thorough preparation and on-the-ground research, the student gave us a clearer understanding of the opportunities and challenges of the Indian market, particularly for our 0.0% fruit beers and premium specialty beers. Her stakeholder interviews and structured analysis provided new insights into consumer preferences, regulation, pricing and potential routes to market. We were very satisfied with both the collaboration and the final result, which now serves as a solid basis for evaluating our next steps in India."

Dirk Lindemans, General Director

VIAVIA WORLD - JAK CV (SOUTH INDIA, 2026)

"The assignment consisted of an exploratory feasibility study into the establishment of a ViaVia Joker Travel Café in Bangalore. This included, among other things, exploring the local network and potential locations, identifying prospective partners, and assessing the overall feasibility of the project.
We were pleasantly surprised by the high quality of the work delivered, especially considering that this was the student's first visit to India. We are very satisfied with both the student's commitment and the results achieved."

Bob Elsen, Managing Director JAK cv

GOVECO (COLOMBIA, 2019 & SENEGAL, 2023 & TANZANIA, 2025)

"The VUB Trade Mission gave us a unique opportunity to explore the Tanzanian market in a structured and dynamic way. Thanks to the student's proactive approach, we were able to connect with key decision-makers in a short time. Her professionalism, energy, and market research helped us position Goveco effectively in this price-sensitive and highly competitive region. She also contributed to strengthening our relationship with an existing local partner. The combination of academic support and hands-on business exploration made this a truly valuable experience."

Katrien Lelièvre, Sales Manager

PANDION EUROPE (IVORY COAST, 2024 & TANZANIA, 2025)

"The VUB Trade mission made it possible to gain valuable and comprehensive insight in a new market in a very short timeframe. Next to insights it also provided us with useful contacts to start up trade. Very good cooperation with our assigned student and VUB/FIT. Definitely worth repeating!"
"The trade mission to Ivory Coast was definitely an added value. The follow-up from the VUB and cooperation with FIT will stay with us. On short notice, our student put together a whole schedule that we greatly appreciated. This mission gave us a better view of the market in Ivory Coast, which we could not have matched without it. And this gives us the concrete opportunities to set up the business."

Laura Christophe & Silke Vanhoecke, Export Managers

SALTA ENERGY (IVORY COAST, 2024 & KENYA, 2024 & TANZANIA, 2025)

"Salta Energy has been present on the West African market for many years, but the experience of the VUB Trade Mission enabled us to approach it from a completely different angle. The student's energy, professionalism and open-mindedness made it possible, on the one hand, to accentuate the company's local presence with the various players and, on the other, to analyse in greater depth the local market, its current operation and its prospects. This partnership between a Flemish university and a Walloon company was a highly enriching experience for our company."

Patrick Vosse, Commercial Manager - Co-founder

FOMICOM N.V. **(ROMANIA, 2021 & GREECE, 2022 & EGYPT, 2025)**
"As an international company, Fomicom has participated in several trade missions with VUB. It is an interesting and alternative way to explore new markets and find potential partners or customers. The well-guided, highly motivated students have consistently opened up interesting perspectives for us. A very positive experience."
Sabine Deprez, Sales Director

ARCELORMITTAL **(KENYA, 2018 & EGYPT, 2025)**
"Our participation in the Inisol trade mission provided valuable support to our team in Egypt on our expansion plans and offered a highly detailed insight into the country's investment landscape. The mission facilitated strategic exploration of industrial zones and legal structures, helping us assess expansion opportunities for our Metal Fabrication operations. This initiative not only strengthened our local engagement but also enhanced our understanding of Egypt's evolving business environment."
Johan Schepens, CEO, ArcelorMittal Projects Africa

PRIMORIS **(ROMANIA, 2021 & IVORY COAST, 2024)**
"Scheduling online meetings in Romania was a real challenge during the COVID era. However, our student demonstrated perseverance, which enabled her to successfully complete her assignment—a market study on residue analysis of pesticides in fruits and vegetables. As a result, we can expand our commercial representation in Romania."
Carine De Clercq, General Manager

MEDEC INTERNATIONAL BV **(MOROCCO, 2020 & POLAND, 2021 & UK, 2022 & IVORY COAST, 2024)**
"Medec International BV is a niche player in international healthcare. Our first assignment through participation in the Morocco trade mission via VUB pleasantly surprised us. Within a short period—despite the challenges of COVID-19 and considering our niche product (anaesthesia), sector, and market—the student provided us with a professional and high-quality report. We look back with satisfaction on this enriching experience with the student as well as with VUB. Her thorough preparation, enthusiasm, and especially her dedication, pleasantly surprised us. The additional analyses and connections the student provided on her own initiative also contributed to the start of negotiations with a new distributor. We are confident that this mission will lead to new trade contracts. We are pleased to use this work as a reference example when recruiting additional export managers."
Kristof Braem, Managing Director

MANUCHAR **(MALAYSIA, 2016 & SENEGAL, 2023)**
"Manuchar has been active in Senegal for some time, but thanks to the market research conducted by the student in Dakar, we gained valuable insights into the polymers market. A well-founded final report and detailed visit summaries led to valuable new contacts for Manuchar. We look back on an enriching experience and an excellent collaboration with VUB."
Michel Troquet, Trader Polymers West Africa

STEELDUXX **(INDIA, 2023)**
"The Trade Mission of VUB assigned us an ideal and highly motivated student. A very professional introductory briefing set us on the right track from day one. The student clearly understood our targets and approached the complexities ofIndia with great awareness. During the trade mission, we were regularly updated on meetings, results, and potential new contacts. Shortly after returning from India, we reviewed the entire mission, and initial direct contacts were established with potential Indian partners. The groundwork prepared by the student provided us with the opportunity to send one of our colleagues to Bombay and New Delhi later this year to discuss matters in detail. We are extremely satisfied with the collaboration and the guidance provided by VUB Solvay Business School."
Lou Appels, Managing Partner

SARENS **(VIETNAM, 2010 & INDONESIA, 2017 & SENEGAL, 2023)**
"The VUB trade mission allowed us to conduct a focused yet high-quality 'deep dive' into the Indonesian market for heavy lift and heavy transport within an academic and professional framework. The outcome met our expectations and serves as a valuable resource for our local team to build upon."
Gert Hendrickx, Sales Director Projects

DESTINATION BRAZIL





FACTSHEET BRAZIL

CAPITAL:
Brasília
(2.8 million inhabitants)

POPULATION:
±213 million
inhabitants (2025)

AREA:
8,515,767 km²
(around 277 times
the size of Belgium)

OTHER MAJOR CITIES:
Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Curitiba, São Paulo

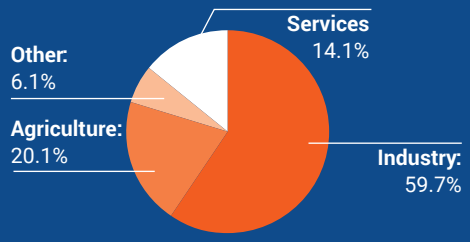
CURRENCY:
Brazilian Real
(BRL)

LANGUAGE(S):
Portuguese

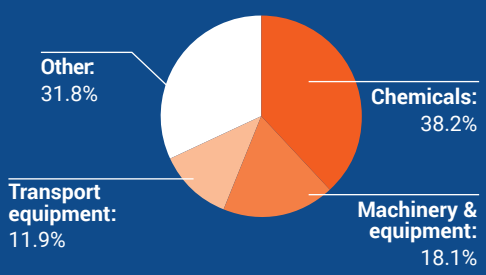
ECONOMIC OVERVIEW AND GDP COMPARISON

	GDP (in billion EUR)	GDP per capita (in EUR)
Brazil	2,280	10,713
Belgium	726	60,750

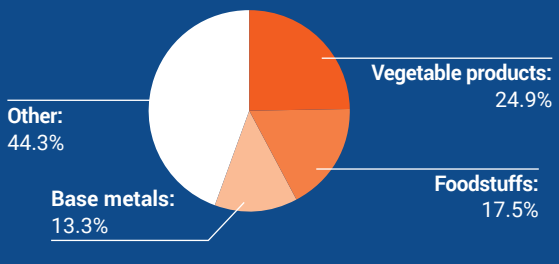
DISTRIBUTION OF GDP BY SECTOR



TOP BELGIAN EXPORT GOODS TO BRAZIL



TOP BELGIAN IMPORT GOODS FROM BRAZIL



Sources: Belgian Foreign Trade Agency (BFTA), Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), World Bank.

HOST COUNTRY

ECONOMY

With a GDP of approximately USD 2.28 trillion in 2025, Brazil is the largest economy in Latin America and ranks among the ten largest economies worldwide. Home to over 213 million inhabitants, abundant natural resources and a diversified economic structure, Brazil represents one of the most important emerging markets globally. The country combines a large domestic consumer market with a strong industrial base, a globally competitive agricultural sector and an expanding services economy.

The services sector represents the largest component of Brazil's economy, accounting for approximately 59.7% of GDP and covering financial services, retail, logistics, telecommunications and a rapidly growing digital ecosystem. Industry contributes around 20.1% of GDP and remains a key pillar of the economy, with important activities including automotive production, aerospace (Embraer), chemicals, steel and energy. Although agriculture contributes around 6.1% directly to GDP, its global importance is significantly larger due to Brazil's position as one of the world's leading exporters of soybeans, coffee, beef, sugar, poultry and orange juice.

The State of São Paulo serves as Brazil's economic powerhouse, generating around 30% of national GDP and acting as the country's main hub for corporate headquarters, financial services and foreign investment. For Belgian companies, Brazil's large and diversified market offers strategic opportunities across multiple sectors, including industrial technology, infrastructure, sustainable solutions and innovation-driven industries.

ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Brazil's economy has shown resilience in recent years, recovering strongly from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and maintaining its position as Latin America's largest economy. After GDP growth of 3.2% in 2023, 3.4% in 2024 and 2.3% in 2025, economic growth is expected to moderate further in the coming period as monetary policy remains focused on controlling inflation. Nevertheless, Brazil continues to benefit from its large domestic consumer market, globally competitive commodity exports and increasing investments in infrastructure, energy transition and digitalisation.

A key driver of Brazil's future economic development is the country's ongoing structural transformation. The government's New Growth Acceleration Programme (Novo PAC) aims to stimulate large-scale investments in infrastructure, logistics, renewable energy, housing and social development. With planned investments exceeding BRL 1.7 trillion (approximately USD 347 billion), the programme seeks to modernise transport networks, improve supply chain efficiency and strengthen Brazil's long-term competitiveness.

Brazil is also positioning itself as an important player in the global green energy transition. Thanks to a power sector where renewable sources account for more than 80% of electricity generation, mainly through hydropower, wind and solar energy, the country has significant potential in clean technologies, sustainable infrastructure and emerging industries such as green hydrogen. These developments create opportunities for Belgian companies, particularly in areas where Belgium has recognised expertise, including port logistics, environmental technology and renewable energy solutions.

Furthermore, Brazil's expanding digital economy and innovation ecosystem are creating new opportunities in sectors such as fintech, digital health and advanced manufacturing. Structural reforms, including the ongoing implementation of the Tax Reform (Reforma Tributária), aim to simplify the tax system, improve business productivity and strengthen Brazil's attractiveness for foreign investment.



INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Brazil plays a central role in global trade as the largest economy in Latin America and one of the world's leading exporters of agricultural commodities, minerals and energy products. In 2025, Brazil exported goods worth approximately USD 351 billion, while imports amounted to around USD 291 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of approximately USD 60 billion. Brazil's export structure is largely driven by soybeans, crude petroleum, iron ore, coffee, sugar, beef and poultry, while imports mainly consist of machinery, electrical equipment, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and industrial inputs. China, the United States and the European Union are among Brazil's most important trading partners.

A major milestone in Brazil's international trade relations is the EU–Mercosur Agreement. Signed in January 2026, its Interim Trade Agreement has been provisionally applied since 1 May 2026, delivering immediate tariff reductions and better market access for European exporters while gradually phasing out tariffs on most traded goods. Beyond tariffs, the deal streamlines customs procedures and enhances cooperation on sustainability, public procurement, intellectual property, and digital trade. Full implementation of the broader Partnership Agreement remains subject to final ratification.

By connecting the EU and Mercosur markets, the agreement will create a trading area covering more than 700 million consumers and is expected to provide new opportunities for European companies active in sectors such as chemicals, machinery, pharmaceuticals, food processing and sustainable technologies.

Belgium and Brazil maintain strong and diversified trade relations. According to the Belgian Foreign Trade Agency, bilateral trade between both countries reached approximately EUR 5.8 billion in 2025. Belgian exports to Brazil amounted to EUR 3.5 billion, making Brazil an important export destination for Belgian companies, while Belgian imports from Brazil totalled EUR 2.3 billion. This resulted in a Belgian trade surplus of EUR 1.2 billion.

Belgian exports to Brazil are highly diversified and mainly consist of chemical products (43.0%), machinery and equipment (17.6%) and transport equipment (10.1%). Belgian imports from Brazil are primarily composed of vegetable products (25.1%), foodstuffs (19.1%) and mineral products (10.6%). These trade flows demonstrate the complementarity between both economies, with Belgium providing high-value industrial expertise while Brazil remains an important supplier of agricultural products, raw materials and resources.

POLITICS

Brazil is a federal presidential republic consisting of 26 states and one federal district. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, leader of the Workers' Party (PT), has been president since January 2023 and is seeking re-election in 2026. The presidential election has become highly competitive, with Lula facing Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, son of former president Jair Bolsonaro, in the second round scheduled for 25 October 2026. Recent polling published on 8 October places Flávio Bolsonaro slightly ahead of Lula, although the race remains competitive.

The election reflects deep political polarisation and differing approaches to economic management, social policy, environmental protection and Brazil's international relations. Key policy issues include fiscal stability, economic competitiveness, infrastructure development, energy transition and attracting foreign investment. Brazil's environmental importance, particularly the Amazon rainforest, also remains central to its international agenda. Having hosted COP30 in Belém in 2025, Brazil continues to play an important role in global climate discussions.

Despite its established democratic institutions and diversified economy, Brazil faces challenges related to political polarisation, fiscal pressures and administrative complexity. The outcome of the presidential election could influence the country's future economic priorities, environmental policies and relations with major trading partners, including the United States and China.

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

Brazil represents one of the most attractive emerging markets for international companies, combining a large domestic market, abundant natural resources and a diversified industrial base. The country offers significant opportunities for foreign companies, particularly in sectors linked to industry, energy transition, agriculture, infrastructure and technology.

At the same time, companies entering the Brazilian market should take into account the country's regulatory complexity, regional differences and administrative procedures. Understanding local regulations, developing reliable partnerships and investing in long-term relationships are important factors for successful market entry.

According to Credendo, Brazil presents a relatively moderate risk profile for international business activities. The country's short-term political risk is classified as category two out of seven, with category one representing the lowest and category seven the highest level of risk due to political events. This reflects a relatively favourable short-term risk environment for business activities. The medium- to long-term political risk is classified as category four out of seven, indicating a moderate level of risk over a longer investment horizon. For direct investments, risks related to political violence, expropriation and currency restrictions remain manageable but should be considered when developing a market strategy.

Brazilian business culture is strongly relationship-oriented. Building trust and maintaining personal contacts are essential elements of successful cooperation. Business discussions often start with informal conversations, as establishing a personal connection is considered an important foundation for long-term partnerships. Although Portuguese is the official language, English is commonly used in multinational companies and international business environments, particularly in major economic centres.

For Belgian companies, combining local market knowledge with strong partnerships can significantly facilitate access to one of Latin America's most promising markets.

DID YOU KNOW?
Brazil shares borders with 10 countries, giving it a strategic position as a gateway to the South American market.

Sources: Banco Central do Brasil (BCB), Belgian Foreign Trade Agency (BFTA), European Commission, Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), International Energy Agency (IEA), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Trade Administration (ITA), OECD, Reuters, Statista, World Bank.



PROMISING SECTORS



AGRICULTURE & FOOD PROCESSING

Brazil is one of the world's leading agricultural producers and exporters. The country is the world's largest exporter of soybeans, coffee and orange juice, and ranks among the largest global producers and exporters of sugar, beef and poultry. Supported by its favourable climate, vast agricultural land availability and highly developed agribusiness ecosystem, Brazil plays a central role in global food supply chains. The country's favourable climate, extensive agricultural land and strong agribusiness ecosystem have made agriculture a key pillar of the Brazilian economy and an important contributor to global food supply chains.

Beyond primary production, Brazil's food processing industry is expanding as the country focuses on adding value to agricultural products, improving efficiency and increasing sustainability throughout the supply chain. Opportunities are emerging in areas such as agricultural technology, food processing, storage, logistics and sustainable production methods. Major agricultural hubs are located in regions such as Mato Grosso, Paraná, São Paulo and Goiás, where large-scale farming and food industries are concentrated.



RENEWABLE ENERGY

Brazil has one of the cleanest electricity mixes among major economies, with renewable sources accounting for more than 80% of electricity generation. Hydropower remains the dominant source, while wind and solar energy have experienced rapid growth in recent years. Brazil is currently one of the world's largest markets for renewable energy expansion.

The country has significant potential in areas such as onshore wind, offshore wind, solar energy, biofuels and green hydrogen. Government initiatives and increasing demand for decarbonisation are accelerating investments in clean technologies and sustainable infrastructure. Key renewable energy clusters can be found in regions such as Northeast Brazil for wind and solar energy, while industrial hubs such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro play an important role in energy innovation and infrastructure development.



AEROSPACE

Brazil has one of the most developed aerospace industries in the Southern Hemisphere and is home to Embraer, one of the world's largest aircraft manufacturers. The country has developed a strong aerospace ecosystem focused on aircraft manufacturing, components, engineering services and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO).

The sector benefits from Brazil's engineering expertise, established industrial base and growing demand for commercial aircraft and aerospace technologies. Major aerospace activities are concentrated around São José dos Campos, which is considered the country's main aerospace cluster and hosts companies, research centres and suppliers. Besides Embraer, international companies such as Boeing, Airbus and Safran are active in Brazil through partnerships and local operations.



LIFESCIENCES & HEALTHCARE

Brazil has the largest healthcare market in Latin America and one of the largest pharmaceutical markets worldwide. The sector is supported by a population of more than 213 million people, increasing healthcare demand and growing investments in biotechnology, medical technology and pharmaceutical production.

Brazil has developed a strong pharmaceutical and biotechnology ecosystem, with important clusters in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. Opportunities are emerging in areas such as pharmaceuticals, vaccines, biotechnology, digital health and medical technologies. The country's focus on strengthening domestic healthcare capacity and innovation continues to create opportunities for international cooperation.



AUTOMOTIVE

Brazil has the largest automotive industry in Latin America, with a well-established manufacturing ecosystem consisting of vehicle production, automotive components and related services. The sector includes major international manufacturers such as Volkswagen, Stellantis, General Motors, Toyota and Hyundai, supported by a large domestic market and an extensive supplier network.

The Brazilian automotive industry is undergoing significant transformation driven by electrification, sustainable mobility and technological innovation. Government initiatives supporting industrial modernisation and the transition towards cleaner vehicles are creating opportunities in areas such as electric vehicles, automotive components, automation and advanced manufacturing. The main automotive clusters are located in São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul.

Sources: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), International Energy Agency (IEA), International Trade Administration (ITA), Statista.



WORD FROM THE ACADEMIC TEAM

Entrepreneurship is one of the values that stand central within the VUB and Solvay Business School. Consequently, we offer students various practical opportunities within their studies, such as internships, the Trade Mission, the International Business Project and Technological Business Development. The successful implementation of such projects requires sufficient attention to quality control throughout the student's learning journey, as well as to the final outcome intended for the assigning company. The academic guidance during the Trade Mission ensures close individual follow-up of the assignments, as well as broader logistical support for the mission as a whole, including maintaining good relationships with institutional stakeholders.

The academic team consists of two professors and two academic assistants. They are present on-site to support and guide the participants throughout the mission.

- Prof. dr. Michaël Dooms, alumnus of the trade mission to Argentina (2001), has an experience of more than 20 missions in more than 15 countries and has supervised more than 400 projects.
- Prof. dr. Magali Geerts has served as co-titular since 2021. She first joined the trade mission project as a student in 2015 (China) and has since taken on a supervisory role in several subsequent missions: Indonesia (2017), Kenya (2018), Colombia (2019), Morocco (2020), Hungary and Russia (2022), India (2023), Egypt (2025) and Mexico (2026).
- Fanny Soyeur, coordinator of the trade missions, was a participant in the trade mission to Colombia (2019) and was a supervisor for the online trade missions to Vietnam (2020), Romania (2021), and the physical trade missions to Greece (2022), Russia (2022), Senegal (2023), Ivory Coast (2024) and Tanzania (2025).
- Finally, Len van Hooijdonk provided academic guidance for the mission to India (2026).

Together, we provide a solid foundation to equip the students, both in group and individually, with sufficient problem-solving skills to tackle the various challenges that arise during the assignments. This way, a strong quality control is ensured throughout the entire process, benefiting both students and companies!

We look forward to collaborating with you.







f.l.t.r. Prof. dr. Michaël Dooms, Prof. dr. Magali Geerts, Fanny Soyeur, Len van Hooijdonk



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Destination: Brazil – São Paulo
Date: March 2027

Destination: Chile - Santiago
Date: April 2027

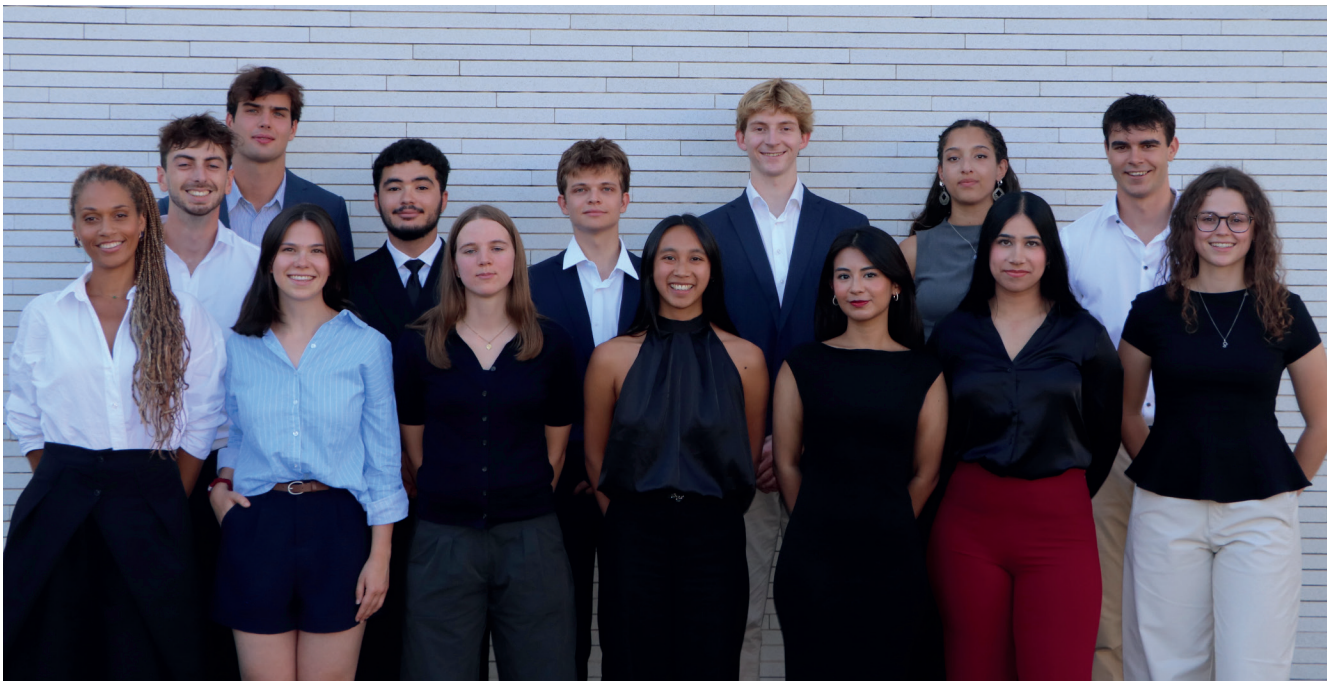
Destination: Uganda – Kampala
Date: March 2027

Participation in the costs: €4.500. Included are the travel and accommodation costs of the student as well as the overall other functioning costs of the project. The students are not remunerated. The non-profit organisation is exempt from VAT under article 44 of the VAT legislation.

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Core team and project leaders of the Trade Mission 2027

f.l.t.r.: Fabienne Kabeya, Victor Saccone, Sebastiaan De Blauwe, Elisa Lauwereys, Imrane Boumeriem, Emeline Goetynck, Otto Janssens, Lucie Pham, Arin Rens, Melanie Córdova, Nora Gobien, Anshpreet Singh, Quentin Lempereur, Anne-Laure De Brandt

MEASURES IN CASE OF TRADE MISSION DISRUPTIONS

The events of recent years such as the COVID 19 pandemic and military conflicts, have taught us important lessons in ensuring the project's continuity. If such disrupting situations were to occur again, the following measures will be taken:

In case of unusual health situations:

- Remote work will be implemented, with adapted and enhanced support from the academic team. During the digital mission in the spring of 2021, this approach led to the satisfaction of the vast majority of the participating companies; innovative methods were employed such as virtual networking events. The aim is to prevent any delays in the academic progress of the participating students. In exceptional cases, the assignment may, in consultation with the company involved, be converted into an alternative project such as an internship.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure maximum refund of the deposited amounts (at least 75%). For the cancelled missions to Poland and Romania, refunds of 90% of the total amount were arranged. Transparency will be maintained regarding the non-recoverable costs and the expenses needed to implement a productive virtual concept. We will also seek maximum flexibility from suppliers of essential transport services and accommodation, as these represent the highest costs.
- The policy of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel is aligned with both the Belgian federal and regional measures regarding essential travel abroad, as well as the policies of the destination country concerning the entry of incoming travellers. This is closely and proactively monitored with the different authorities and Flanders Investment and Trade. In such cases, frequent updates are provided to the participating companies.

In case of unusual political instability and/or unexpected military conflict:

- For the project to Moscow, Russia (2022), due to involvement in the military conflict and the associated sanctions, the decision was made to cancel the group mission. All students were relocated to a different country of interest for the respective companies to ensure the completion of the mission. The predominantly positive results of this flexible approach indicate that the trade mission is now prepared for such unexpected situations.

The safety of the participating students and staff, just as it is for your own employees, is always the absolute priority, alongside the effective execution of field work. For example, if a 10-day mandatory quarantine is required in the country of destination, travelling may not be advisable as it significantly limits the scope for fieldwork.
The necessary clauses for this purpose are included in the contracts, as well as clauses related to unforeseeable political circumstances and/or military conflict impacting the destination country.

Important note: *Unless otherwise stated, all euro values in this brochure are based on USD–EUR exchange rates as of 8 August 2026 (USD 1 = EUR 0.86).*

WORD FROM OUR PARTNER INISOL

With great pride, we present to you Initiatiefgroep Solvay, or Inisol for short. Inisol is a student association founded by Business Engineering students and is dedicated to engaged economics students at the Solvay Business School, affiliated with the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

The primary mission of Inisol is to familiarise master's students with the professional world, ensuring a smooth and confident transition into their careers. To achieve this, Inisol focuses on three main areas.

First, we aim to help students gain hands-on experience by supporting the trade mission and organising interactive, practice-oriented workshops.

Second, we assist students in building a strong professional network through initiatives such as the Job & Internship Fair and other networking events.

Finally, we strive to inform students — before, during, and after their studies — about the wide range of opportunities the business world has to offer.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

As a master's student, it is becoming increasingly important to enter the job market with a well-rounded and practical skill set. Inisol contributes to this development by (co-)organising practice-oriented activities that complement the theoretical curriculum offered by the faculty.

Firstly, we support the trade mission, which is a valuable and integrated part of the faculty's academic programme. In addition, students are given the opportunity to gain meaningful experience by being introduced to the corporate world through various initiatives. These include the organisation of the Job & Internship Fair, a range of networking events, and multiple interactive workshops.

Furthermore, Inisol regularly launches new initiatives aimed at strengthening the link between education and real-world experience. One example is the Solvay Scholarship Cup, a competition designed to encourage talented high school students to pursue a Business Engineering or Applied Economics degree at the VUB. The winner is rewarded with a reimbursement of his/her tuition fees for the first year of the Business Engineering or Applied Economics programme.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Inisol bridges the gap between business engineering and applied economics students, and the corporate world. Throughout the academic year, we organise a wide range of career-focused activities, including interactive workshops and a finance business game, all sponsored by potential future employers.

Students have the opportunity to connect with diverse companies during our flagship networking events, such as the Job & Internship Fair, Dine & Connect, and the Career & Curriculum event.

All of these initiatives take place at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and serve as impactful recruitment moments. They provide students with the perfect opportunity to explore different companies, gain insights into career paths, and meet potential employers in a professional yet approachable setting.



f.l.t.r.: Julie Malchair, Sirine Sarroukh

GUIDANCE

Our primary stakeholders are, and always will be, the students. Throughout every phase of their academic journey, Inisol ensures clear and continuous communication. We keep students informed via an online events calendar, social media updates, brochures, and engaging activities.

Even before they officially begin their Business Engineering and Applied Economics programme, prospective students are introduced to Inisol through our Marketing team, who represent us at university open days and SID-ins. During their studies, we continue to support and guide them through various initiatives. And once they graduate, we maintain strong connections by hosting alumni events, where young professionals share their experiences and provide valuable insights into life after university.

The Inisol 2026-2027 board wishes all business engineering and applied economics students and our partners a productive year and a successful professional career.

With entrepreneurial regards,

Julie Malchair & Sirine Sarroukh

President & Vice-President Inisol 2026-2027

INISOL



Editorial Team: Core team Trade Missions 2027
Graphic Design: MARCOM
Published by: Trade Mission VUB © 2026
Website: www.trademission.vub.be

VUB TRADE MISSION SOLVAY BUSINESS SCHOOL

SOLVAY BUSINESS SCHOOL

INISOL