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## People

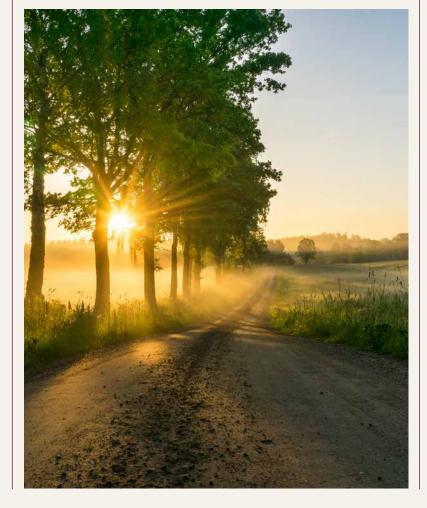
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# Introduction

Ever since our beginnings in 1998, we have striven to build a culture in which people feel energized, curiosity is encouraged, and we provide support and care for one another. We aim to achieve success in business while also making a positive impact on people, society, and the planet. For brands within Akind, this begins at home: consistently treating people with respect, adhering to ethical standards, and contributing to economic development. All while improving the quality of life of our workforce, their families, and the local community and society at large.



## We are Akind

Akind is a family of brands collaborating to unlock the growth potential of individuals and companies. What began more than 25 years ago with staffing and recruitment has evolved into a family of four brands spanning six countries - Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland – assisting companies in finding or developing the right expertise.

All our companies share a belief in human potential, which is why our mission is simple: We make people grow. The mission is embodied in our core values: "Share Energy", "Beat Yesterday" and "Show Heart", which guide us in who we strive to be, both as a business, and as individuals

As we and our partners grow, so does our ability and responsibility to have a positive impact on people, society, and the planet.

#### Our journey so far

The world today is vastly different from that of 1998 when Academic Work was founded. Alongside changes within our world of work, we have also witnessed the destructive impact of climate change around the globe. We continually strive to stay at the forefront of labor market developments, learning, improving, and innovating while keeping our responsibilities to the planet at the core of our actions. Today, we operate with a much broader scope and greater capacity as a business and as contributors to society.

### Our brands

#### **Academic Work**

An expert in recruiting early-career professionals.

#### **Brights**

Tailor-made learning solutions to unlock brilliance through up-skilling and re-skilling.

#### **Crowd Collective**

A new breed of IT consultancy focusing on meeting customers' needs for senior expertise and leadership in today's world of digital disruption and transformation.

#### Winona

Recruitment of experienced executive managers and specialists, on a permanent or interim basis.

Akind in numbers throughout 2024

225,687 EUR

Social impact investments

2.6% EBITDA

Number of internal employees (full-time)

## A word from the CEO

A key pillar of our company culture has always been embracing change, because without change growth is impossible. And as always, our central mission is to make people grow.

Economic sustainability remains a key aspect of running a business. In 2024, our team at Akind faced new challenges and opportunities. Although the economy in our markets did not recover as expected, there were small signs of recovery by the end of the year. Inflation remained a concern, but recession became more prominent. We focused on operational efficiency and invested in technology to support both growth and resilience. These efforts strengthened our foundation and positioned us to thrive in an ever-changing landscape.

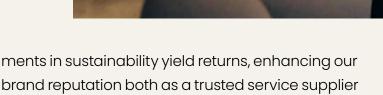
This year brought some big environmental and social challenges. We saw record-breaking heatwaves and extreme weather, showing how urgent it is to tackle global warming. Geopolitical tensions have also contributed to humanitarian crises, reminding us of the need for compassion and collective action. These events highlight how connected our world is and the importance of acting responsibly.

That responsibility, in combination with our conviction that sustainability and profit are closely connected, has motivated us to deepen our commitment to sustainability even further and deliver on our ambition to be excellent. Over the past year, we have formulated science-based targets, which have been validated and approved by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). This milestone marks the beginning of a new chapter in our environmental commitment. In 2025, we will implement a group-wide climate strategy for emission reductions.

Our ambition to excel in sustainability is driven not only by our desire to be a positive force in the world, but also by the recognition that it is good for business. Our most important stakeholders – clients, internal employees and consultants – have demonstrated their support for sustainability initiatives. They actively seek to engage with companies that contribute to sustainable development. It is evident that invest-

"This year has tested the resilience of our world and its people, reminding us of the urgent need for collective action and shared responsibility."

Johan Skarborg, Founder and CEO, Akind Group



The past year brought Akind both significant challenges and valuable opportunities for growth and learning. These experiences have highlighted the critical importance of adaptability, resilience, and a steadfast commitment to creating a positive impact. As we look ahead, we are more driven than ever to

and as an attractive employer.

pursue our mission with sustainability, responsibility, and a deep alignment with our values — supporting our clients and the global community alike.



Johan Skarborg CEO of Akind

Content Introduction

# Our approach tosustainability

The impact of climate change has become impossible to ignore. It is more important than ever that companies take action to protect the environmental, social, and economic welfare of our planet.

Sustainability at Akind is about taking a step forward instead of laying low. We take accountability for the impact we have on the environment - however small. As experts within the fields of upskilling, reskilling, training, and recruitment, we believe our potential for positive impact on people and society is great.

#### Change starts with people

We are in a unique position to facilitate and accelerate the sustainable transition by providing the skills needed to make it possible. Transition is about change, change starts with people – and we are in

the people business. We know we have a responsibility to the world in which we operate, and we understand the potential and the opportunities it offers us from a business perspective. Sustainability is a part of who we are and what we do.

When we look towards the future, we see hope. We see resilience. We see a world of possibilities filled with people ready to act, and we want to do our part. Our sustainability strategy is our commitment to taking action to create a brighter future.

#### **OUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY**

### People We make people grow

Creating The Best Place to Work for our coworkers.

Being the number one career partner for career shifters and people early in their careers.

Providing opportunities for growth through various community enrichment initiatives such as pro-bono engagements, donations, and volunteer work.

#### Society

### Providing skills for a sustainable society

Preparing people and businesses to meet the challenges of tomorrow through reskilling and upskilling.

Allowing both new and hidden talent to enter the labor market by evaluating candidates on potential over experience.

Training people in the skills required for the transition to a sustainable society.

#### **Planet**

#### A net-zero business

Emission reductions targets in line with the latest science and the Paris Agreement, verified by the Science Based Target initiative.

Making yearly climate investments to offset our known CO2 emissions.

Continuously make use of new innovations and opportunities to ensure we are doing everything possible to safeguard the planet.

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12. Responsible consumption and production



13. Climate action

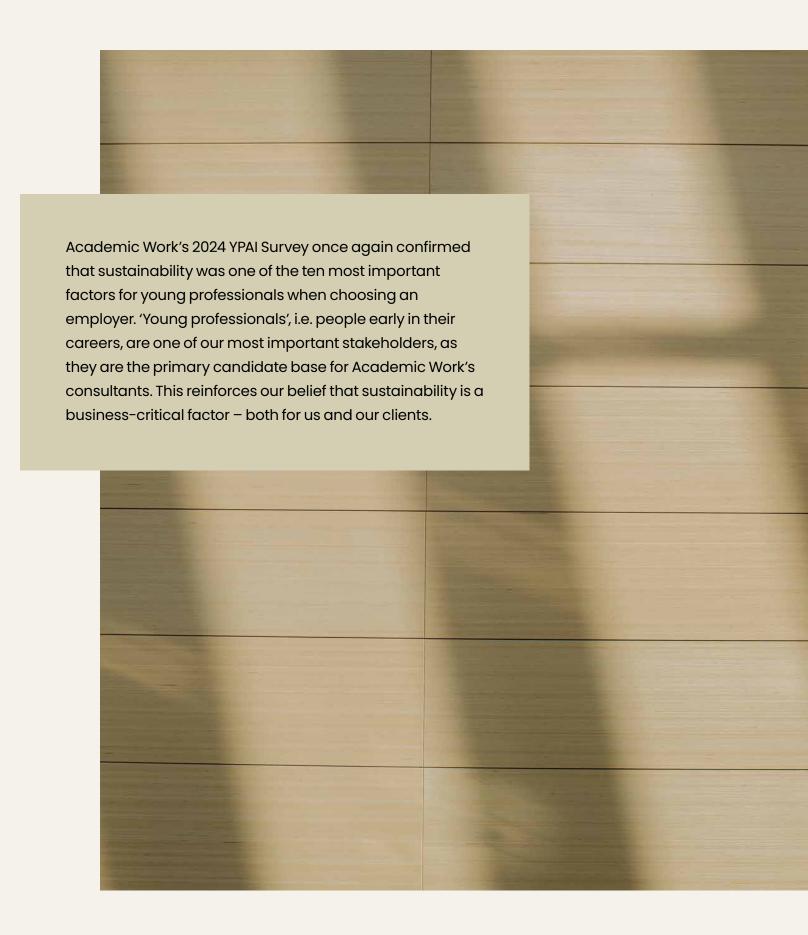


Society

# Stakeholder engagement

At Akind we use a combination of surveys, meetings, reports, and evaluations to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of our main stakeholders. The input we gather from these groups informs our decision-making and ensures that we set the right targets for our work.

STAKEHOLDER	TYPE OF DIALOGUE/CHANNEL	
Clients	Client Experience survey (CX Survey), Client Touchpoint survey and F2F client meetings.	
Consultants	Yearly Satisfaction survey, monthly NPS survey, F2F consultant meetings.	
Candidate base	YPAI (Young Professional Attraction Index), NPS survey.	
Internal employees	Weekly OfficeVibe surveys, monthly 1:1 meetings, annual performance reviews.	
Shareholders	Annual general meeting and quarterly shareholder update.	
Suppliers	Supplier assessment and evaluation.	
NGO	Quarterly financial and narrative reports, yearly budget process, visits on site, and follow-up meetings.	





About this report

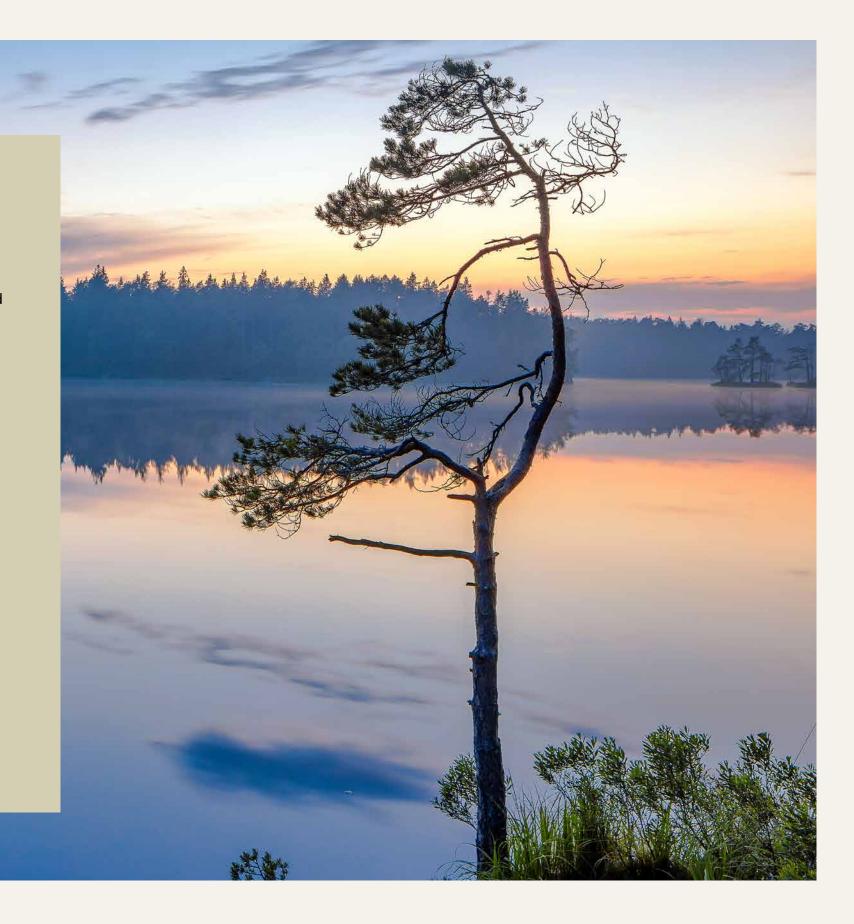
Covering the entirety of Akind and intended for all our stakeholders, the purpose of this report is to communicate our sustainability work from an environmental, social and governance perspective. We also share our view on human rights and how we contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the financial sustainability of our business.

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is an independent international organization that has developed a set of standards for sustainability reporting. These standards outline how companies should communicate their impact on sustainability issues to stakeholders and identify what they consider important. This report is inspired by the GRI Standards but has not been certified by an external body. Our sustainability agenda is informed by ongoing dialogue with our stakeholders. We have used these discussions to assess the topics within the GRI sustainability framework that are most relevant to Akind.

Starting in 2022 our emissions have been calculated in accordance with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol covering emissions from Scopes 1, 2 and 3. Beginning in 2026, we will also publish a report in compliance with the EU CSRD directive.

This sustainability report constitutes Akind's statutory sustainability report in accordance with the Annual Accounts Act and covers the period from January 1st to December 31st, 2024. The report includes all companies within Akind Universe Group but especially applies to Academic Work Sweden AB, Academic Work HR Service AB, Academic Work Consulting AB, and Academic Work Technology AB, all of which are legally required to produce a sustainability report.

For us, this report is an opportunity to summarize our annual sustainability performance and identify areas that require further attention.



People

# A word from our Chief People & Sustainability Officer

Looking back on 2024, we have continued to navigate a world affected by economic instability and war. Despite these challenges, the development toward a more sustainable future remains urgent. Our conviction to act now remains steadfast.

At the group level, during 2024, our Sustainability function was integrated with our People function, strengthening a unified approach to our environmental, social, and governance goals. This collaboration further enhances our ability to drive holistic sustainability, ensuring that all aspects – people, society, and planet – are aligned and advanced together. I am proud to affirm that our continued investment in sustainability throughout 2024 highlights that our sustainability strategy remains deeply embedded in every facet of our business - through both challenges and opportunities. We are unwavering in our commitment, staying the course while pushing forward to further accelerate our journey toward excellence.

Reflecting on 2024, I am proud of all that we have accomplished. We have successfully had our science-based reduction targets validated and

approved by the SBTi, we have continued to deepen the understanding of our GHG emissions and their context, initiated our adaptation to CSRD and established a new Code of Conduct for our coworkers. Above all, I feel especially proud of the invaluable partnerships and collaborations we have fostered with various NGOs, and of all the coworkers who continue to be involved in these collaborations.

A milestone close to our hearts is that 2024 marks the 20th anniversary of the collaboration between Akind and Response Network. This partnership supports Response Network, an NGO operating in Southern Zambia, in its mission to provide children and young people with access to education and training.

The ultimate objective is to safeguard human rights and continue to support individuals in vulnerable

situations, providing the resources and opportunities needed to improve their circumstances and build a more sustainable future together.

Looking ahead to 2025, we have a lot happening and great steps to take. This is the year when we will:

- · With our SBTi targets approved, supported by our clear environmental strategy, we will focus on developing our roadmap and setting out activities for coming years to reach these goals.
- Proceed with our adaptation to CSRD compliance by finalizing the double materiality analysis, accelerating stakeholder dialogues and further developing our foundation for a sustainability approach grounded in both risk analysis and impact assessment.

- Continue our efforts to make it easier for candidates to find jobs with a positive impact.
- Continue to strengthen civil society through corporations with NGO's and offering our employees the opportunities to engage in different ways.

Perhaps more than ever, it is clear that sustainable development cannot be postponed. The time to act is now. We know the role we must play in creating a more sustainable tomorrow and we are eager to fulfill it.



Emilia Rydin Chief People & Sustainability Officer, Akind emilia.rydin@akindgroup.com

"The challenges of today demand action, and through dedication and collaboration, we are committed to driving meaningful change for a sustainable future."

# People

It's an amazing feeling to see people wake up, understand their full potential, take charge of their lives, and grow. Unlocking this unlimited growth potential is what drives us. Not only can we make a lasting difference in their lives, but we can also make a difference in the success of their employers, and the well-being of entire communities. Every day, we help thousands of ambitious, curious people to learn, develop, and find rewarding career opportunities.



Content

Introduction

## Best place to work

#### **Employee engagement**

Engaged coworkers are our most important asset. We believe that engaged coworkers contribute to a positive culture, which facilitates better collaborations and creates a better workplace for everyone. We define "engagement" as the emotional commitment an employee has to the organization and its goals. Having a sense of purpose and a desire to meaningfully contribute to the organisation is key to achieving high levels of engagement.

#### Measuring engagement

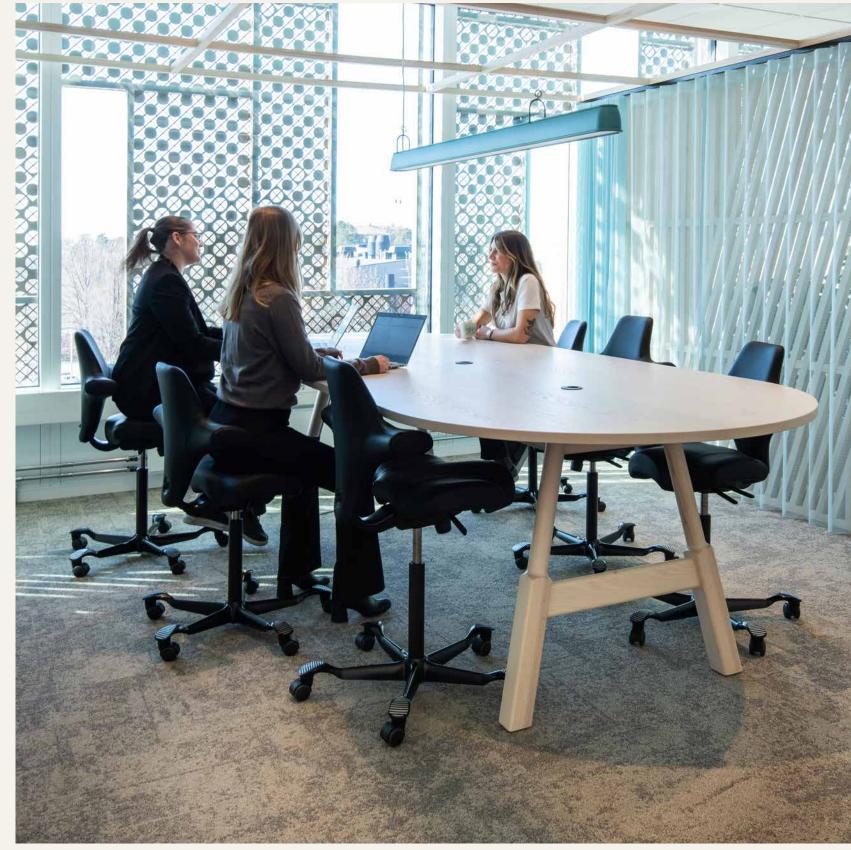
We believe that employee engagement is vital to our success, so we measure it every week. Using an external survey tool, we send our coworkers a weekly pulse survey and gather their honest feedback. The result from the survey allows us to promptly address any issues and measure trends over time. These real-time updates enable an agile approach to employee engagement, ensuring that our actions are relevant and timely.

Our tool calculates an overall engagement score, derived from a weighted average of 10 key metrics. This allows us to compare every company within Akind, not only with one another but also against external benchmarks, on both the overall score and specific sub-metrics. By doing so, we can identify challenges as well as best practices to share.

Akind's engagement score remained steady throughout 2024, maintaining a high level of engagement, despite a slight negative trend (-0,1 compared to 2023). We attribute this decline mainly to challenging market conditions and tougher economic situation that persisted during 2023 and continued to impact engagement levels during 2024. But as mentioned above, our engagement remains strong, thanks to our amazing people, who drive engagement every single day. We are optimistic that the engagement score will improve in 2025 when hopefully the economy begins to recover.

#### **Employee engagement trend during 2024**





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#### The HR ecosystem

During the year, we transitioned to Alva Labs as our new test supplier. Their tool is designed to reduce unconscious bias in recruitment, promoting fairness and inclusion throughout our recruitment processes. The change to Alva Labs provides us with a test tool that ensures our hiring decisions are guided by data and science rather than intuition. This aligns perfectly with our committment to evidencebased recruitment – a data-driven hiring process grounded in scientific research to enable fair recruitment processes and foster a more diverse workforce.

People

Data-driven decisions and digitalization are integral parts of our strategy. Since integrating our HR core system in 2022, we have continued to build upon that foundation. In 2024, our efforts have focused on enhancing existing systems, driving automation, and improving efficiency. We have introduced new modules to our HR system for time attendance and have continued to optimize and streamline our processes. These initiatives in 2024 are designed to position us for a more execution-focused approach in 2025, ensuring we achieve our goals with greater precision and effectiveness.

Enhancing the efficiency of our systems and further digitalizing work tasks enables managers and coworkers to allocate more time to other priorities. This approach not only eliminates monotonous tasks but also allows us to maintain our focus on becoming the Best place to work.

#### Job architecture

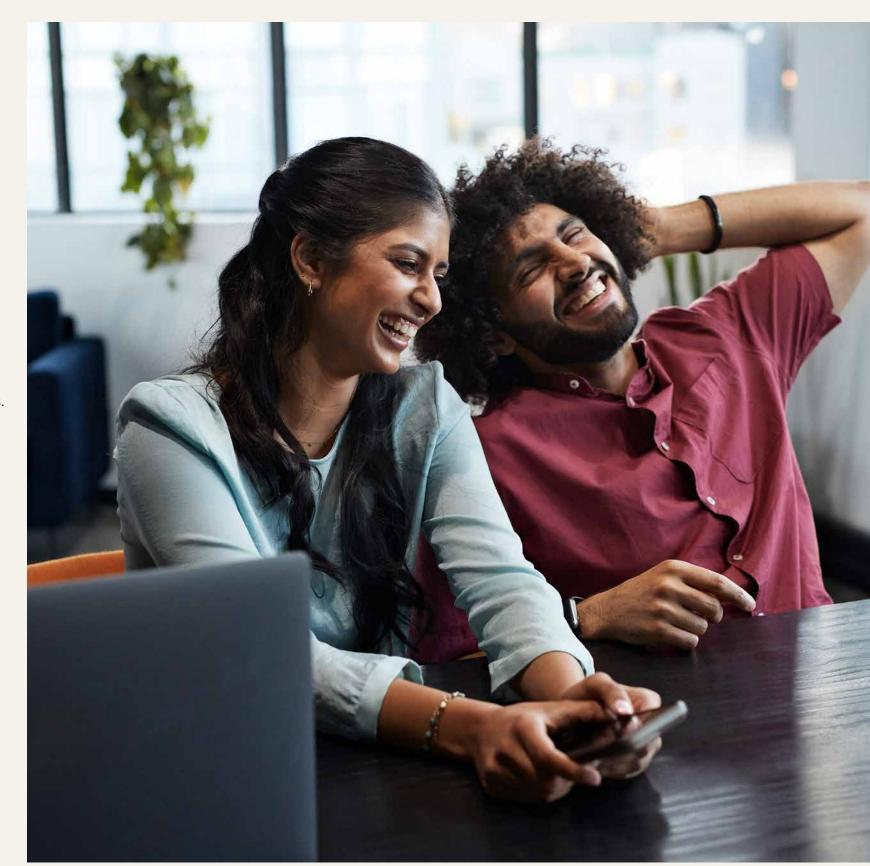
Planet

In 2025, we will continue to develop and refine our job architecture, with the primary objective of creating a robust framework that provides clarity in roles and responsibilities while also ensuring fair, justifiable, and competitive compensation practices. As of 2023, we have ensured that all job descriptions are up to date and fully aligned with our new job architecture.

As our organization continues to grow and evolve, this strategic initiative enables us to make informed investments, promote internal equity, and enhance overall fairness. Additionally, it proveides a clear framework for compensating and rewarding performance in alignment with market benchmarks.

Starting in 2026, gender analysis will be expanded to include all EU countries. To better prepare for gender analysis, career path planning, and resource allocation, the Akind Group launched a job transparency project during 2024. This project will continue during 2025 to ensure fair and transparent pay structures.

Our goal is to provide managers with the necessary tools and support to ensure equitable pay practices and to guide their team members in their professional growth. Our commitment is to maintain a system that values and recognizes performance while empowering our workforce for lasting success.



## Careers, growth, and development

At Akind, our commitment is to cultivate an environment where individuals can thrive, develop, and achieve successful careers. We aim to foster a culture in which our colleagues feel empowered to grow, supported by their employer. Maintaining and enhancing this culture is of utmost importance to us.

#### **Learning and development**

To consistently deliver high-quality and impactful training and development initiatives we need to take inspiration from the fast-paced world around us, adapt to new market realities, technologies, ways of working, habits and expectations of our respective target groups.

To this end we have developed a new vision, method and approach to guide our learning and development efforts moving forward.

We want to broaden the organization's understanding of learning. We see learning as a continuous journey centered around an individual's strengths and needs, but with learning materials focused on the daily work and integrated into the work process.

This change requires a higher level of commitment

and involvement from managers than our organization has been accustomed to in the past, however it promises great benefits in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our learning initiatives.

#### In practice, this means:

- Each 'training' should be delivered in the format best suited to the material. Be it online learning, peer-to-peer learning, on-site training sessions, etc.
- Not everything needs to be a "training". Many topics historically communicated through a training format can be delivered more effectively through other methods such as a meeting, an email or making a change to routine or a system.
- Training initiatives should be designed based on clear business needs and directly connected to employees' work tasks. This ensures that they

represent a relevant investment of time and effort for all involved. This approach is also in line with the dominating adult learning theory.

• Each training initiative needs to ensure a prepared and receptive audience before starting production. This means anchoring the project with the relevant part of the organization that will participate in the training and ensure that the adequate time and resources are allocated to implement the project successfully.

We have been able to successfully pilot our new method during 2024 with a new AM introduction and we look forward to implementing it on a wider scale early 2025.

"We are committed to enhancing business outcomes by providing employees with learning and development opportunities customized for their roles."



Samira Saghai, Head of People Development Academic Work Group



Introduction

# Wellness and wellbeing

Within Akind, we encourage our coworkers to embrace a healthy lifestyle. We take a holistic approach to occupational health management that incorporates physical, emotional, and mental well-being. We believe this is an essential part of creating the Best place to work.

To support physical health choices such as exercise and nutrition, we integrate wellness into HR, organizational development, and our corporate culture.

Research shows that daily activities that incorporate daily activities that elevate your heart rate, even in short bursts, benefits both the heart and the brain. These activities help reduce stress levels, increase our ability to concentrate and improve our memory. In light of this, we actively encourage our coworkers to stay physically active and have worked to create a workplace that fosters a healthy lifestyle.

#### Work flexibility

Since 2021, we have actively explored and implemented new strategies to address the changing demands and opportunities in the market. Recognizing that work flexibility is a vital aspect of these efforts, we

have made it a key focus. After consulting with our coworkers, we have established a hybrid work model that combines remote work and in-office collaboration. Our goal is to provide our coworkers with the tools to balance their professional ambitions with their personal lives, creating a flexible work environment that aligns with both individual and business needs. We believe work flexibility should be built on trust, forming a solid foundation for engagement and performance.

We recognize that workplace relationships are a cornerstone of our corporate culture, and we firmly believe that these connections are best nurtured through time spent together. Our offices will continue to serve as an essential space for us to meet, build relationships, and embody our values. Additionally, we believe that innovative ideas are best generated,



We maintain a humble approach in our ongoing evaluation and adjustment of our work flexibility,

always prioritizing the well-being of our coworkers as well as the overall business, as we navigate this exciting yet challenging landscape.



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Introduction

# Diversity and equal opportunities

Diversity enriches our companies and provides new ways for our business and employees to grow. We firmly believe diversity creates a healthier work environment that welcomes different perspectives and nurtures new ideas.

We measure diversity and equal opportunity by studying gender-based data, particularly in managerial roles, and considering ethnic backgrounds. At Akind, we are committed to achieving gender equality, striving for a 40% to 60% gender balance between those who identify as men and those who identify as women, across all levels of our organization. We also prioritize ethnic diversity to better reflect the communities in which we operate.

#### **Gender equality**

We track gender distribution in managerial positions to evaluate whether employees who identify as women and those who identify as men are being offered equal opportunities. In 2023, several initiatives - including revamped recruiting methods, manager awareness training, and a focused effort on gender distribution within our succession system - resulted in an increase in female leaders.

Compared to 2023, 2024 has been a more stable year, with only minor changes in managerial positions. These changes have allowed us to meet our target (40/60 gender balance) in two out of six categories: Top Management and Management. In the category Branch Managers and All Managers, we still have >60% of women, and we are slightly below target when it comes to Managing Directors.

For us, this is a long-term commitment, and we are satisfied with a stable result without excessive fluctuations. We want to see a continued shift from mid-level to top-level management and gain a deeper understanding of how to make this transition happen. We believe progress in mid-level management provides a solid foundation for future female succession into senior management roles. However, we still see challenges as we have a tipping point in the proportion of female Branch Managers, affect-



ing the overall composition of managers. Addressing this requires reinforcing managers from different parts of the organization, particularly at more junior leadership positions, while recognizing the potential long-term impact on the figures.

We remain committed to fostering equality! Our 2024 results emphasize our dedication to building an inclusive and gender-balanced workplace.



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#### **Ethnic diversity**

To gain a deeper insights into ethnic diversity within Akind, we request statistics from the Swedish Central Bureau of Statistics (SCB) on the foreign backgrounds of our Swedish employees. This data is collected every other year and includes both our internal employees across all Akind companies and our consultants. SCB defines a person with a foreign background as someone who was either born outside of Sweden or has two parents born outside of Sweden.

Internal employees Akind Group Sweden	2024		
Swedish population	27,4%		
Internal employees Akind Group Sweden	15,9%		
Consultants Academic Work Sweden	37,7%		

SCB statistics show that we have achieved our goal of mirroring Swedish society when hiring consultants. Currently 37,7% of our consultants have a foreign background, compared to 27,4% of the Swedish population.

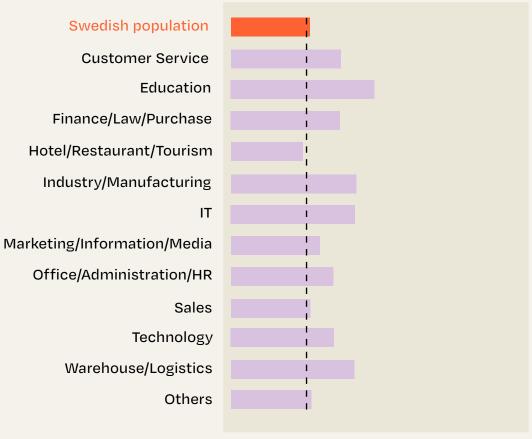
In Sweden, 15,9% of our internal employees have a foreign background, according to the 2024 statistics, highlighting room for improvement. An important action taken to address this was the implementation of evidence-based recruitment in 2023, which has been proven to be the best recruitment method for fair and equal evaluation of candidates. While we made slight progress in 2023–2024, increasing from 15,1% in 2022 to 15,9%, there is still significant work to be done to improve the ethnic diversity among our internal employees to better reflect Swedish society.



## Share of consultants with foreign background (per job category)

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An important step in the right direction is examining the necessity of being able to speak the local language when recruiting. Over the past year, we have created more opportunities for English-speaking candidates, thereby increasing the potential for ethnic diversity. Creating an inclusive work environment where different languages and cultures can coexist and enrich our organization is a priority. When we attract and retain talent from various backgrounds and value language skills and cultural diversity, we believe our competitiveness and innovation capacity will grow stronger.

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#### **Equality at Crowd Collective**

Crowd Collective has developed an equality plan and strategy to ensure the development of both numerical and experiential equality.

People

Across our five Crowd Collective offices, a dedicated team of employees operate at both local and group levels, to drive progress toeard our equality goals. To further support our offices, we have implemented an annual Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) wheel to provide additional support.

Furthermore, all employees receive training in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and this training has been further improved in 2024. This collective effort ensures that our team is equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to foster a diverse and inclusive work environment.



Jonatan Lidström, **CEO Crowd Collective** 

"One specific goal is to achieve a 50/50 gender distribution within Crowd Collective. This is a very ambitious goal in the IT industry, but with our EDI strategy I am confident that we will continue to progress in the right direction."



#### Academic Work Finland's continued work through collaboration with deidei

In our people-focused industry, themes of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) play a vital role. To reinforce our commitment to EDI, Academic Work Finland partnered with the impact-driven Nordic EDI agency deidei.

Together, we conducted a company-wide EDI survey in 2023, which provided measurable results and valuable insights. Based on the survey findings, we began planning tageted actions for 2024.

In 2024, Academic Work Finland prioritized EDI training to deepen our employees' and leaders' understanding of these critical topics. In May, all managers participated in a workshop designed to enhance their inclusive leadership skills. Later in the fall, a company-wide training session was conducted to highlight the importance of EDI to our organization and to discuss strategies for fostering a more inclusive workplace.

We can see a positive response from our co-workers and the collaboration with deidei has laid a solid foundation for future EDI efforts, which will continue to evolve during 2025.

People

**Akind Sustainability report 2024** 

We believe in the potential for brilliance that resides in all human beings. Given the opportunity, most people are eager to grow, no matter where they are in the world. In addition to creating The Best Place to Work for our coworkers and consultants, we want to provide support to communities both close to home and around the globe.

We focus our initiatives around three areas of impact:

1) Education 2) Employment and 3) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). These initiatives can be a one-time engagement or an ongoing project and can involve employees in a team, an office, a country, a company, or the whole of Akind. We believe that everything counts and that while no one can do everything, everyone can do something.

In 2024, we are proud to have collaborated with several organizations. Even though the initiatives vary in scale, they share a common purpose: building a more sustainable world where people and societies have the opportunity to grow.



Content

## The 1% Movement

Each year, 1% of Akind's net profit is invested in projects or NGOs dedicated to creating a more sustainable world. These funds provide a foundation for outreach and support, uniting the entire Akind family. It is our way of ensuring that we continuously make investments in the well-being of people and society, independent of business growth. We call this the 1% Movement.

#### 20 years of improving education in Zambia

Since 2004, our collaboration with Response Network has been a cornerstone of the 1% Movement. In 2024, we celebrated 20 years of this partnership - a milestone that we are immensely proud of. Over the

years, the self-help programs, and educational sponsorships, funded by Akind and implemented by Response Network, have created countless opportunities to help facilitate growth for marginalized communities.

#### The collaboration focuses on three principal areas:

Kubala Girls; This initiative focuses on improving access to quality education for young girls around the Livingstone area. The support is provided in the form of financial aid and scholarships to ensure that the girls can begin and complete their education.

Community Schools; Where the goal is to expand access to quality primary education in the rural areas of Kazungula, Zimba and Kalomo districts by constructing community schools on a self-help basis. This project provides villages with motivation, knowledge, and costly building materials so that they can build their own schools. The villagers carry out most of the construction work themselves,

ensuring that the schools belong to them, making it a sustainable development. The project also focuses on the construction of teachers' houses, to enable the presence of teachers in already established schools.

Village Programs; This initiative aligns with Response Network's Self Help Approach. By engaging rural communities in self-help activities it opens possibilities to improve their livelihood in several different dimensions. These programs define and address some of the most pressing issues the communities face, such as HIV/AIDS, adult illiteracy and children with special needs, among others.

#### Meet Lungowe, participant of our Kubala Girl Sponsorship program

In rural Zambia, many children – especially girls – face significant barriers to education. Long distances, limited infrastructure, and financial constraints often make schooling beyond primary level unattainable.

One of these girls, Lungowe, was born near Livingstone into a family of six and her opportunity to pursue an education was not a given. She was highly motivated to excel in her studies but faced periods of uncertainty during her time in school whether she could continue studying.

"I've been trying my best with [school in every way], but what really motivates me to put in my best is, [because of the help], I have all the funds that I need, so why shouldn't I put more effort as an individual?"

Through Response Network, with the support of the 1% Movement, Lungowe received a scholarship that paved the way for her to pursue her dream of continued education. She is now on her way to becoming a nurse and is set to graduate in November 2025. In 2024, she participated in an exchange semester in Finland as part of the program and has ranked at the top of her class several times.

"I would ask that Akind not stop this work now, because who knew that I could reach this point in my education? All the hardships I once faced are no longer there, because someone has been there for me."



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"With the support from Akind and Social Initiative, Response Network has significantly improved its ability to measure impact. They are now able to quantify the changes in the lives of community members created by the self-help approach."

Pernilla Bard, Founder, Social Initiative

#### Village programs progress

In 2024, accessing and generating across all areas where Response Network engages with communities has been a high priority. The Village programs are no exception, and during 2024 Akind and Response Network with support from Social Initiative have made significant progress in this area. We have worked together to set up relevant indicators to be able to track outcomes even better, to ensure our efforts to improve livelihoods have the effect we strive for. A baseline questionnaire has been developed, tested and is set for rollout in 2025.

#### Focus 2025 - Engaging and inspiring

Over the years, a solid and strong relationship has been built between Response Network and Akind. With this strong foundation – proving essential support for the important work being done in Zambia and ensuring a transparent, clear directive for the project - the focus for 2025 is on the internal engagement within Akind.

With a new structure for the project, we aim to strengthen the engagement within the company in new and inspiring ways. Our primary goal is to expand the reach and awareness of our collaboration with Response Network, so that everyone at Akind feels part of this important initiative. By doing so, we hope to grow our sponsor pool to reach even greater numbers in the future.

#### Kubala Girls Sponsorship Program summary 2010-2024

- This program is set out to give sponsorship for children to attend grades 1–12 and targeting girls who otherwise would risk facing early marriage, motherhood, and no education at all.
  - During 2025 a focus shift will take place, where scholarships now will be focused on secondary school, since enrollment and completion of secondary school is substantially lower than that of primary school.
- Since the inception of the Kubala Girls sponsorship program, Akind and many of our co-workers have sponsored 2,583 girls to receive an education.

- Over the past three years, Response Network has supported the girls in improving their exam results, giving them more future opportunities.
- The Kubala Girls performed very well in the 2024 grade 12 final exams. 82%, (31 students) passed the exam, compared to the 68% average in the Southern Province of Zambia where the program is run.
- 16 grade 12 students passed with grades sufficient to qualify for university.
- Excellent results in last grade 9 exams, with a pass rate of 89% (Zambian average 56%).



## Partnerships with the aim to inspire future careers

#### Partnering with My Dream Now

During the academic year 2023/2024, Academic Work Sweden partnered with the organization My Dream Now. Their vision is to empower young people to recognize their value and find their own pathways to fulfill their dreams and potential careers. By bridging the gap between schools and companies across various industries, the aim is to connect youths in vulnerable areas with professional role models and to learn about different career opportunities.

Together with My Dream Now, Academic Work employees have visited students in their classrooms as well as invited school classes to our own offices. During classroom visits, there have been workshops around dreams and potential careers - while personal experiences have been shared between the participants. Welcoming students to our own offices has included an office tour and fika together with our employees, but also CV-workshops, interview training and quizzes about the labour market. The goal has been to help young students navigate the early stages of their careers and empower them in their first steps toward a professional future.

#### Collaboration with Mitt Livs Val

Our collaboration with Mitt Livs Val began as a local initiative in Gothenburg, and has expanded to include our Stockholm offices. Mitt Livs Val aspires to create an inclusive society where young migrants can shape their future careers in Sweden.

The organization runs three different programs, designed to enhance study motivation, provide insights into higher education and the labor market, and expand social and professional networks for young people who are new to Sweden. Over the past years, Academic Work has hosted events within Mitt Livs Val's various programs as well as organizing our own events, including CV workshops and opportunities for our office employees to take on the role of CV-coaches.

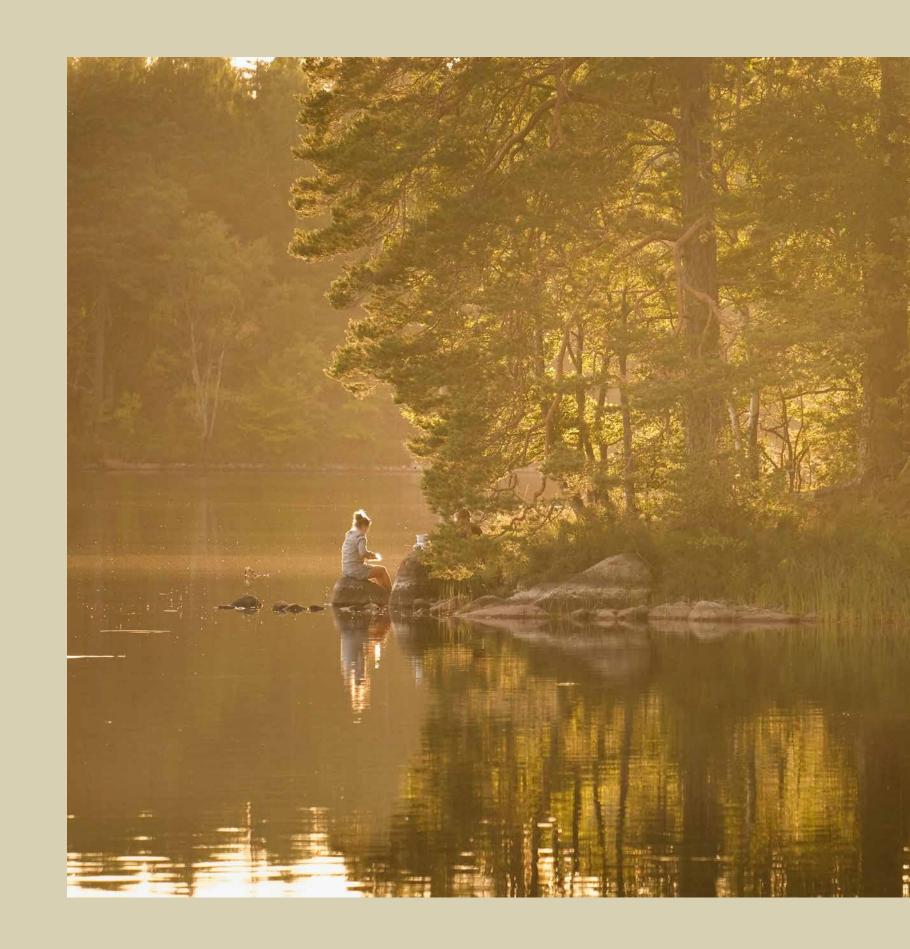




Content Introd

# Society

We want to contribute to a better world where people experience a sense of purpose, have equal opportunities, and live in a sustainable society where they can prosper. By providing the skills necessary for a sustainable society, and teaching people the importance of lifelong learning, we aim to contribute to this transformative process. We want to provide people with the means to strengthen their communities, enhance fairness, and promote sustainability within their society. We want to inspire others to do the same!



Content

Introduction

Sustainable business

## Contributing to a sustainable, dynamic labor market

Our mission statement is "We make people grow", and creating jobs, developing people, and building careers is our core business. We believe that ambition and potential often outweigh experience when predicting performance. This philosophy not only opens doors for new talent to enter the labor market but also creates and advances careers. We are confident that this approach can take Akind far as a company, while strengthening both our consultants and clients.

#### Supporting early career professionals and job creation

We firmly believe that hiring and developing early career professionals is an essential part of fostering a sustainable workforce. In our view, early career professionals encompass students, recent graduates, individuals in the beginning of their careers, and career shifters. Bringing them on board brings fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to companies. Moreover, their ambition, eagerness to learn, and adaptability can quickly compensate for any lack of experience. Their presence also plays a critical role in maintaining knowledge continuity. Having diverse levels of

seniority helps organizations avoid retirement waves and secures continuity.

We know that ambition and potential often surpass experience when predicting performance. This statement is based on over 100 years of research and data validation. This insight forms the foundation of our Evidence-Based Recruitment method. This approach not only enables new talent to enter the labor market but also nurtures growth and advances careers. These qualities can propel Akind as a company while enhancing the knowledge-sharing and development of both our consultants and clients. We help our clients appreciate the value of

In 2024 we helped people find new jobs.

Since the start in 1998, we have helped people find new jobs.



hiring early career professionals and provide the necessary support to ensure they are successfully integrated into the business. In our day-to-day work, we utilize our knowledge and experience to serve as a bridge between our clients and candidates. We invest time in understanding both the labor market and our client's needs. Our commitment extends beyond simply completing a successful hiring process; we prepare our clients and consultants for each job assignment and maintain continuous follow-ups to support their collaboration. Feedback is an essential component of our approach, guiding our product development, steering us in the right direction.

#### Measurements - Clients

One of our strategic goals is to have the most satisfied and loyal clients, aiming to be every client's first choice. We believe that maintaining continuous communication with our clients is key to achieving this goal. We use client surveys as a structured method to gather insights and use them to improve our services and ways of working.

The Client Touchpoint Survey provides our clients with an effective and timely opportunity to share their perception of specific staffing or recruitment process. The Client Experience Survey allows our clients an opportunity to provide us with extensive feedback about our offer and our ways of working twice a year. It

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#### Measurements - Consultants

Our most vital and valuable resource for our business is our consultants. We want them to feel completely satisfied with us and feel confident recommending us to others. We use our NPS (Net Promoter Score) survey as a key tool to measure engagement among our consultants.

The Yearly Satisfaction Survey complements our NPS survey. The primary purpose of this survey is to gain a deeper understanding of our performance as an employer, identify what we are doing well, and determine the areas where we need to improve.

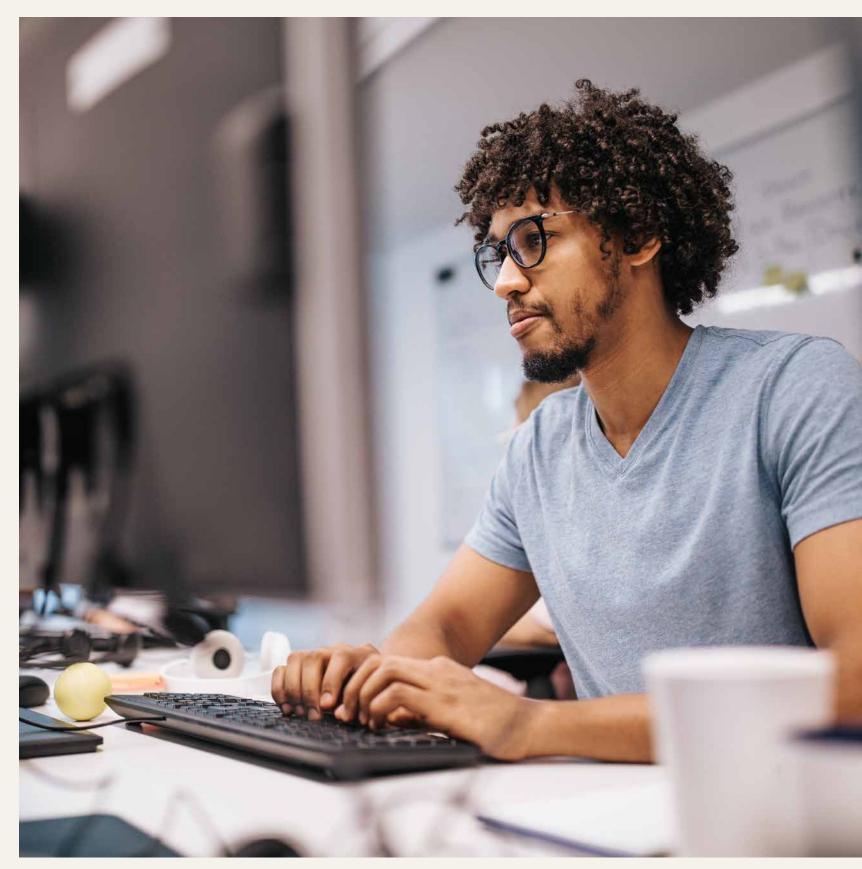
#### Measurements - Candidates

Our candidates put a lot of time and effort into applying to our positions. It is highly important to us that we offer them a reliable, professional and seamless hiring process and show them gratitude for choosing us.

As with our consultants, we also use Net Promoter Score survey to understand how candidates perceive the recruitment process with us. Ultimately, we want build trust with our candidates so they feel confident in recommending us to others and applying for new positions through us un the future.

#### **Client and consultant loyalty**

Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
NPS result client loyalty					_
Academic Work	63	49	46	76	72
Crowd Collective	61	39	46	_	58
NPS result consultant loyalty Academic Work	56	48	52	55	47
Creating jobs and building careers		ı			
Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Number of people we helped to find new jobs through Academic Work	5,545	7,619	12,315	9,214	7,408
Number of people reskilled or upskilled through Brights	1,315	1,455	1,275	871	507



The continued reliance on traditional recruitment methods – where candidates are screened solely based on their CV and cover letter before being invited to unstructured interviews – is heavily influenced by unconscious biases. This often leads companies to overlook hidden talents and contributes to societal inequalities. To counteract this, we have chosen to implement the approach of Evidence-Based Recruitment throughout the organization.



Tim Knutsson, COO, Academic Work Group

"Evidence-Based Recruitment represents the future of hiring, offering our clients a more effective and qualitative hiring process, that increases the chances of identifying high-performing candidates. Additionally, it contributes to social equity, promoting a fair and inclusive job market!"

### How it works

Evidence-Based Recruitment (EBR) in short, is data-driven hiring founded on scientific evidence. This recruitment philosophy is based on five core principles:

#### Define relevant job criteria

First, we identify the tasks necessary to address the gap or issue currently experienced. Next, we define how these tasks should be performed to be successful in the job.

#### **Choose valid requirements**

Based on the defined behaviors and abilities, we determine which evidence we can rely on either from our own data or the scientific community, to make sure we exclusively consider requirements relevant for the desired outcome.

#### Apply reliable methods

We exclusively use methods and questions during the recruitment process that have been scientifically proven to assess the requirements we intend to assess.

#### Practice mechanical decision-making

By using standardized grading models and weighing all assessed criteria according to the latest scientific findings, we minimize subjectivity and unconscious bias. This approach improves the quality of our decisions by up to 50%, while including a wider range of candidate backgrounds.

#### Validate our result

Once a candidate is in place, we track their performance to validate our recruitment process. This allows us to make necessary adjustments in upcoming recruitments, ensuring continuous improvement over time.

### The benefits of EBR

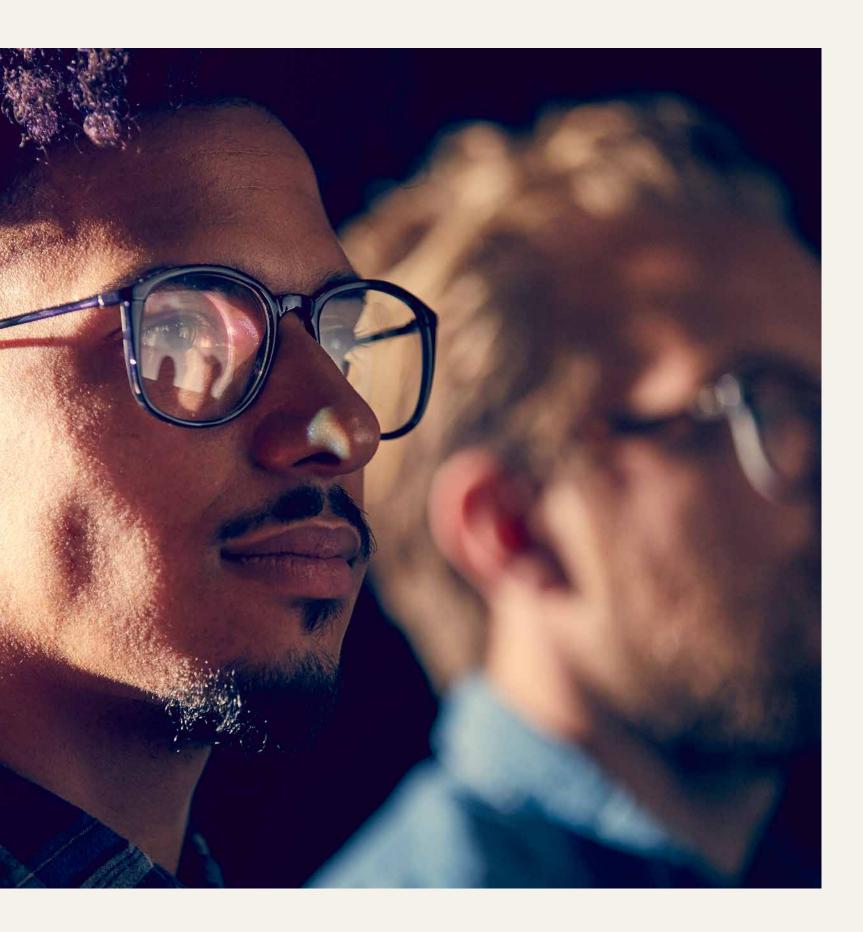
#### A fair and transparent recruitment process

Evidence-Based Recruitment ensures a fair and transparent process for our candidates. We utilize consistent questions and grading models, minimizing bias and individual recruiter variability. Our assessments are grounded in empirical research and real outcome data, allowing us to compare decisions with objective data and provide constructive and respectful feedback to candidates.

#### Selection based on potential

Since 2015 we have selected candidates for our reskilling and upskilling programs based on their potential. We have learned that factors like age and gender do not determine performance, and having the right education or prior experience does not always make someone the ideal candidate. What truly matters are their cognitive ability, personality, and drive. These insights have become central to our core business, enabling us to identify the best candidates from a larger, more diverse talent pool, by only assessing relevant requirements, standardizing processes, and minimizing the influence of unconscious bias.

Sustainable business **Akind Sustainability report 2024** Introduction



## Lifelong learning is the key to a sustainable society

Skills are becoming outdated faster today than ever before. People not only need tools to develop their skills in current positions, but also to transition from disappearing jobs to thriving in new ones. Businesses must prioritize continuous learning to maintain a sustainable competitive edge.

With Brights, we help companies navigate this rapid change, transforming their existing employees, into the workforce they need tomorrow. Brights began as a way to rapidly develop skills in emerging technologies and high-demand fields. Since 2015, we have assisted over 1,000 companies in acquiring vital skills through our programs.

Our tailored learning solutions deliver proven results. We have successfully upskilled over 6,000 individuals across 400+ reskilling and upskilling projects, with an impressive 89% of reskilled individuals still thriving in their new roles two years after our training.



A lack of skills is one of the largest obstacles to sustainable transition. We know that there is a lack of competencies within specific fields required for innovation or the scaling up of new technology. However, it is equally crucial that everyone adopts a sustainability perspective and integrate it into every part of businesses. Furthermore, there must be well-defined processes for how sustainability strategies can be integrated into our business model and operations.

#### Influencing individuals and companies

As a service company, the direct environmental impact of our core business is limited. We do not manufacture products, nor do we own factories. However, we are present in many industries and businesses through our consultants. This unique position places us in a position of influence over individuals and companies across dozens of industries across all our markets. With this in mind, we have made a strategic decision to think beyond our core business and take a proactive role in guiding other businesses and industries toward a more sustainable future. We aim to be an accelerator in this sustainable transition by providing the necessary skills needed for a sustainable society. Transition requires change, and change begins with people, and we are in the people business.

#### Green jobs

In today's rapidly evolving job market, understanding the skills needed for a sustainable future is essential. We aim to simplify the process of finding jobs that contribute to the environmental transition, connect companies with people who possess sustainability skills and interest, and to gather and share insights about the necessary skills for the transition to happen. As a result, we have chosen to define green jobs and make them easily accessible.

The definition is used to determine whether a job is qualified as green, through a self-assessment, made by the client. In 2024 Academic Work launched 'Green jobs' as a job category in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

As there is no universal definition for the term "green job" and multiple interpretations exist, we have taken on a pioneering role as the first company in our industry to define what constitutes a green job.

Defining green jobs has presented challenges, and we remain open to adapting our definition as new insight and information becomes available. Following an extensive pre-study, we decided to combine two existing definitions to define a job as green, the definition from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the International Labor Organization.

#### The definition: What is a green job?\*

- It is in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources. This includes businesses that reduce the consumption of energy and raw materials, limit greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution, protect and restore ecosystems, or enable enterprises and communities to adapt to climate change.
- It also includes jobs in which work duties involve making a product, process, or service more environmentally friendly or using fewer natural resources.

#### Want to learn more?

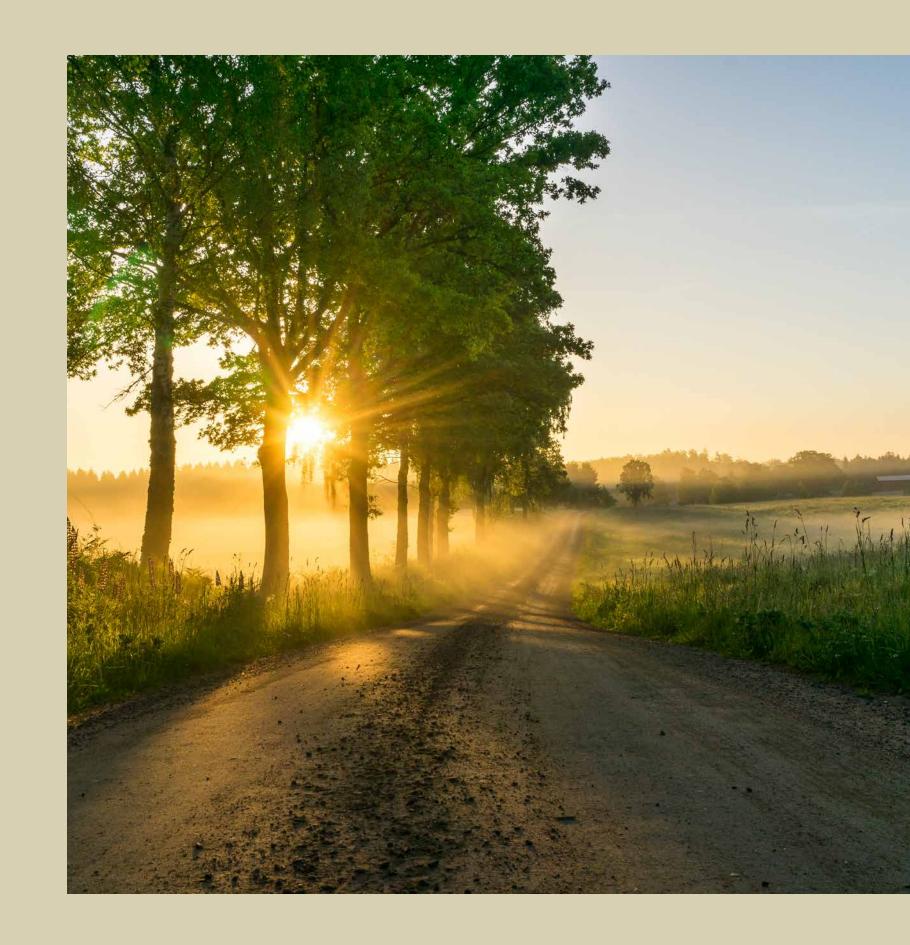
Please visit the local Academic Work-websites.



https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/methodologies/thechallengesofdefiningagreenjob https://www.bls.gov/green/home.htm

# Planet

The planet is our home, and it is our collective responsibility to safeguard it for future generations. Climate change is no longer a distant threat but a harsh reality, and we need to act now to curb its most disastrous effects. Governments, companies, organizations, and every one of us. Akind is committed to this cause, fueled by a sense of urgency and a bold ambition to create a world where people and planet coexist sustainably.



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# Our goal: a net-zero business

We want to actively contribute to an environmentally sustainable future. That is why our goal is to become a net-zero business.

#### **Ambitions Climate Action**

To lay the foundation for our journey towards net-zero emissions, we initiated the Ambitious Climate Action project in December 2022, consisting of three phases:

- 1. GHG Accounting: Calculating our complete carbon footprint using the GHG Protocol methodology, covering scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions. It serves as a prerequisite for establishing science-based targets and plays a crucial role in understanding our total emissions, making sure we can develop a strategy for their reduction.
- 2. Setting Science-Based Targets: Establishing CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets in alignment with the latest scientific findings and the Paris Agreement, verified and approved by the Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi)...
- 3. Creating a Climate Strategy: Building a roadmap featuring key activities to drive ambitious climate action, complete with a clear plan for the actions needed to achieve our science-based targets.

This project is our most strategically significant step toward achieving our goal of becoming a net-zero business. In November 2024, we completed phase 2 when our targets were approved by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). Our focus during the first half of 2025 will be on closely investigating and analyzing our current emissions to identify reduction opportunities. This will include creating scenario calculations to determine how and where to make reductions over time to reach our targets. Additionally we will work to mobilize the Akind Group in climate action through strong collaborations and governance structures. Read more about Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) below.

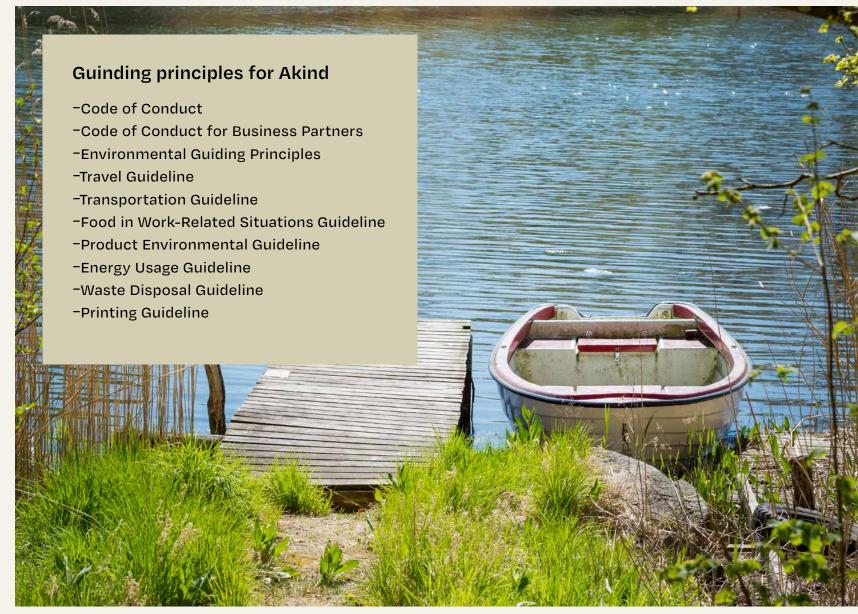
#### Managing our sustainability work

To effectively manage our environmental efforts, we rely on guiding principles and management systems that ensure strong performance and keep us on the right path. Our guiding principles are integrated into the organization to provide our employees with confidence in their daily decisions. We consistently pursue continuous improvement and will always evaluate and

take actions in order to improve our environmental performance. In today's regulatory climate we aim to not only comply with ever-changing standards, directives and legislation, but also to explore how these can be implemented in a way that offers additional benefits to people, society, and the planet.

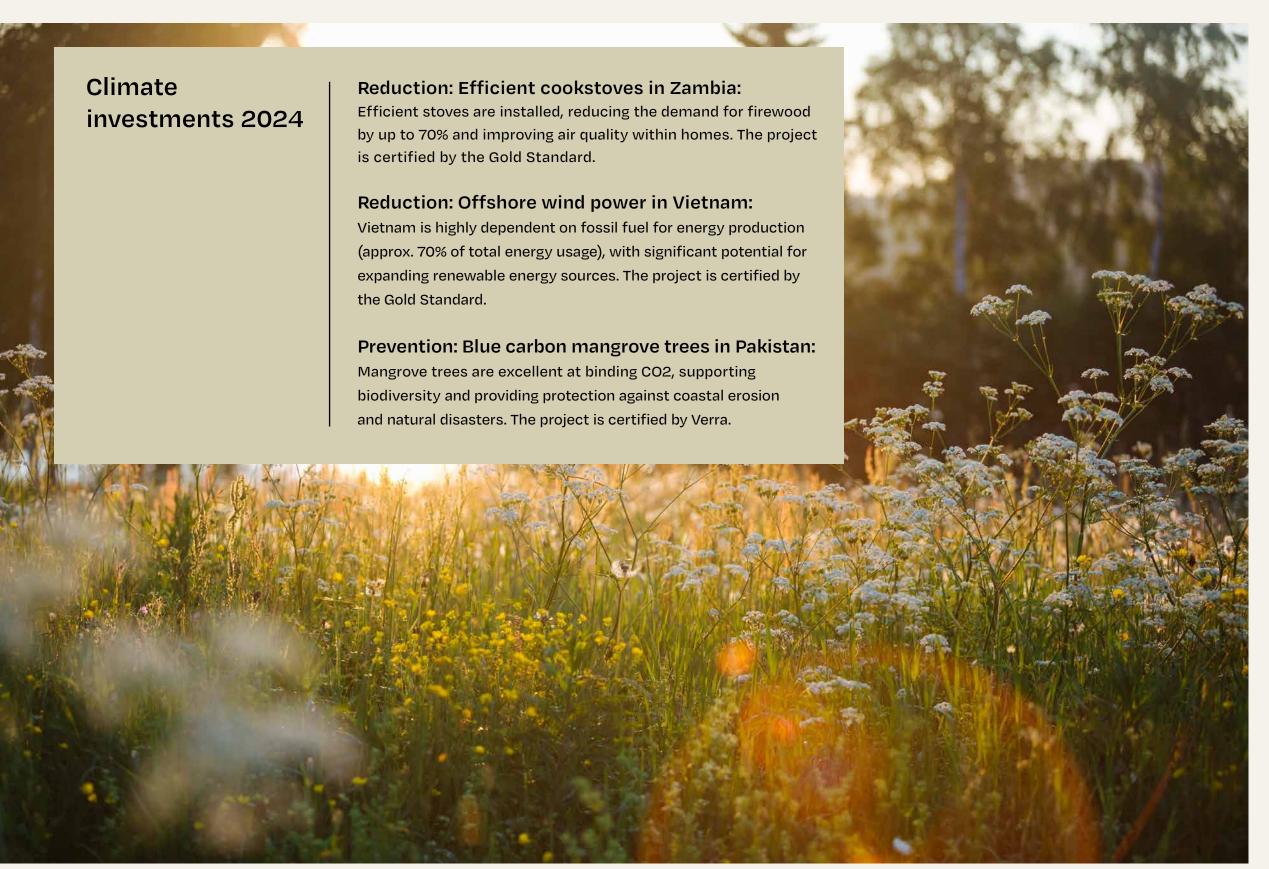
Furthermore, we establish clear environmental targets at both the group level – including science-

based targets – and locally in our largest markets Sweden and Finland. Our target setting process is guided by GHG calculations, SBTi criteria, ISO 14001 certification, as well as client demands. To achieve these targets, we implement a governance structure where each site and relevant department work with focus areas and action plans. This structure will be further developed and formalized as we refine our climate strategy in the coming year.



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#### **Annual climate investments**

To achieve net-zero, we also need to offset our carbon footprint by investing in projects that reduce, prevent, or remove carbon emissions. Carbon offsetting allows us to take direct responsibility for emissions that are difficult to mitigate while we work to reduce our climate impact.

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We make our climate investments on an annual basis. These investments are intended to offset our total carbon footprint, including scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions, from the previous year. These investments are distributed across projects that focus on reducing, preventing, and removing carbon emissions from the atmosphere. Beyond their climate benefits, each project contributes to social and economic sustainability and is well-established among local stakeholders and project participants. It is important for us that our journey towards net-zero does not affect our other SDGs negatively, and that we aim for a holistic approach in every decision.

# Our science-based targets

Described by the UN as 'code red for humanity', the latest science shows that limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C is still possible, but we are dangerously close to that threshold. Achieving extensive and effective emission reductions is not only critical to the climate - it is also essential to our business. Joining the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is a fundamental building block of our long-term and group-wide sustainability strategy, reinforcing our commitment to taking ambitious and actionable measures.



Johan Skarborg, Founder and CEO, Akind Group

"Committing to the Science-Based Targets initiative is not a symbolic act. It has real-world implications. The SBTi commitment is based on transparency and accountability, and companies simply cannot afford to dishonor their commitment. We are determined to deliver on this promise."

In November 2023, Akind Venture AB committed to establish both near-term and a long-term target in alignment with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) Net-Zero Standard. These targets were then submitted for validation and approval by the SBTi.

As of November 2024, the SBTi has approved Akind's near-term science-based emissions reduction target, as well as science-based net-zero target, in line with the 1.5°C pathway:

#### Akind's near-term targets:

Akind Venture AB commits to reducing absolute scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by 58.8% by 2034, using 2022 as the baseline year.

Akind Venture AB commits to reducing absolute scope 3 GHG emissions from purchased goods and services, capital goods, and business travel by 58.8% by 2034, using 2022 as the baseline year.

#### Akind's net-zero target:

Akind Venture AB commits to reducing absolute scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions by 90% by 2045, using 2022 as the baseline year.

Direct emissions reductions (decarbonization) will be prioritized, with all residual emissions neutralized through climate investments in accordance with SBTi criteria before achieving net-zero emissions.

#### Creating a climate strategy and emission reduction roadmap

A major focus for 2025 will be to create a roadmap and governance structure to drive emission reductions in line with our targets.



## Ouremissions

People

Since we began measuring our emissions according to the GHG Protocol in 2023, it has become evident that a significant part originates from our purchases and supply chain. Moving forward, a major focus will be on refining emissions data and determining the most efficient strategies to reduce these emissions. At the same time, we will continue efforts to lower emissions in key areas within our own operations, such as travel, transportation, and energy consumption.

In 2024, we have made significant progress toward our science-based targets, and compared to the previous year we have achieved reductions across all scopes and categories. While some of these reductions can be attributed to cost-cutting measures influenced by the economic landscape, our longterm emission reduction strategies and actions have undeniably contributed a great deal as well.

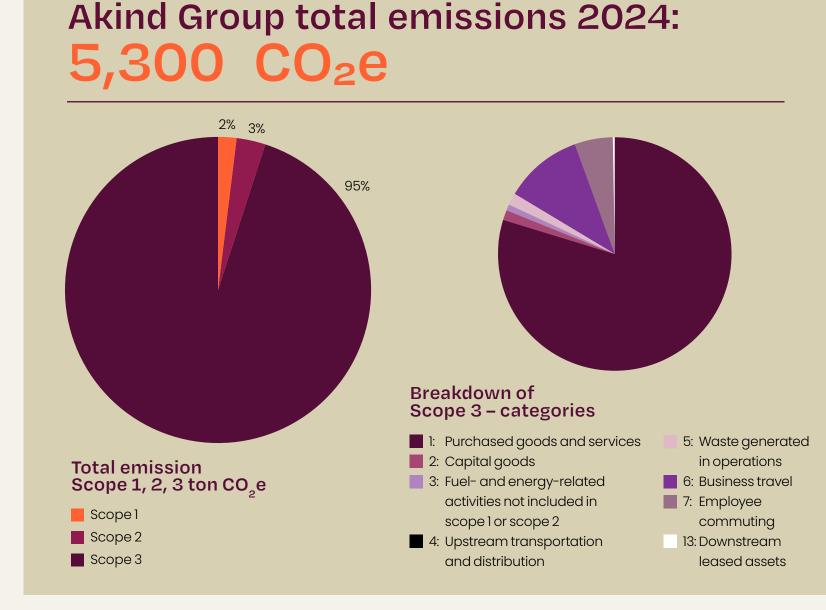
Our **scope 1** emissions primarily stem from the use of our company vehicles, where we stay on track in our ambition to electrify our car fleet. Additionally, we have reduced the number of pool cars at several offices and prioritize carpooling and public transportation whenever feasible.

As we continue to transition towards fully renewable office electricity, which is now at 96,5%, and have

secured renewable heating for one of our largest offices this year, we have successfully lowered our scope 2 emissions by 15%.

Within scope 3 category 1 (Purchased goods & services), we have successfully reduced our emissions by nearly 11%, primarily due to lower spending in 2024 compared to 2023. Currently, we rely heavily on spend-based data using emission factors, and starting to move towards supplier-specific data is a priority this coming year. This shift will provide a more accurate understanding of the actual impact of our purchases and enable us to use data in order to make more informed purchasing decisions, ultimately driving real emission reductions.

The most significant year-over-year reduction can be found in scope 3 category 6 (Business travel),



where we have reduced our total emissions by 63,4%. However, this is largely due to the 25-year jubilee conference held in 2023 which is increased emissions that year. When compared to 2022 – a more comparable year to 2024 in terms of travel pattern – the reduction is closer to 19%. These past years, we have become more selective in granting exceptions for air travel, especially when planning internal events or traveling for internal meetings and trainings.

#### The focus going forward

Going into 2025, we will continue advancing the implementation of the aforementioned key strategies and company-wide actions. In addition, we will take a closer look at each market and office in order to pinpoint more specific adjustments and focus areas. This will ensure that all locations contribute efficiently to emission reductions and contribute towards reaching our science-based targets.

People

To manage our purchases more sustainably, we evaluate both who we buy from and what we buy. Our goal is to source all our products and services exclusively from suppliers who meet our sustainability criteria.

Planet

All new suppliers are assessed based on their environmental impact and management practices, and we require all suppliers to comply with our Code of Conduct for Business Partners. Based on this assessment, suppliers are categorized as either "approved" or "not approved", and are also assigned a sustainability score as a result of a supplier assessment questionnaire.

#### **Enhanced follow-up routine**

In the upcoming year, we aim to strengthen our dialogue with a number of our key suppliers and to conduct closer follow-ups on sustainability initiatives. Additionally, we will enhance our follow-up routine for the supplier assessment, which is conducted with each new supplier agreement, with the goal of setting improvement plans and collaborating with suppliers to foster more sustainable practices in their operations.

Our overarching goal for sustainable sourcing is to increase the share of our total expenditure directed towards sustainable suppliers, while also deepening sustainability dialogues and collaborations with key suppliers.

#### Sustainable consumption at the office

Respecting and preserving planetary resources is an integral part of our sustainability efforts, which will be present in every aspect of our organization's daily choices – both big and small. We also embrace a circular perspective to consumption, which includes reducing overall consumption, choosing the most environmentally friendly options, recycling whenever possible, and minimizing waste.

Within our Product Environmental Guideline, we give our office staff the necessary tools and information to purchase products aligned with Akind's environmental principles.

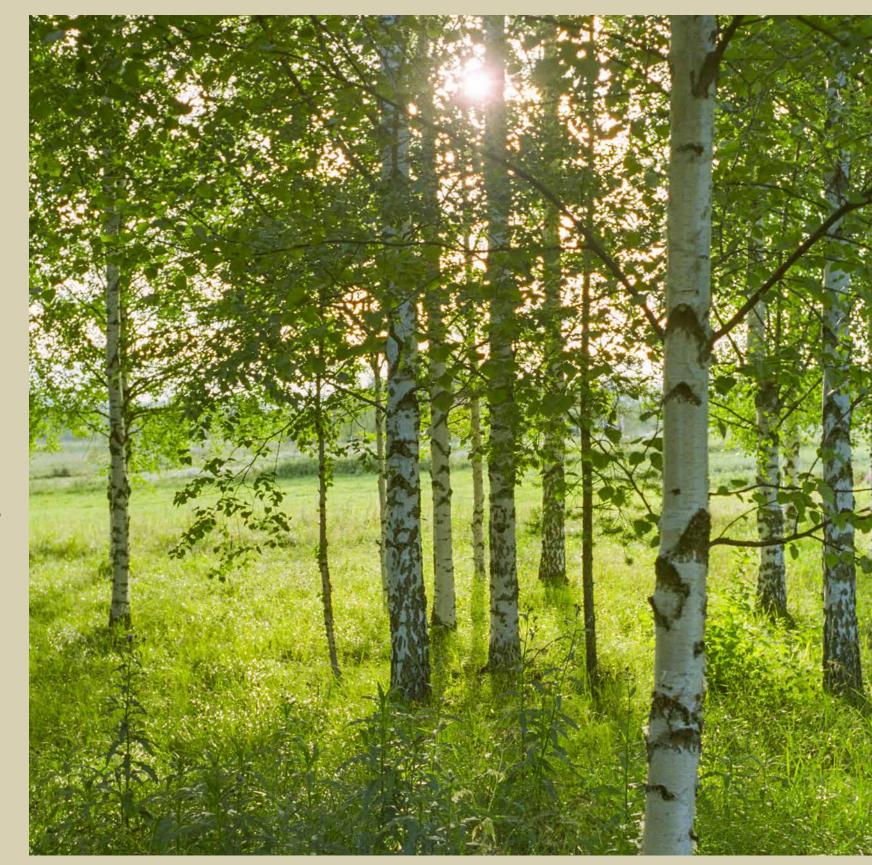
We also have guidelines for food consumption, with a strong emphasis on vegetarian, organic and locally sourced foods. Additionally, we have established clear routines for minimizing waste, along with designated recycling stations to ensure proper disposal of any waste we generate.



**Sustainable business Akind Sustainability report 2024** 

# Sustainable business

Akind's core purpose is to unlock the growth potential of people and companies. Maintaining a financially healthy position allows us to create a great place to work, invest in initiatives that keep us as our clients' first choice and ensure our relevance in the future. Strong finances provide our coworkers with stability and growth, enabling us to create more jobs and support career development. We can also provide the best service to our clients, helping them prosper through innovation and increased potential. As Akind grows, our contribution to people, society and the planet grows with us. However, even as we pursue growth, we never compromise on our ethics.



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# Sustainable growth

Embracing new business approaches in pursuit of sustainable growth is a fundamental objective for any organization that aims to thrive in the long term. At Akind, we adopt a long-term perspective in everything we do. We are continuously working toward a culture that seamlessly incorporates sustainable growth into every part of our business.

In 2025, we continue to strengthen our ability to identify and invest in key strategic areas, focusing on core competencies and expertise. This will lay a strong foundation for growth in the years to come.

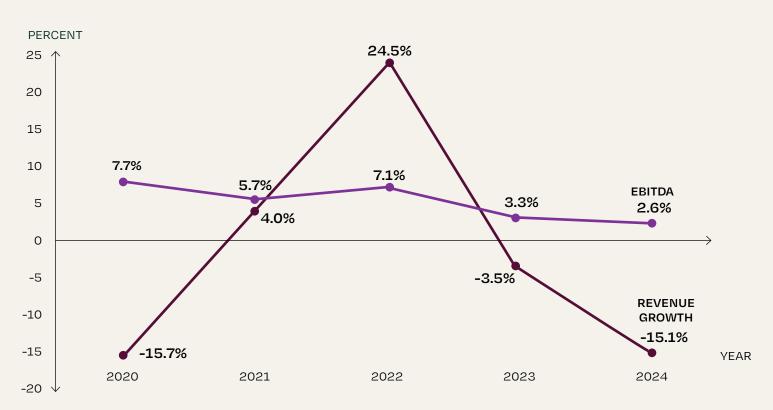
Additionally, we have strengthened our capacity to support all companies within Akind. Through investments in technology, digitalization, and process design, we are ensuring that we can facilitate sustainable growth within all our businesses, considering cost-effectiveness, quality, customer experience, and job satisfaction.

## Improved matching

We continue our focus on the implementation of the process and technology to support Evidence-Based Recruitment. Unlike traditional or intuition-driven hiring methods, Evidence-Based Recruitment relies on validated data derived from actual job performance to guide decision-making. This method is the most reliable way to predict future performance, as every aspect of the process is based on solid evidence rather than speculation. By leveraging Evidence-Based Recruitment, we significantly increase the likelihood of identifying the right candidates. It also provides an ideal framework for integrating AI, though the effectiveness of AI models ultimately depends on the quality of the data they are trained on.

This strategy will position us as Knowledge Leaders in recruitment, accelerate time-to-hire, and - most importantly - ensure world-class accuracy in predicting future work performance.

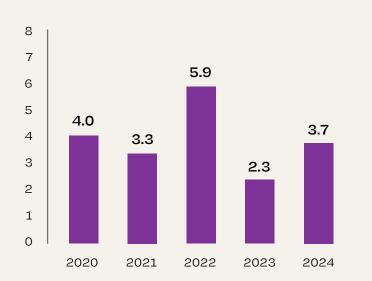
## Revenue growth and EBITDA, 2020-2024



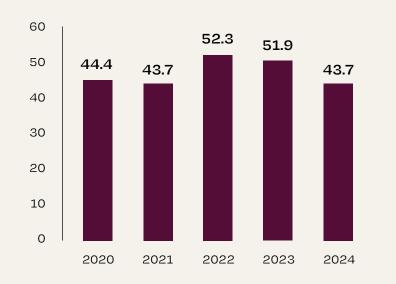
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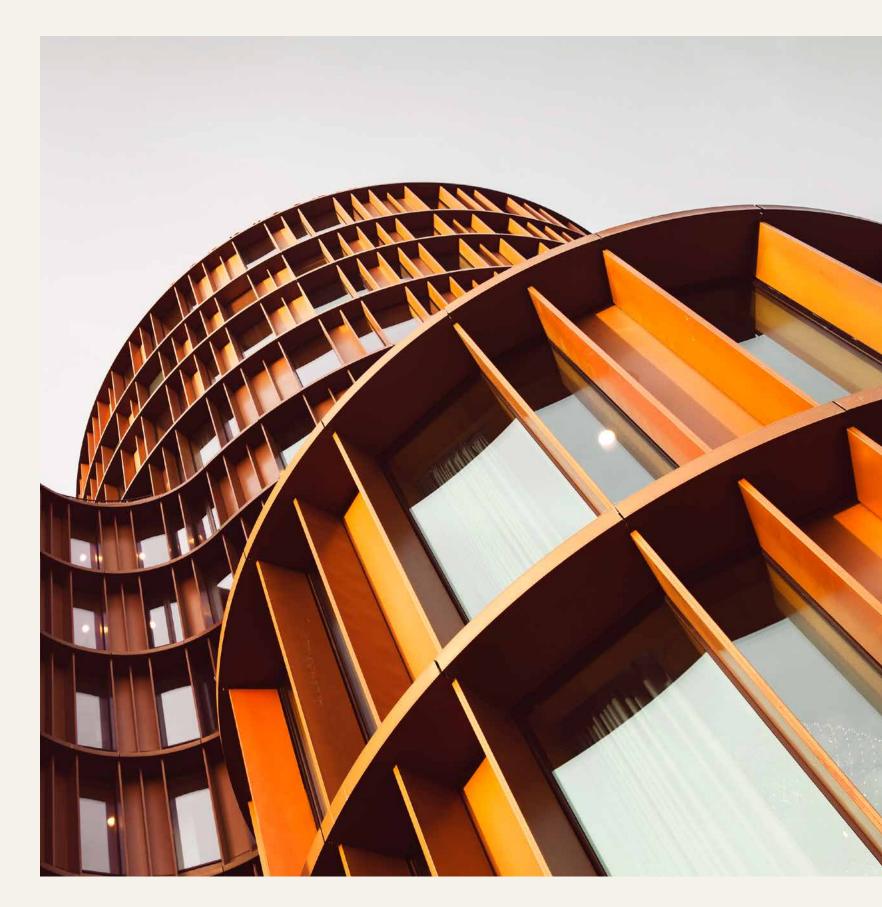
It is important for us to make a positive contribution to the societies in which we operate, and the taxes we pay is a significant part of our wider economic and social impact. High profits mean high tax contributions that benefit a wide range of investments in our society.

### Corporate income tax in MEuro



Social security contribution in MEuro





# Ethical business and anti-corruption

We value strong business ethics and want to collaborate with people who share our principles. To us, ethical business practices are the foundation of sustainable business growth.

#### **Code of Conduct**

In 2024, a new Code of Conduct was implemented for all internal employees. This document covers a wide range of topics, including anti-corruption, fair competition and business practices, collective bargaining, harassment, discrimination, health and safety, data protection, and environmental responsibilities. It is mandatory for each employee to read and accept.

Additionally, we require a Code of Conduct for Business Partners to be signed when entering into supplier agreements. This ensures commitment to the same ethical standards, including human rights and compliance with sanctions, among other things.

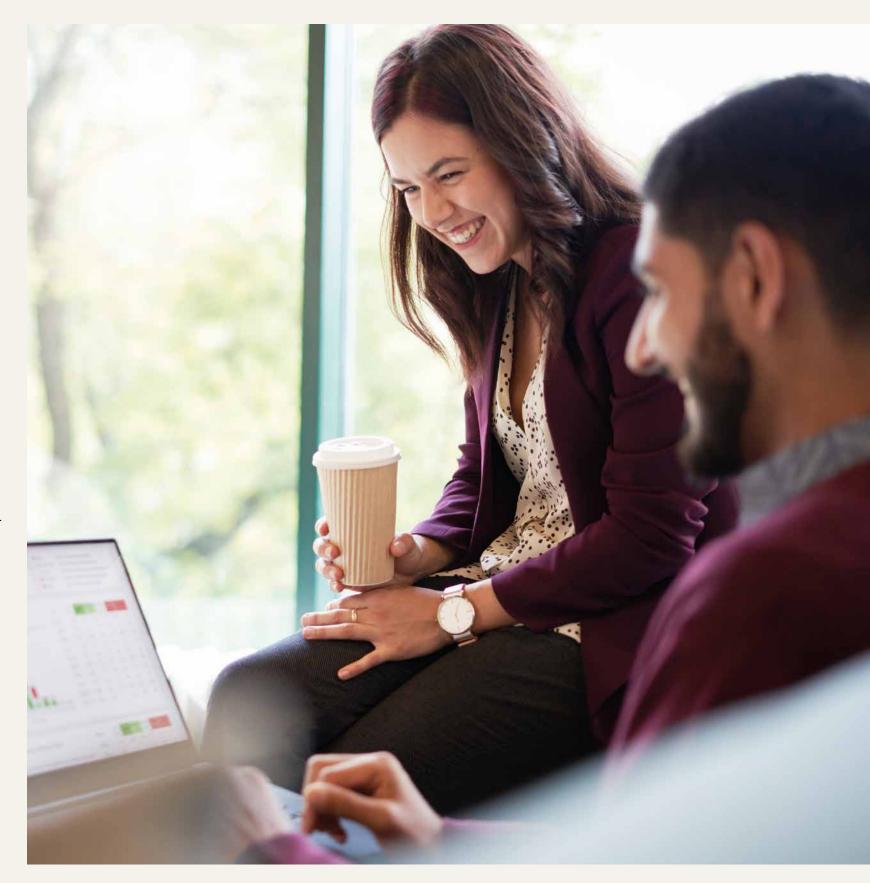
#### **Anti-corruption**

There are several formal rules that provide a framework for conducting ethical business. To make sure we operate within this framework, we have implemented

an anti-corruption policy that states that our coworkers may not offer, give, request, or accept bribes. We expect that our partners and their representatives will act according to the same principles for ethical business practices. We continuously work with creating awareness around our anti-corruption policy within Akind.

## Whistleblowing

Akind protects whistleblowers in all parts of our business and our process for whistleblowing is fully compliant with the EU Whistleblower Protection Directive from 2019. The process includes how to report potential wrongdoings, how such notifications will be assessed, and how identified wrongdoings shall be handled.



# Respecting human rights

Recognizing our responsibility to uphold and defend human rights in every aspect of our business is an inherent part of Akind's culture. As a prominent company in our sector, we see ourselves as leaders, committed to setting the highest standards and inspiring others to follow.

Everything we do within Akind is guided by our core values: "Share Energy," "Beat Yesterday," and "Show Heart." These values define who we are and what we do. They guide us not only in how we manage change and share best practices but also in demonstrating respect for one another and the people around us. These principles are integrated into our Code of Conduct, which we have updated during 2024, and it applies to all our coworkers and consultants, as well as our Code of Conduct for Business Partners, which governs our suppliers and other business partners. Both documents are aligned with the United Nations Global Compact Principles and the International Labor Organization's fundamental conventions of human rights at work, including freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the eradication of forced or compulsory labor, the abolition of child labor, and the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation.

## **Human Rights Due Diligence**

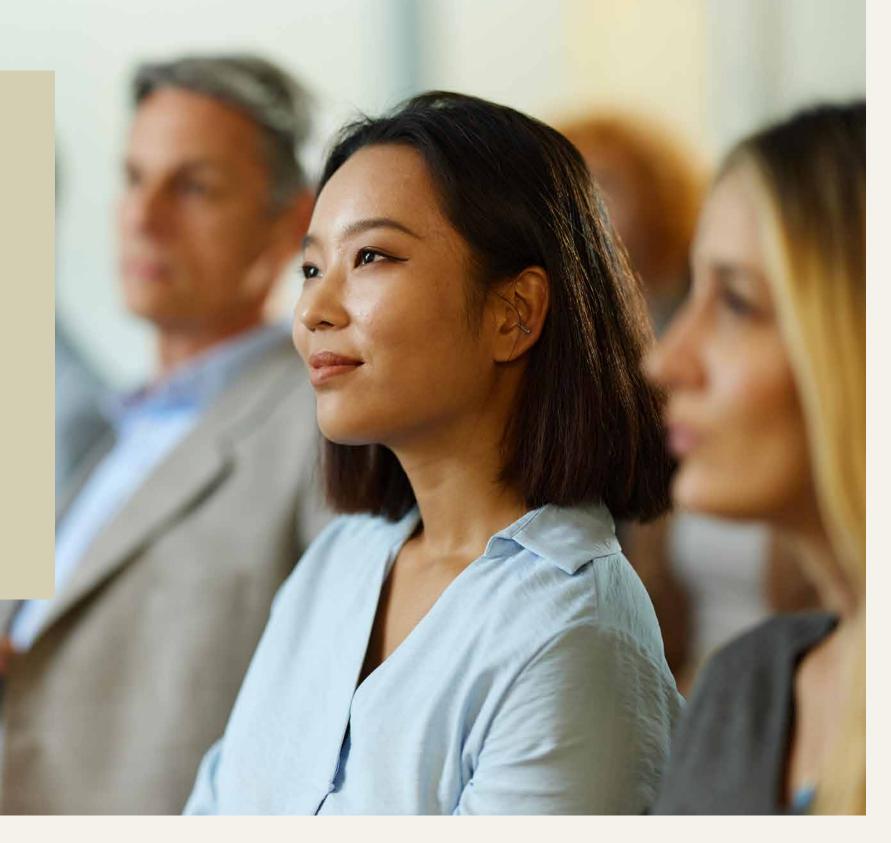
Akind's Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) process is closely aligned with the model outlining the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct. We are fully committed to conducting human rights due diligence on an ongoing basis and in ever-increasing depth. In this regard, we aim to develop a deeper understanding of how our own operations and supply chain may impact human rights. We are also working to establish policies and processes that effectively manage and mitigate any potential negative impacts. We will actively engage stakeholders at all levels, both internal and external, to ensure that our commitment to promoting human rights is mirrored throughout Akind.



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The Agency Workers Directive is specific legislation within the staffing industry that applies to companies in the countries where we operate. This directive mandates that consultants working in staffing companies receive the same basic employment and working conditions as those directly hired by the client. At Akind, we adhere to local legislation in all our markets, either through collective bargaining agreements or internal processes and audits to secure compliance. We offer market-oriented salaries and make provisions and contributions for pensions and annual leave according to collective bargaining agreements or local regulations.



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# Innovation and technology

Our society is eager to explore innovative development in every aspect of life - and so are we. We do so because it is in our DNA to find new, clever ways to help people grow, both within our company and beyond.

We are a people-focused service company, our success is built on the relationships we have with our clients, candidates, and consultants. However, in today's rapidly evolving business landscape, we believe it is also crucial to invest in innovation and technology to stay competitive and continue providing the best possible service to our clients.

#### Staying ahead of trends

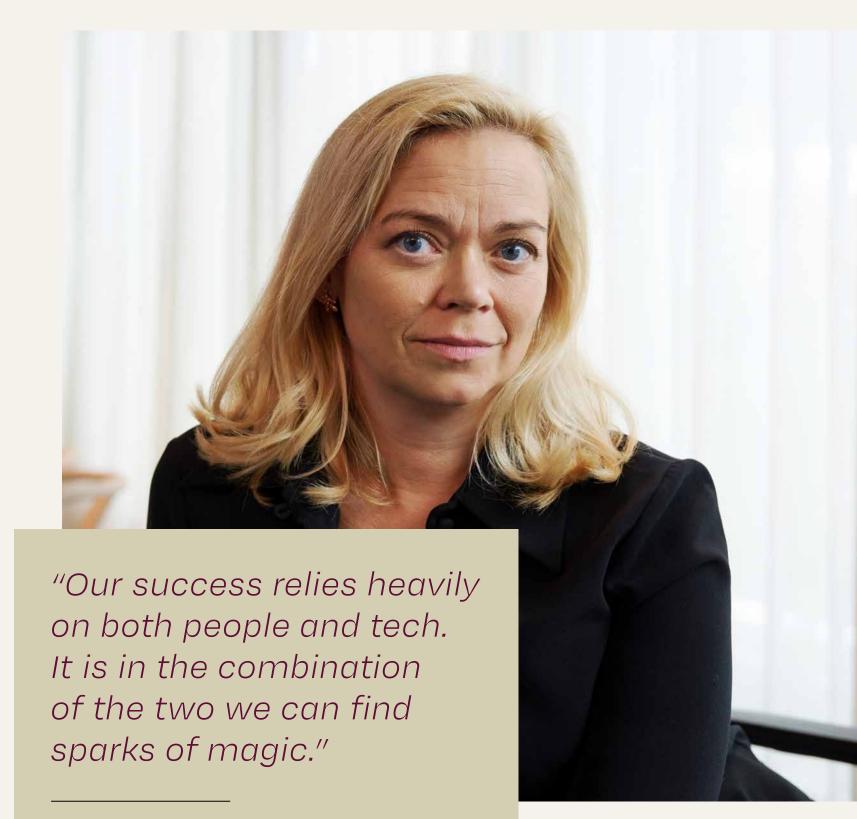
Innovation and technology allow us to continuously improve our processes and services, making us more efficient and effective in meeting the needs of our clients. By investing in these areas, we can stay ahead of industry trends and developments; and offer new and improved solutions to our clients.

Furthermore, investing in technology also enables us to better support our employees, by equipping them with the tools and resources they need to work in the best possible way. This not only improves employee satisfaction but also benefits our clients by allowing

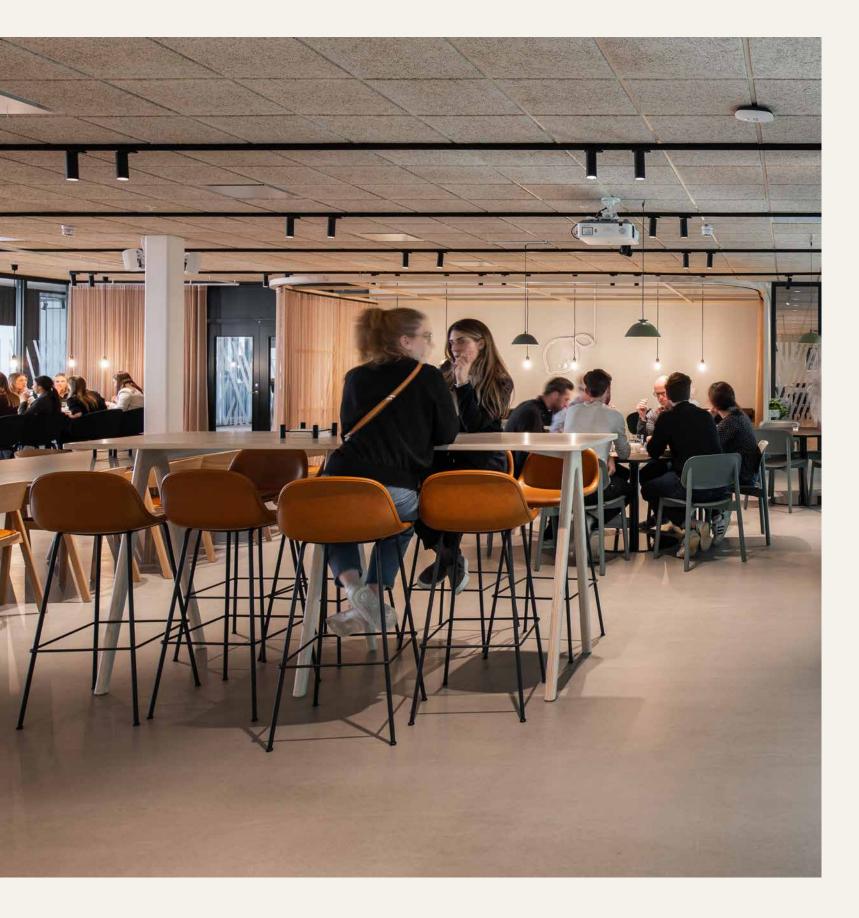
us to provide a higher level of service. These actions also help to reduce our environmental footprint and enable more efficient collaboration, which is becoming increasingly important in today's world.

#### Staying competitive

In summary, our primary focus will always be on fostering strong relationships with our clients, candidates, and consultants. However, we firmly believe that investing in innovation and technology is essential for staying competitive and delivering the highest level of service to our clients. We are happy to witness how our recent investments are being put to work, delivering improvements in all areas of our company. We see improvements in our core work processes as well as in supporting processes, enabling us to build a stronger company, better equipped to take care of clients, candidates, consultants, and coworkers. We will continue to innovate, learn, and grow, as digitalization is an ever-evolving journey, and we believe that there is always room for improvement.



Jenny Smids, COO Akind



# Potential risks

Our commitment to establish a sustainable business is rooted in our values, vision, and leadership. We work systematically and continuously with performance evaluation, assessment of risks and impact, and preventive risk mitigation. The purpose of risk management within Akind is to minimize any negative impact that might arise in the business, as well as its potential impact on the wider world.

#### **PEOPLE**

#### POTENTIAL RISK OF LESS ENGAGEMENT

- If Akind fails to meet coworkers' needs and expectations regarding compensation and benefits, there is a risk of decreased levels of engagement.
- We are a results-driven organization. Setting ambitious goals has been key to our success and is deeply ingrained in our culture. This approach can sometimes create stress and psychosocial challenges.
- It can be hard to ask for support within a high-performance culture.

#### ACTIONS

- Akind must ensure that all coworkers trust that they are compensated fairly compared to similar roles. We are continuing the implementation of a salary mapping system across all countries, throughout the entire organization.
- Continuing to foster strong, positive relationships between managers and coworkers.
- Recurring meetings where performance, workload, and existing support are discussed. Weekly coworker feedback surveys.

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#### POTENTIAL RISKS RELATED POTENTIAL RISK IN LACK OF EQUALITY, **ACTIONS ACTIONS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) FOCUS.** TO COMMUNITY ENGAGMENT Failing to meet coworkers' needs and expectations We continue to develop our strategy within Our donations could potentially help finance par- Recurring meetings with accountable people regarding our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and further ties, projects, or individuals other than those within Response Network. efforts or behavior may lead to decreased integrate our EDI statement into our daily work... intended. An established follow-up structure for the engagement and the loss of key talent. That Response Network is violating basic human projects we finance. rights without our knowledge. A well-defined annual budget is implemented. POTENTIAL RISK IN ATTRACTING AND **ACTIONS** • An annual external financial review is conducted to RETAINING SKILLED COWORKERS detect corruption or other financial irregularities. There is high demand for qualified labor, and we We work to continuously improve working conditions, may have difficulty recruiting necessary coworkers. company culture, leadership, and skills development SOCIETY to ensure that the company is an attractive employer High candidate turnover or loss of key talent could and has access to the right skills. POTENTIAL RISK CONCERNING have negative impact on the company. **ACTIONS OUR CONSULTANTS** Having development programs for key job roles increases our attractiveness as an employer and · Life as a consultant can be uncertain when it comes Transparent communication during the consultant the perception of Akind as a long-term employer. to the duration and type of work. recruitment process. Akind is accountable for the consultants working A well-defined process to review consultants' POTENTIAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS **ACTIONS** with our clients. workplace experiences before, during, and after an assignment. Akind's greatest health and safety risks are Coworkers are provided with occupational health • Due to the competitive market conditions, we need services according to their individual needs, as well repetitive strain injuries and stress-related illness. to have a strong consultant offering to fill the orders Continuous meetings and dialogue with our as equipment to prevent repetitive strain injuries. we receive from our clients. consultants and clients. • In 2023-2024, we conducted a group-wide change project with the focus on establishing processes to work ongoingly with our consultant offer. The goal of this project was to make sure Academic Work is seen as an even more attractive career partner for young professionals. Sustainability training for consultants in Sweden is

partially aimed at strengthening the consultant offer.

Introduction **Sustainable business Tables Akind Sustainability report 2024** Content People Society Planet

#### **PLANET**

## **ACTIONS** POTENTIAL RISK CONCERNING THE PLANET Negative environmental impact in terms of CO<sup>2</sup> We report our emissions in accordance with the emissions generated from running our business. GHG protocol, providing a true picture of our total environmental footprint and the different sources for emission. By joining the Science Based Targets initiative, we

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS**

#### POTENTIAL RISK CONCERNING **HUMAN RIGHTS**

- Risk linked to discrimination, internally or externally, based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religious identity, political affiliation, disability, or age within recruitment processes.
- Third-party suppliers not living up to our Code of Conduct or offering fair and proper employment conditions.

#### **ACTIONS**

Evidence Based Recruitment: A robust and transparent recruitment process designed to eliminate the risk of bias and unfair decisions.

have established company-wide emission reduc-

tion targets aligned with the latest climate sci-

By carbon offsetting, we take direct responsibility

work is underway to reduce climate impact.

for the emissions that are difficult to access, while

ence, as outlined in the Paris Agreement.

- Training and customized activities for better leadership and support through a variety of learning methods.
- Our suppliers are required to sign our Code of Conduct for Business Partners.

#### SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

#### POTENTIAL RISK CONCERNING **ETHICAL BUSINESS**

- Incorrect financial data, either due to human error or fraudulent activities.
- Misuse of position, where employees, knowingly or unknowingly, act in ways that conflict with our values and Anti-Corruption Policy.
- Ethical risks, including non-compliance with national regulations, our Code of Conduct, or involvement in corruption, bribery, or other irregularities.

#### **ACTIONS**

Comprehensive Onboarding: All new employees are required to review and formally acknowledge our Code of Conduct, which covers key ethical principles, including anti-corruption and whistleblowing.

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- Ongoing Training & Awareness: The Yearly Repetition Training, mandatory for all employees, reinforces the principles outlined in our Code of Conduct, ensuring continued awareness and compliance.
- Sanctions Policy: We maintain a documented Sanctions Policy, accessible to relevant stakeholders and integrated into our Quality Management System, outlining consequences for non-compliance.
- Expectations for Business Partners: Our Code of Conduct for Business Partners defines the ethical, responsible, and sustainable business practices we expect from all partners associated with Akind Group.

# Tables



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People

Tables

BEST PLACE TO WORK	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Employee engagement					
Overall engagement score	8.1	8.2	8.4	8.3	8.1
Benchmark	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.8	7.6
Relationship with manager					
Relationship with manager score	8.7	8.8	8.9	8.9	8.7
Benchmark	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.4	8.2
Deficilitian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.2
WELLNESS & WELLBEING	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Absenteeism					
Absenteeism (long and short term <sup>1</sup> )(%)	1.33	2.26	2.33	2.09	_
Share of absenteeism that is	67.2/32.8	57.4/42.6	58.3/41.7		_
short term/long term ¹ (%)	0112,0210	o,	33.3/		
DIVERSITY & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Gender identification division in					
managerial positions (Women %)					
Board	0	5	20	20	14
Top Management	33	50	50	56	43
Managing Directors	36	38	13	15	17
Management	47	45	42	40	41
Branch Managers	65	66	58	52	40
All managers	62	67	57	59	62
All employees	59	63	64	64	63

ETHNIC DIVERSITY	2024	2022	2020	2017	2015
Share of employees with foreign background <sup>2</sup>					
Swedish population (%)	27.4	26.9	25.5	24.1	22.1
Internal employees Akind Group Sweden (%)	15.9	15.1	12.9	10.8	9.8
Consultants Academic Work Sweden (%)	37.7	38.4	32.5	30.4	27
Broken down on job areas – consultants					
Customer Service	38.2	37.4			
Education	50.0	23.5			
Finance/Law/Purchase	38.0	33.8			
Hotel/Restaurant/Tourism	25.0	50.0			
Industry/Manufacturing	43.6	44.6			
IT	43.2	37.0			
Marketing/Information/Media	31.0	35.9			
Office/Administration/HR	35.6	37.6			
Sales	27.6	34.5			
Technology	35.9	43.6			
Warehouse/Logistics	43.0	40.7			
Other	28.0	39.3			
PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Pension contributions (%) <sup>3</sup>	9.7%	8.7%	8.0%	7.9%	7.5%
DISCRIMINATION	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Incidents of discrimination					
Reported incidents of discrimination	0	1	1	0	C

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> More than 15 days off work is defined as long term absenteeism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> SCB's definition of another cultural background than Swedish is; foreign born or Swedish born with two foreign-born parents.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Pension cost in relation to salary.

Tables

	Akind	Academic Work	Brights	Crowd Collective	Winona
Internal employees per company					
Number of full-time employees" <sup>1</sup>	101	675	35	127	46
Employee turnover (%)	28	36	68	24	17
Gender equality: Share of women/men in total (%)	59/41	65/35	74/26	28/72	35/65
Gender equality: Share of women/men in managerial positions (%)	77/33	65/35	73/27	38/62	50/50
Average age	38	32	35	36	35

COMMUNITY ENGAGMENT	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
1% Movement					
Total number of Akind employee sponsors <sup>2</sup>	87	115	147	137	175
Response Network: Educational sponsorships					
Number of children in the Kubala Girls program	465	610	610	610	611
Number of young women in skills training	10	10	15	15	21
Number of community members in skills training (village program)	3	10	20	13	10
Number of young women in tertiary training (3-5 year diploma)	15	9	8	14	5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Employees with permanent employment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Akind employees that choose to donate 1% of their net salary to Kubala Grirls Sponsorship program.

CLIENT AND CONSULTANT LOYALTY	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
NPS result client loyalty					
Academic Work	63	49	46	76	72
Crowd Collective	61	39	46	-	58
NPS result consultant loyalty Academic Work	56	48	52	55	47
CREATING JOBS AND BUILDING CAREERS	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Number of people we helped to new jobs through Academic Work	5,545	7,619	12,315	9,214	7,408
Number of people reskilled or upskilled through Brights	1,315	1,455	1,275	871	507

## Planet outcome

ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND EMISSIONS	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Total emissions per scope					
Total emissions Scope 1 (ton CO2e)	112	144	137	91	_
Total emissions Scope 2 (ton CO₂e)	158	185	219	117	_
Total emissions Scope 3 (ton CO₂e)	5,030	8,384	8,990	118.5 <sup>1</sup>	_
Total emission Scope 1, 2, 3 (ton CO₂e)	5,300	8,713	9,346²	327	-

In going through the SBTi target validation-process, and having our GHG calculations verified, we found some double accounting. Therefore, the emissions in this report for 2022 and 2023 have been corrected and will slightly differ from the Sustainability Report published in 2023.

### Planet outcome

BREAKDOWN OF SCOPE 1 & 2	2024		2023		2022	
	ton CO <sub>2</sub> e	%	ton CO <sub>2</sub> e	%	ton CO <sub>2</sub> e	%
Scope 1 total	112	42	144	44	137	39
Mobile combustion (company cars)	112	42	144	44	137	39
Scope 2 total	158	58	185	56	219	61
Electricity - market based	25	9	33	10	39	11
District heating	133	49	152	46	180	51
Total Scope 1 & 2	270	100	329	100	356	100
BREAKDOWN OF SCOPE 3	2024		2023		2022	i
	ton CO <sub>2</sub> e	%	ton CO <sub>2</sub> e	%	ton CO <sub>2</sub> e	%
Category 1: Purchased goods and services	4019	80	<b>4</b> 504	69	4859	54
Category 2: Capital goods	65	1	81	1	2886	32
Category 3: Fuel- and energy-related activities						
not included in scope 1 or scope 2	45	1	61	1	88	1
Category 4: Upstream transportation and distribution	4	0	5	0	8	0
Category 5: Waste generated in operations	86	2	160	2	132	1
Category 6: Business travel	540	11	1436	22	664	7
Category 7: Employee commuting	266	5	304	5	346	4
Category 13: Downstream Leased Assets	6	0	5	0	8	0
Total Scope 3	5,030	100	6,558	100	8,990	100

OPTIONAL GHG EMISSIONS (TON CO <sub>2</sub> e)	2024	2023	2022
Accomodation, business travel	46	32	48
Accomodation, event	19	38	33
Total CO <sub>2</sub> e optional GHG emissions	65	70	81

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLIER	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Number of new sustainable supplier assessments	140	49	67	122	112
Total number of sustainable supplier assessments	703	563	514	458	336
Share of total spend on all sustainable suppliers (%)	76	67	67	77	71

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Only includes: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions facitily, CO2 emissions travel (bus, train, air, hotel nights),

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions food (purchased goods, catering), and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions purchased material (marketing, office paper)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Rapid increase due to climate calculations done according to the GHG protocol

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Generated direct economic value					
Revenue in MEURO	339	398	412	331	319
EBITDA (%)	2.60	3.30	7.1	5.7	7.7
Revenue growth (%)	-15.10	-3.50	24.5	4.0	-15.7
CONTRIBUTION THROUGH TAX PAYMENTS	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Distributed economic value					
Corporate income tax in MEURO	3.7	2.3	5.9	3.3	4
Social security contribution in MEURO	43.7	51.9	52.3	43.7	44.4
ANTI-CORRUPTION	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Incidents of corruption	No incidents				

CHARITABLE DONATIONS	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
1% Movement (EURO)					
Yearly deposition for 1% Movement <sup>1</sup>	49,023	61,953	229,606	142,436	220,056
Yearly deposition from internal					
employees, 1% Movement²	48,705	65,272	55,574	60,075	67,293
Total depositions	97,728	127,225	285,180	202,512	287,349
Total social impact investment					
via 1% Movement (EURO)	225,687	260,968	317,348	385,169	176,414
CLIMATE INVESTMENTS (EURO)	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Payment to offset historic emissions <sup>3</sup>		87,135	101,971		
Payment to offset emissions	97,020	119,139	108,957	7,832	3
Average exchange rate SEK to EURO <sup>4</sup>	11.43217	11.4765	10.6317	10.1449	10.4867
Average exchange rate EURO to SEK <sup>4</sup>	0.0875	1.0794	1.0479	0.9674	0.9903

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 1% of yearly net profit is used for social impact investments.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Akind employees that choose to donate 1% of their net salary to Kubala Girls Sponsorship program.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Historic emissions from company-related activities, for the years 1998-2018, and 2020. In this calculation we use 2019 as a base year and number of employees as division key. Since our calculations were made with the data availble at the time we have also added 20% to cover these

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Annual average exchange rate from the Swedish Central Bank (Riksbanken).

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# GRI index

102-40 List of stakeholder groups

102-41 Collective bargaining agreements

102-44 Key topics and concerns raised

102-42 Identifying and selecting stakeholders

102-43 Approach to stakeholder engagement

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8

## GRI 102: General disclosures 2016

GRI STANDARDS 2016	PAGE REFERENCE	REMARKS	UN SDG	GRI STANDARDS 2016	PAGE REFERENCE	REMARKS	UN SDG
Organizational profile			8	Reporting practice			
102-1 The name of the organisation	4			102-45 Entities included in the			
102-2 Activities, brands, products and services	4			consolidated financial statements	4, 9, 50	All entities unless	
102-4 Location of operations	4					otherwise stated.	
102-5 Ownership and legal form	-						
102-6 Markets served	4			102-50 Reporting period	9		
102-7 Scale of the organisation, including				102-51 Date of most recent report	9		
number of employees, entities, sales, equity	4			102-52 Reporting cycle	9		
102-12 External initiatives	19-23, 32			102-53 Contact point for questions regarding report	10		
				102-54 Claims of reporting in accordance with GRI	9	This report is inspired by the GRI standards'	
						core option but has	
Strategy						not been certified by	
102-14 Statement from senior decision-maker	5, 10					an external body.	
102-15 Key impact risks and opportunities	43-45						
				102-55 GRI content index	51-53		
Ethics and integrity				102-56 External assurance	-		
102-16 Values, principles, standards,							
and norms of behavior	39-41	Process for					
		whistleblowing.					
Stakeholder engagement							

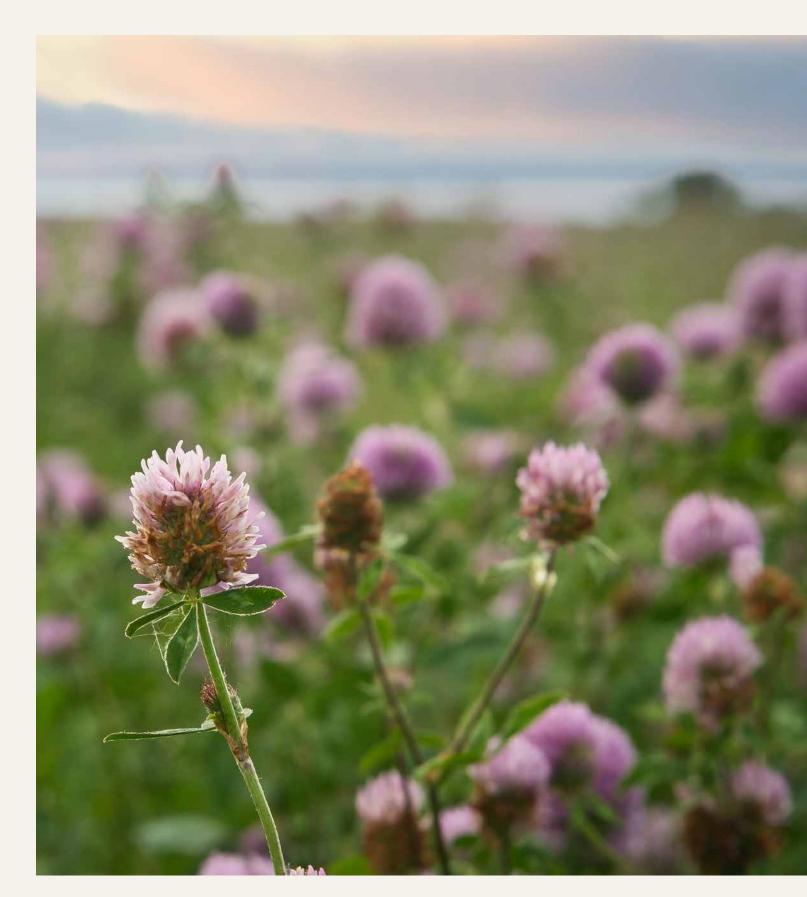
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# **GRI 200: Economic 2016**

GRI STANDARDS 2016	PAGE REFERENCE	REMARKS	UN SDG
GRI 201: Economic performance 2016 201-1 Direct economic value generated and distributed 201-3 Defined benefit plan obligations and other retirement plans	4, 37-38, 50 41, 47, 50		<b>8</b> 8 -
GRI 203: Indirect economic impacts 2016 203-2 Significant indirect economic impact	20-23, 32		<b>3, 5, 8, 13</b> 3, 8
GRI 205: Anti-corruption 2016 205-1 Operations assessed for risks related to corruption 205-3 Confirmed incidents of corruption and actions taken	39, 45, 50 50	No incidents.	

# GRI 300: Environmental 2016

GRI STANDARDS 2016	PAGE REFERENCE	REMARKS	UN SDG
GRI 103: Management approach			-
103-1 Explanation of the material topic and its boundary	31-35		
103-2 The management approach and its components	31-35		
103-3 Evaluation of the management approach	31, 33		
GRI 302: Energy 2016			8, 12, 13
302–1 Energy consumption within the organization	34, 49		8, 12, 13
302-3 Energy intensity	34, 49		8, 12, 13
302-4 Reduction of energy consumption	34, 49		8, 12, 13
GRI 305: Emissions 2016			3, 12, 13
305-1 Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions	34, 49	Commited to SBTi.	3, 12, 13
305-2 Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions	34, 49	Commited to SBTi.	3, 12, 13
305-3 Other indirect (Scope 3) GHG emissions	34, 49	Commited to SBTi.	3, 12, 13
305-5 Reduction of GHG emissions	33, 34, 49	Commited to SBTi.	3, 12, 13
GRI 308: Supplier Environmental Assessment 2016			
308-1 New suppliers that were screened using			
environmental criteria	49		-



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# GRI 400: Social 2016

GRI STANDARDS 2016	PAGE REFERENCE	REMARKS	UN SDG
GRI 401: Employment 2016			3, 5, 8
401-1 New employee hires and employee turnover	47-48		5, 8
GRI 403: Occupational health 2018			3, 8
403-10 Work-related ill health	47-48	In view of the nature of the business, Akind has elected to report only absenteeism.	3, 8
		to report only absenteersm.	
GRI 404: Training and education 2016			4, 5, 8
404-2 Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programs	14, 23, 28-29		8
GRI 405: Diversity and equal opportunity 2016			5, 8
405-1 Diversity of governance bodies and employees	17-19, 47-48		8
GRI 406: Non-discrimination 2016			5, 8
406-1 Incidents of discrimination and corrective actions taken	47	No incident.	5, 8



3. Good health and wellbeing



5. Gender equality



12. Responsible consumption and production



4. Quality education



8. Decent work and economic growth



13. Climate action

# Thank you for reading!

Read more about Akind at <u>akindgroup.com</u>