

Strategic Roadmap School of Business and Economics 2026-2028

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Welcome!

We are proud to present the Strategic Roadmap of Maastricht University School of Business and Economics (SBE) for the period 2026–2028.

This document is more than a policy framework. It is an invitation to discover who we are as a School, what drives us, and how we aim to contribute to a world that is changing rapidly and facing increasingly complex challenges. For that reason, we have chosen to present our strategy as a book: a story with a clear direction, but also with space to grow, adapt, and be written together, chapter by chapter as we move from 2026 to 2028.

At SBE, we embrace an open and connected academic community. We combine excellent research with problem-based education and a strong commitment to societal impact. Through collaboration and engagement, we turn learning and research into real-world solutions. Globally connected and locally rooted, our strategy builds on this foundation and on the belief that universities play a vital role in addressing the

complex societal challenges of our time. In the first chapters of this book, SBE's identity, vision, and mission are outlined, followed by the strategic focal areas that will guide our priorities in the years ahead. To support the realisation of this strategy, we have developed a toolkit. This toolkit is meant to strengthen the understanding of our strategy across a wide spectrum of internal and external stakeholders. For more information about our faculty and toolkit please visit our [faculty website](#).

We invite you to experience SBE as a School guided by a clear sense of purpose in education, research, and societal impact. This story is still being written, and we are glad to share it with you as we continue to shape the next chapters together.



Strategic Roadmap 2026-2028 Global Minds, Local Roots

In the pages that follow, we outline SBE's identity, vision, and mission — three elements that together define who we are, what we aspire to become, and how we translate that ambition into purposeful action.

SBE's identity, vision and mission

Our identity reflects the distinctive character and values that shape SBE today; our vision sets out the future we are striving toward; and our mission explains the role we choose to play in creating impact for our community. Together, they provide the foundation and direction for the strategy that follows.

SBE is an international School of Business and Economics with a broad scope, enabling the School to address complex problems in a comprehensive and holistic way. SBE's areas of expertise reside in economics, international business, management, public policy, governance and sustainability.

SBE delivers **research-driven education** through our distinctive **Problem-Based Learning** approach, serving learners from undergraduate to executive levels. We also conduct **high-quality fundamental** and **applied research** that advances knowledge and supports evidence-based decision-making. Our approach is challenge driven, innovative, collaborative, inclusive and grounded in SBE's globally engaged community. As an **open** and **connected** community, we are an outward-looking participant in the (inter)national knowledge society. We believe that through science and education we can play a leading role in shaping a **sustainable future**.

We work with, and learn from, engaged professionals who value **transdisciplinary collaboration**. Through both collaboration and co-creation, we contribute to society and address complex challenges. Integrative problem solving is central to our approach to societally relevant research and learning. Our graduates, equipped with strong analytical and problem-solving skills and state-of-the-art knowledge, go on to make **meaningful contributions to society**.

Education

At SBE, we provide high-quality problem-based education that equips students with the knowledge, skills and global perspective they need to navigate and positively impact an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

We continuously monitor and evaluate our education portfolio, not only to refine existing practices but also to actively experiment and pioneer in educational design and increasingly in the use of technology-enhanced learning approaches. This reflects our commitment to continuous innovation, personalised learning and improved student outcomes across all levels of education.

Research

Our mission statement 'Research without borders' guides our research. In line with this mission, SBE combines high-quality fundamental and applied research to advance both scientific knowledge and professional practice. SBE also actively drives new transdisciplinary research to tackle today's complex societal challenges.

Impact and engagement

We build regional and global partnerships that stem directly from our education and research activities and engage in co-creation with societal

and industry partners. Together, we identify challenges, share expertise and develop solutions that can be applied in practice. Through this joint effort, our knowledge, talent and networks contribute to measurable and meaningful impact within regional and global innovation ecosystems.

Mission

SBE combines a strong commitment to excellent research and problem-based education with a focus on our positive impact on society. Our aim is to generate ideas that advance scientific knowledge and practice, and to educate and train undergraduates, graduates and professionals to function effectively and responsibly in careers in academia, economics, international business, management, public policy, governance and sustainability. Through these objectives, SBE aims to add value to the society to which it belongs.

The Context Shaping SBE's Strategy

Higher education is undergoing profound transformation. Around the world, universities and business schools in particular are rethinking their purpose and models in response to societal shifts, technological disruption, and increasing global uncertainty. For SBE, this changing context brings both challenges and opportunities that are shaping our strategic direction.

Across Europe and the Netherlands, the pushback against internationalisation and growing geopolitical instability are reshaping global collaboration in research and education. These developments have created new complexities for institutions like SBE, which has long been rooted in international partnerships and an open, globally connected outlook. At the same time, these pressures highlight the importance of **strengthening local engagement and regional impact**, ensuring that SBE remains both globally relevant and locally embedded.

Values

International

We embrace a global outlook, bringing together diverse perspectives to address challenges that cross borders and shape our interconnected world.

Committed to Academic Excellence

We uphold the highest standards in research and education, fostering critical inquiry, evidence-based thinking and intellectual integrity.

Fostering Sustainable Development

We are dedicated to advancing sustainability through our teaching, research and partnerships, contributing to solutions that support a more resilient and equitable future.

Inclusive

We value diversity and ensure that all voices are heard, cultivating a learning and working environment where everyone feels respected, supported and able to contribute.

Connected

We actively collaborate across departments and faculties, and we engage with regional and global partners, integrating real-world challenges into our work to strengthen our collective impact.

Co-creative

We work collaboratively with students, researchers, organisations and communities to co-design knowledge, innovate together and generate meaningful societal impact.

The rise of **artificial intelligence and disruptive technologies** is transforming not only how we teach, learn and do research, but also what knowledge and skills are required for professionals and the future labour market. The rapid evolution of these technologies challenges traditional academic models and calls for an ongoing rethinking of our curricula, research focus and educational delivery. The “half-life” of skills continues to shrink, driving a growing need for **lifelong and flexible learning opportunities** that prepare students and professionals to navigate a dynamic world.

Meanwhile, **climate change and geopolitical developments** remain defining challenges of our time. As a School, we want to contribute to the transition towards a more sustainable and inclusive economy through our research, our teaching, and our own organisational practices. Responding to the interconnected issues of climate, technology, and social resilience requires interdisciplinary collaboration and partnerships that extend beyond academia.

SBE's ambitions rely on a **strong and healthy academic community**. Across the sector, increasing workload, administrative demands, and performance pressures affect the **wellbeing and engagement** of students and staff. For SBE, this calls for continued investment in an **inclusive and supportive work and learning environment**, where diverse talents can thrive and develop meaningful, future-proof careers.

In short, SBE's current strategy is shaped by a rapidly changing world: one marked by global developments, technological acceleration, and urgent societal challenges. These developments reinforce our commitment to **educating responsible leaders, advancing transformative research, and fostering impact at both global and local levels**. By adapting with purpose and building on our collective strengths, SBE aims to continue to play a key role in shaping the future.

Vision for 2028: Building on purpose

SBE's vision for 2028 remains the same as that of 2025: **As part of Maastricht University, the European University of the Netherlands, SBE contributes to a better world by addressing societal problems, by co-creating knowledge and by developing team players as leaders for the future.**

We are recognised as having a positive impact on the local, regional, national and global environment to which we belong.



SBE's focal areas 2026-2028

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To achieve our mission, SBE's strategy concentrates on four focal areas, again building on the School's previous strategy and existing strengths, then further refined based on external developments and discussions with the SBE community and stakeholders.

SBE's four focal areas

1 Organisation development

We safeguard the efficiency and effectiveness of our organisation in how we educate, conduct research and run our operations.

2 Digital and Disruptive Technologies

We aim to advance education, research and operations through the use of digital and disruptive technologies.

3 Global-Regional synergies

We are an international institution embedded in the region. Through our widely recognised international classroom and global partnerships, we ensure that our education and research incorporate the global interconnectedness that characterises economies and business worldwide.

4 Sustainable and

Regenerative Development

We commit to embedding sustainability principles into our curricula, research, operations and partnerships.

How the focal areas were chosen:
Building on strong foundations

These four focal areas were selected not only because they build on the foundations laid in our previous strategy, but also because they represent areas where meaningful progress is already underway and where SBE's existing strengths position us to achieve even greater impact.

1. Organisation development

For **Focal Area 1**, SBE's historically strong financial position—supported by a **culture of careful financial stewardship** at departmental, institute, cluster and leadership levels—provides a robust foundation for the future. We take this responsibility seriously, and by building on this solid base and the ongoing improvements in our internal processes, we are well positioned to continue strengthening our organisation in a sustainable and strategic way without losing sight of the well-being and engagement of our community.

2. Digital and Disruptive Technologies

For **Focal Area 2**, exploration of digital and disruptive technologies is already taking place across the organisation, through research projects, new assessment formats, and innovative educational methods, demonstrating strong potential for further development. SBE has long been a **pioneer in teaching methodology**; we were among the first to adopt Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and this spirit of innovation

continues to guide our educational approach. Our ongoing commitment towards conducting research on education through our Educational Research and Development department, and feeding those insights directly back into our programmes, sets us apart. In addition, **several departments and academics are experimenting with cutting-edge technologies** such as VR, service robots, advanced data analytics and modelling, machine learning and novel assessment approaches. There is still a long way to go, but our community is curious, engaged, and ready to explore what the next generation of learning could look like.

3. Global-Regional synergies

For **Focal Area 3**, SBE has a long-standing culture of being outward facing and values partnership as a core part of its identity. This is reflected in our mandatory exchange programme in the bachelor programmes, which has fostered **strong collaborations with more than 170 top institutions around the world**. It is also deeply embedded in how we conduct research: many of our academics, departments and institutes maintain **extensive networks across academia,**

industry, and public institutions, and these connections play a crucial role in shaping and enriching their research projects. In addition, SBE continues to strengthen its dynamic global community of over 35,000 alumni, building meaningful ties that benefit both the School and the broader ecosystem.

4. Sustainable and Regenerative Development

Finally, for **Focal Area 4**, SBE has built a strong and steadily growing body of research and expertise in **sustainability and economic resilience**. Over the past years, an increasing number of staff have been actively engaged in these topics, contributing to a vibrant and diverse research community and significantly strengthening our capacity in sustainability, regenerative development, and resilience-related research. These developments provide a powerful foundation on which we aim to build, further positioning SBE as a leader in addressing some of the most pressing global challenges.

Together, these starting points give us confidence that we can take each focal area further and unlock the School's full potential.



Strategic objectives and initiatives for 2026-2028

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Across each focal area, a first set of strategic objectives and initiatives were developed through the strategic dialogue process carried out in 2024–2025, in close co-creation with colleagues across SBE. Together, we reflected on past achievements and explored opportunities for improvement and innovation to guide the School’s strategy for 2026–2028.

Building on this input, the SBE Board conducted an initial prioritisation exercise to determine which objectives and initiatives are considered essential for the School’s continuity, which ones will drive future innovation, and which require further exploration or preconditions before moving forward. An overview of the defined focal areas and their corresponding initiatives is provided on the next page.

An Open Call for Engagement

With this strategic direction in place, the next phase is also about working together to further develop and implement these initiatives. We therefore invite staff to participate or even take a leading role in the strategic initiatives outlined in this plan. For each initiative a clear process will be communicated through which participation will be invited as the further development and implementation depends on **collaboration across disciplines**. Most of the initiatives will progress through teams that bring together a mix of expertise from across the School. These teams will be asked to develop robust business

cases and practical proposals. Colleagues are encouraged to step forward, express interest, and contribute where their strengths, insights or ambitions align.

It is important to note that these initiatives will move at different speeds. Some projects have a strong foundation already in place and can be advanced relatively quickly. Others are more complex, will require deeper exploration, and may extend beyond the timeframe of this current strategic roadmap. In all cases, staff expertise and practical understanding of how SBE operates are essential to turning these initiatives into meaningful, workable outcomes.

Moving forward

Looking ahead, SBE will organise a **co-creation summit in 2027** with internal and external stakeholders. This will be a key moment to take stock of progress, reflect on emerging developments, and collectively explore what the next phase of SBE’s future should look like.

3.1 List of strategic objectives and initiatives for 2026-2028 per focal area

3.1.1. Focal area: Organisation development

We safeguard the efficiency and effectiveness of our organisation in how we educate, conduct research and run our operations.

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Support and deliver high quality research

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Develop the Research Institute to take a central role in driving and monitoring SBE's research quality

Develop the Graduate School to take a central role in driving and monitoring the quality of SBE's PhD programs

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Education: maintain a relevant, balanced and globally competitive portfolio of (degree) programs

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Empower EdIn, UMIO/MSM and UNU-MERIT to maintain high quality curricula (innovative, international, aligned with employers' demands)

BSc International Business revision

MSc portfolio review and revision

Evaluation and potential change of pre-master programs change of pre-master programs

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Education: facilitate a strong and coherent Lifelong Development portfolio.

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Develop an organizational and governance model that facilitates collaboration between MSM and UMIO and enables them to function as one integrated unit in SBE's matrix structure

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Increase SBE's ability to connect to external stakeholders and alumni under an integrated shared strategic vision

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Build a strong SBE external relations office to unite alumni relations and corporate partnerships (also FFW ALP 2024)

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Maintain financial resilience and stress resistance

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Maintain a solid financial base and robust allocation system

Implement feasible, viable and desirable cost savings proposals from strategic dialogue groups ('GO' projects)

Keep worst case scenario's up to date

Build a strong SBE external relations office to unite alumni relations and corporate partnerships

Explore the feasibility, viability and desirability of further developing privately funded BSc and pre-experience MSc education



3.1.2. Focal area: **Digital and disruptive technologies**

We aim to advance education, research and operations through the responsible use of digital and disruptive technologies.

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Enable digital technologies as a core pillar in education

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Futurizing societies: implementing and testing digital learning technologies through Spark pilot

Maintain/enhance/evaluate learning portfolio software

Make sure that digital infrastructure is in sync with strategic objectives

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Leverage AI to advance research excellence

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Establish a leading AI, Digital Experience and Robots hub at SBE (for education & research)

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Enhance AI literacy of students and staff

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Digital literacy training: generative AI training for staff

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Facilitate and stimulate transdisciplinary and cross-departmental research on digital & disruptive technologies

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Small Scale Research grants

3.1.3. Focal area: **Global-regional synergies**

We are an international institution embedded in the region. Through our widely recognised international classroom and global partnerships, we ensure that our education and research incorporate the global interconnectedness that characterises economies and business worldwide.

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Region: Strengthen SBE's contribution to the Brightlands campuses

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Brightlands Venlo campus:

- Develop MSc Circular Economy with differentiating value proposition, strengthen current supply chain education (FFW ALP 2024) and sustainability projects with regional partners
- Contribute to Sustainable Nutrition/ Climate Health research theme

Brightlands Heerlen campus:

- Development Dutch BSc Bestuur, Recht en Samenleving
- Further explore ideas FFW ALP (2024)

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Facilitate and stimulate transdisciplinary and cross-departmental research on global-regional synergies

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Small Scale Research grants

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Europe: Strengthen the European perspective in our education and research

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Participation in Studio Europe

3.1.4. Focal area: **Sustainable and regenerative development**

We commit to embedding sustainability principles into our curricula, research, operations and partnerships.

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Collaborate and co-create in research to increase impact

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Take part in interfaculty research communities on sustainability (e.g. sustainable nutrition, ERCE) that incorporate external partners

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Connect and develop existing decentralised research on sustainability

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

MSI as the SBE hub to accelerate interdepartmental sustainability research in business and economics

Strategic objectives 2026–2028

Facilitate and stimulate transdisciplinary and cross-departmental research on sustainable and regenerative development

Strategic initiatives 2026–2028

Small Scale Research grants



An evolving strategy, written together

This book does not conclude our strategy, it opens it. The SBE Strategic Roadmap 2026–2028 is intentionally designed as a living document, as the environment in which we operate continues to evolve. This calls for both clear direction and adaptability. As new insights emerge and society develops, we will periodically review and refine our strategy and we will continue to add chapters to the book as the implementation of the various strategic initiatives progresses

In the coming years, we'll continue engaging in important conversations with our community and partners. Through reflection and co-creation, we will refine our focus and enhance our impact. In 2027, a co-creation summit with internal and external stakeholders will provide an important moment to reflect together and explore the next phase of SBE's future.

For those who wish to learn more about SBE, our programmes, research, and engagement with society, we warmly invite you to visit our website.

