



# CARU IMPACT REPORT 2023

# DOING BUSINESS AS A FORCE FOR GOOD

Where responsibility and opportunity meet

**Being a truly global company, we see both climate and markets are changing across the globe. We hear the societal worries and rising environmental demands from clients, legislators and (future) employees. And we care.**

As container traders, we may not be the most obvious company to have frontrunner ambitions on both social and environmental sustainability. It's correct that our sector has many nautical miles to go, taking better care of people and the planet.

Which is why we, as CARU, see an opportunity that's at least as big as our responsibility. To use our products and services, experience, skills, resources and partnerships to do better.

In the past years, we have taken first actions to get insight into our environmental impact and reduce it. Last year, we widened our horizon: not only navigating through our environmental impact, but also considering the social impact we (can) have.

To step up our game, we have embraced the B Corp framework. We have used it as a mirror, yardstick and source of inspiration. To CARU, it provides guidance on and structure in everything we can do to boost our sustainability performance.

Maybe you have  
heard of the B Corp  
movement before, maybe  
you haven't. A B Corporation  
is a for-profit company that  
meets rigorous social and  
environmental standards.

In other words,  
B Corps use business as  
a force for good.

This year, we're all about taking meaningful action. Making social and ecological sustainability part of our boardroom discussions, company targets, coffee machine conversations, and personal growth program. We're tweaking our processes and practices, creating policies, launching initiatives and continuing to discover what sustainability means to us - as a team.

In this Responsibility Report, we reflect on the past year and we sharpened our goals for the future. We happily take you through our results and ambitions on all five impact areas of the B Corp framework: Governance, Workers, Community, Environment, and Customers.

We hope to inform, inspire and involve you in our journey to becoming a force for good!

**Thirza Belder,  
Sustainability Officer**







# IN THIS RESPONSIBILITY REPORT

# Governance

We have defined a new mission and vision that give direction to our business activities, now and in the future.

**Our baseline B Corp score**

49,1 | 80



**Stijn de Vries**  
was appointed as  
CARU's new **CEO**



- ▶ The whole team made an incredible effort to reach great results on all levels, including sustainability.



- ▶ We've taken massive steps in defining our value proposition and positioning ourselves.



- ▶ **Interview Stijn:** "I believe it's important to make the transition from being very CO2-minded to a broader outlook and action plan on sustainability."



- ▶ We're working on setting measurable targets for relevant social and environmental topics.

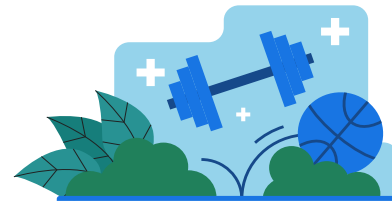


# Workers

At CARU, we put our people first.

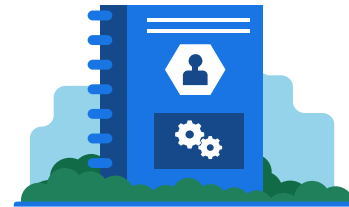


One of our priorities in 2023 was to boost personal contact and promote connection at the office.



▶ Employees were given the opportunity to receive a sports membership and participate in personal training sessions after work.

Everyone is unique, being in a different phase of life and having a one-of-a-kind career path.



▶ We've launched an improved onboarding process.

Proactive approach to personal growth.



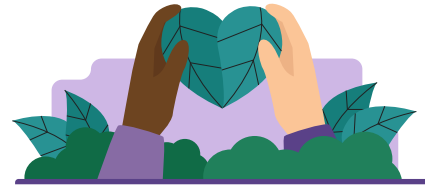
▶ We improved our parental leave and grievance policies.

We're working on an Employee Handbook that includes our company processes, people-related policies and benefits.



# Community

Our business is a people business.



- Investing in relationships has always been a priority for CARU.



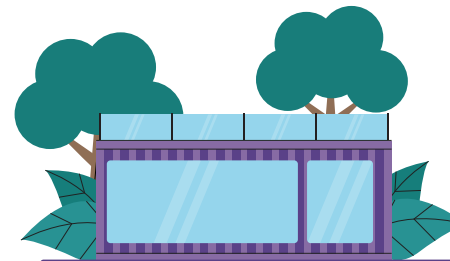
- Through donations, we want to support (local) organizations close to our heart.



- Using business as a force for good - that's what we're working on at CARU Containers.



- We've co-created a vision on CARU's philanthropy with our colleagues.

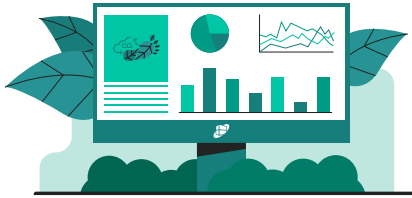


- Promote sustainability throughout our communities.



# Environment

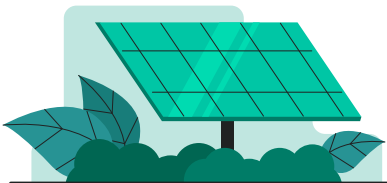
## → Chapter Environment



- Introduction of CO2 analyse by Coolset.



- All employees get a bike in NL office.



- Solarpanels on our depot.



- Battery for electricity storage

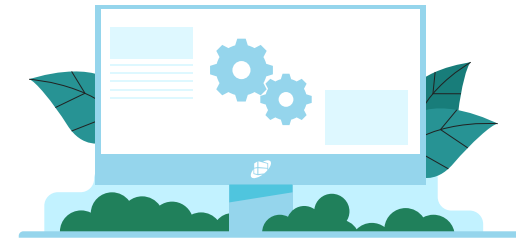


- Own Caru bee hive on our depot.



# Customers

2023 was the year in which we made great improvements in how we service our customers.



- ▶ Unlocking countless possibilities to develop more value for and together with customers and suppliers. Make use of data and create a platform for future growth.



- ▶ With >NEXT, we will be able to service our customers even more than we are used to do.



- ▶ 2023, we have launched a completely new Depot Management system, based on LowCode technology.





# CHAPTER 1 GOVERNANCE

## **Driving positive change from within**

Creating value for others has always been part of our company's DNA. Last year we took this commitment to the next level when we embedded sustainability into our long-term vision and decided to become a Certified B Corporation. Now, our focus is on establishing a company governance structure that drives positive change.

Both what we have done and what we will do to further develop our governance, is what you find in this chapter.

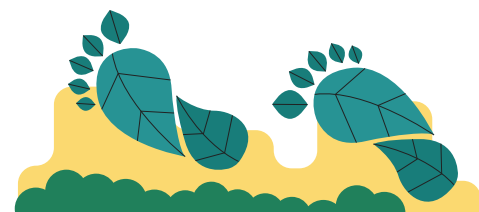
# Governance

## WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

### About Governance

**At the foundation of the B Corp Certification - and any company committed to driving positive change - is governance: how a company is structured and managed in order to attain a certain higher goal. Topics like accountability, transparency, fairness and risk management together make up a company's governance.**

**In the context of sustainability, good governance has proven to be a driving force for positive impact. Companies that embed sustainability in their strategy and actively promote sustainable decision-making from top to bottom, ensure their commitment to creating a sustainable future is reflected in their processes, practices, and policies.**



This is included:

### Purpose-driven mission

To what extent your company contributes to solving a social or ecological problem and how this is translated into your mission statement, is an important element of governance. After all, what you strive for tomorrow, determines what you work on today.

### Sustainability targets

Defining relevant social and ecological objectives - based on your mission statement and your current impact on people and the planet - is an important next step. Not only do these sustainability targets drive progress, but they also build awareness and responsibility within teams.

### Company transparency

Having insight into the positive and negative impact of your business activities and sharing this with internal and external stakeholders, helps to demonstrate your commitment to sustainability. It also builds credibility among employees, suppliers and customers.



# Governance



Our results of 2023

## A NEW COURSE AND CAPTAIN

2023 was a big year for CARU. The desire to sharpen our role in creating a sustainable future and put a clear dot on the horizon was put into practice. The whole team made an incredible effort to reach great results on all levels, including sustainability. Also, there was a change at the top of our management, as Stijn de Vries succeeded CARU's founder Rob Tromp as the CEO. Below we tell you more about it.



## A future-proof vision

We sell empty containers - that's what puts us in business. While empty movements are quite common, we also know they are wasteful. Since we're in a position to do something about this and see it as our responsibility to ensure every container has a purpose, we have defined a new mission and vision that give direction to our business activities, now and in the future.

## A new CEO to lead the way

Over the past 1.5 years, CARU's management team - which consists of Carlo, Lennart and Stijn - ran CARU's day-to-day operations, together with other colleagues of course. In doing so, founder and part-time CEO Rob Tromp kept an eye on the bigger picture. In 2023, they decided the time was right for a change and Stijn was appointed as CARU's new CEO.

Now, Stijn and Rob closely collaborate on setting out the strategic direction for CARU, with Stijn being the linking pin to the company. This provides clarity on the distribution of roles within the MT, which benefits the entire organization.

## Gaining insight into our current impact

Having embedded sustainability into our vision is nice, but what actually is our impact on people and the planet? In order to gain more insight into our current social and environmental impact, we completed an impact analysis using the B Corp framework in 2023.

With a baseline score of 49.1 - as compared to the 80 points you minimally need to attain to become certified - we have become aware of both the good things in place and our opportunities to improve. Unlocking these on the basis of a renowned international framework, is something we're excited about.

# Governance



Meet our renewed vision

## **NO EMPTY CONTAINER**

Never waste a good container. We keep movements efficient and as local as possible. We try to keep containers full and/or always with a purpose to extend their lifetime value: to use, re-use, repair, refurbish and re-use again.

None of us want to move air or keep a container empty, while it can be used for so many purposes. So

our operation, our services and solutions are tailored around this vision. With a worldwide network of trade partners and end-users, we can resell containers for a new purpose or help to move them efficiently and full all over the world. With technology and data, we optimize supply and demand and forecast efficient movements and costs. A win-win for all of us.





# Governance



Personal note

## STIJN ABOUT HIS NEW ROLE AS CEO



### **Congrats on your new role Stijn! What's the main difference from your previous role as CARU's CFO?**

As the CEO, one of my main responsibilities is having a long-term focus. Of course the entire management and leadership team is working on future developments, but I feel that it's my job to really put time and effort into understanding what they (could) mean to our business, clients and team. And develop a vision that provides guidance to our colleagues on complex topics such as sustainability or our people strategy, thereby creating a story that resonates with all of CARU's team.

### **What are you proud of, looking back on 2023?**

We've taken massive steps in defining our value proposition and positioning ourselves. For years, we have tried to grasp what we as CARU are all about. What do we stand for, why is that so important to us, what core values unite us? In 2023 we found and formulated answers to these questions - key to our future success, I believe.

### **What else?**

The professionalizing of our people processes and policy, which we started in 2023 and we continue to work on throughout this year. Also, we took a few

hurdles but then built a solid base for our new IT platform, which will benefit CARU for the decade(s) to come.

And whilst the container business is changing, our team managed to achieve great results in 2023. So overall, CARU's performance, and especially how everyone is taking ownership for making our company thrive, is something I'm very proud of.

### **Talking about sustainability, what lies ahead for CARU?**

I believe it's important to make the transition from being very CO2-minded to a broader outlook and action plan on sustainability. How do we take care of each other, and of the environment? How can CARU collaborate with suppliers to optimize value for all our stakeholders? How can we embed sustainability in both our strategic and day-to-day decision-making?

This means that we still work on reducing our carbon footprint, but also start conversations within our team and with supply chain partners on both social and ecological issues. I'm looking forward to finding answers to these questions, together with the team and our partners. And act accordingly.

# Governance



Key ambitions

## **BROADENING OUR SUSTAINABILITY HORIZON**

**We've proudly embedded sustainability into our long-term vision, but truthfully, this is just the beginning. From further aligning our governance structure with our mission, to building sustainability awareness and promoting ethical behavior among our employees and partners - we plan to take some bold steps this year. Here's a few of our big ambitions:**

### **Spread the word**

Now we have established our no empty container-vision, it's time to share it and make it resonate with our employees, partners and customers. That's why we'll keep on talking about the vision internally and increasingly communicate about it externally. So that, together, we can take the necessary steps to live up to it.

### **Commit to long-term value creation**

Using our business as a force for good means that we not only create value for shareholders, but consider the interests of all stakeholders when making decisions, including employees, customers, suppliers, communities and the environment. This is also called stakeholder governance.

An effective way to ensure we act in the interest of all stakeholders, is by including our mission into our legal DNA. That's why, we'll update our articles of incorporation in a way that protects our mission and ensures that CARU stays legally accountable to stakeholder governance and our higher purpose.



### **Set and share sustainability targets**

In the past, our sustainability ambitions were dominated by our CO2-footprint. Having learned more about our CO2-emissions (and continuing to do so), we now need to broaden our view of sustainability. And incorporate this approach in how we go around our supply chain, HR, and the exploration of new business models.

To make this practical and get into action-mode, we're working on setting measurable targets for relevant social and environmental topics. The next step is to gradually make them part of the formal job responsibilities of the management team, managers and other employees of CARU.



An illustration of a port scene. On the left, a white cargo ship is docked, with several stacks of yellow and blue shipping containers on its deck. Two large blue cranes are positioned behind the ship. To the right, a blue semi-truck is parked on a road, carrying a blue shipping container with the 'CARU CONTAINERS' logo. The background features a city skyline with blue buildings and green trees under a light blue sky with a few clouds.

# CHAPTER 2 WORKERS

## Helping our team grow

At CARU, we put our people first. With a personal approach, we have always helped our colleagues to grow, in both their private and professional lives. But now we're evolving as a business too, we feel the need to professionalize our people department.

That's why we started to formalize and standardize various HR-related processes last year. And we'll continue to do so in 2024. How? That's what you'll find out in this chapter.



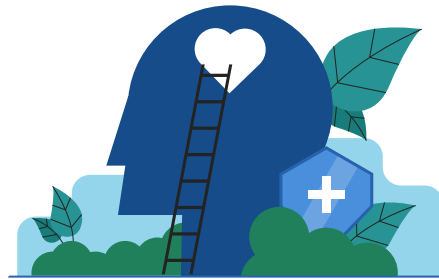
# Workers

## WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

### About Workers

**At the foundation of the B Corp Certification - and any company committed to driving positive change - is governance: how a company is structured and managed in order to attain a certain higher goal. Topics like accountability, transparency, fairness and risk management together make up a company's governance.**

**In the context of sustainability, good governance has proven to be a driving force for positive impact. Companies that embed sustainability in their strategy and actively promote sustainable decision-making from top to bottom, ensure their commitment to creating a sustainable future is reflected in their processes, practices, and policies.**



This is included:

### Well-being initiatives

Investing in the mental and physical health of your employees by creating a well-being program is not only the right thing to do, but also comes with great benefits. It can positively contribute to your team's productivity, reduce stress and prevent burn-outs, and increase overall happiness and satisfaction.

### Sustainability targets

People join a company to learn something and develop themselves as a person and a professional. Having a personal growth program in place, including various training opportunities for your team, and stimulating internal promotions, makes employees feel more satisfied and engaged in their work.

### Company transparency

Worker engagement refers to the emotional connection an employee has with their job. Implementing ways to engage and empower your team members, in the form of feedback mechanisms, open book management or letting employees contribute to strategic decisions, helps to build this relationship

# Workers



Our results of 2023

## REGROUPING AS A TEAM

The last couple of years have not been business as usual. Even though we performed well as a container company, as a team we needed to recover from the impacts of COVID. That's why we used 2023 to regroup. We did so by getting together more often again, refining our company values and paying some extra attention to the well-being of our colleagues.

## Connecting post-COVID

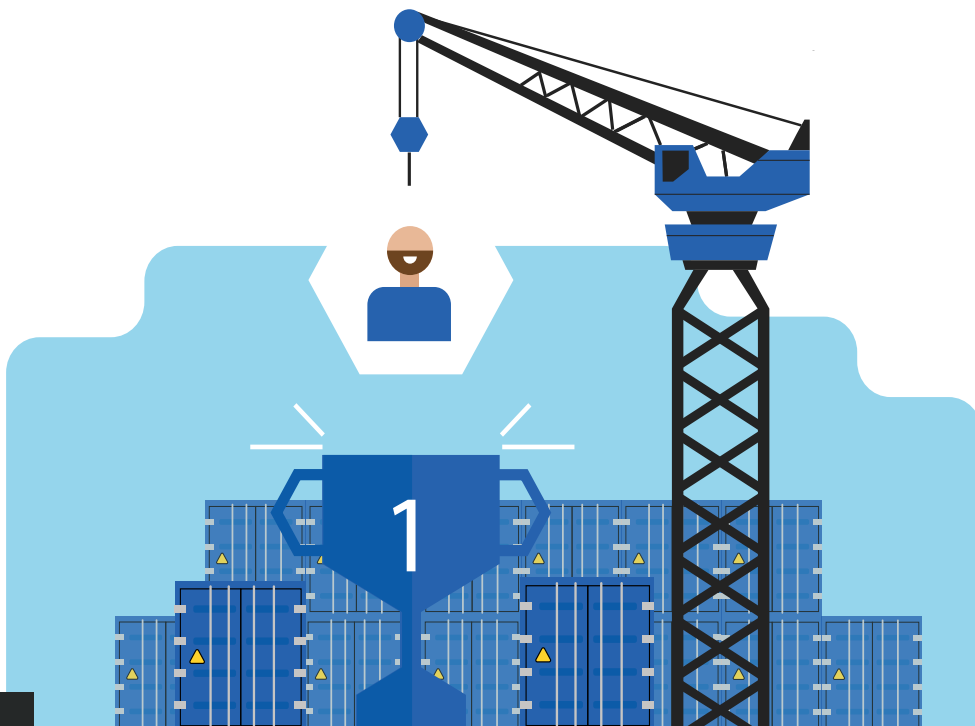
Like many other companies, reconnecting as a team after a global pandemic has been a challenge. That's why one of our priorities in 2023 was to boost personal contact and promote connection at the office. We did so by encouraging colleagues to come to the office more often, hosting mandatory lunch talks on Thursday in which colleagues share stories and updates, and organizing fun internal events to get together.

## Clear core values

The new vision of CARU brought clarity to the team about where we want to go as a company. We're very happy with that. In addition, we put our core values on paper. These values show what is important to us and characterize how we collaborate - not only as a group of employees, but also in partnerships with suppliers and customers. Among others, these include taking care, taking ownership and being curious.

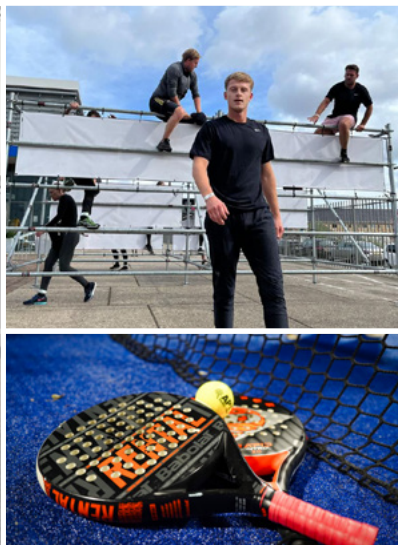
## Initiatives to promote physical well-being

We want our people to feel well. In 2023 we have launched several initiatives that promote physical well-being within our team. For instance, employees were given the opportunity to receive a sports membership and participate in personal training sessions after work. Also, we offered an electric bike to the entire team, facilitating a healthier and more sustainable mode of transportation in their work and private life.





# Workers





# Workers

Personal note

## SUZANNE ABOUT CARU'S PEOPLE- APPROACH



**Want to get to know CARU's people and culture? Then have a coffee with Suzanne - the driving force behind the many initiatives that help our team thrive. And so we did.**

**How would you describe CARU's culture - in a nutshell?**

Open, driven, caring. Our team cares about our company. And when things get tough, whether at work or at home, we're there for each other. Staying connected, as a global team, can be challenging though. Especially during and right after the pandemic, we noticed how important it is to get our people together. We made this a priority in 2023. Regularly bringing the team together in the office, exchanging updates, and organizing events. During these gatherings, you really feel CARU's culture coming to life.

**Taking good care of your team as an employer - what does that look like at CARU?**

We think it is important to look at the development of an individual. Everyone is unique, being in a different phase of life and having a one-of-a-kind career path. Which comes with varying desires, needs and challenges. CARU goes to great lengths to provide customized support to each individual.

**Could you share a personal highlight of 2023?**

I became a mother in 2021. And when I came back

to work, I felt supported in shaping my role within CARU in such a way that I could combine parenthood and my job. This was and still is very valuable to me.

**And for this year, where do your ambitions lie?**

The people at CARU have a strong focus on doing their job and everyone works very hard to get the best results. Which is great! Yet, in order to stay a strong-performing team, we want to create some more room for celebrating successes together and having fun. That too is important for the happiness of our team and to stay connected with the CARU community.

Also, we see that our team benefits from processes that are a bit more structured and formalized. For example in regards to personal and professional development. We'd like for all our team members to thrive as a person and within their role. But what does this mean in practice; what do we expect from our colleagues and what can they expect from CARU?

For important topics like personal development or well-being, we don't just want to launch a one-off initiative - we'd rather carefully develop and implement a process that we can build on for years to come.

# Workers

Key ambitions

## EXECUTING OUR PEOPLE STRATEGY

**At CARU, a lot is possible. In the past, we relied on our intuition when helping our people grow. But since we have big plans for the future, we know we have to formalize processes and policies for the team and give these a long-lasting character.**

### Proactive approach to personal growth

We talk to our employees about performance and growth opportunities each year. Yet giving our review process a formal character and creating a personal growth plan for everyone, has been on our wishlist. This year we therefore implemented an improved evaluation form to talk about career aspirations and introduced a yearly personal development budget. Next, we'll explore ways to help employees better identify growth needs and opportunities.

### Welcoming new employees

To welcome new employees in a more efficient and professional way, we've launched an improved onboarding process. This includes a pre-boarding, in which contracts are processed automatically and the right preparations are taken, a buddy system to give new employees good guidance during their first weeks, and a document package that explains what we do and how things work at CARU.

### Broader leave and flexibility options

We decided to extend the amount of paid days off to 28, as a way to promote well-being, boost work-life balance and lift overall work happiness within



our team. Also, we improved our parental leave and grievance policies - helping our employees through ups and downs - and we'll implement a sabbatical policy this year. This enables our team to take a longer break every once in a while to go on an adventure and/or spend time with their families.

### Our Employee Handbook as the single source of truth

As the cherry on the cake, we're working on an Employee Handbook that includes our company processes, people-related policies and benefits, and explains them to employees in a fun and engaging way. Our Employee Handbook brings clarity to our colleagues on what we expect from them and vice versa, but also creates consistency across our company. A dynamic piece of work that will be valuable for CARU for years to come!





# CHAPTER 3 COMMUNITY

## A thriving society and supply chain

Our business is a people business. We thrive because of the relationships we have with suppliers, depots and other partners. Investing in these relationships has always been a priority for CARU. We currently do so by attending exhibitions, organizing events and optimizing our connections with depots worldwide. Besides, we believe it's important to support the community around us by making donations to foundations close to our heart.



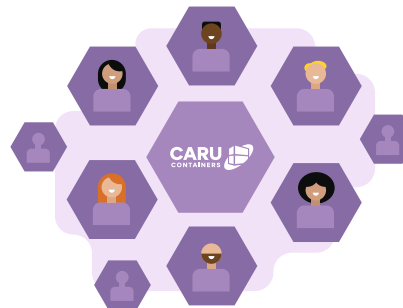
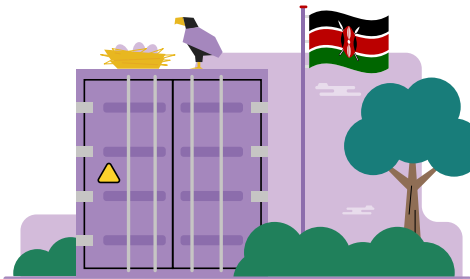
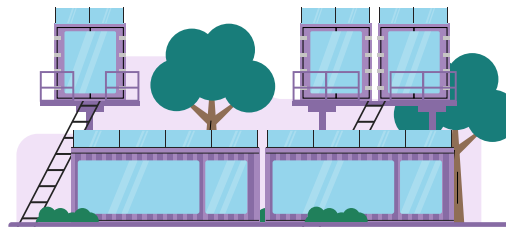
# Community

## WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

About community

When building a successful business, you're highly dependent on others. You source products, services or raw materials from other companies and operate in a certain location, potentially hiring or engaging with people in the area. How you interact with and benefit those communities, is what's covered within the Community-section of the B Corp framework.

As a company, there are multiple ways to positively contribute to the communities you're in. The economic impact of your business and how you collaborate with your supply chain is an important part. But paying attention to diversity, equity and inclusion within your team and giving back to society in the form of volunteering or donations, is also taken into account.



This is included:

### Supply chain management

Every company is (an integral) part of a supply chain. As such, being aware of where and how you spend your money and integrating social and environmental considerations into supplier partnerships, is of great importance in creating a sustainable way of doing business.

### Civic engagement

Actively participating in communities and society at large, is what civic engagement is about. It covers volunteering, donations and advocacy for social or environmental change. Through these activities, companies can demonstrate their commitment to do good and make an impact outside their company walls. outside their company walls.

### Diversity, equity & inclusion

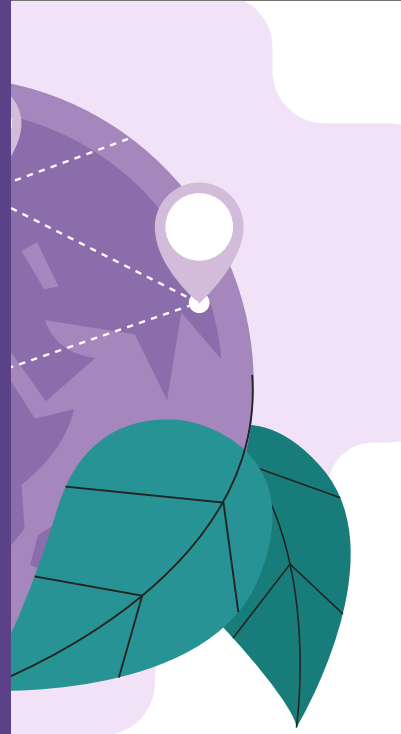
In an increasingly diverse and globalized world, it's important that companies create and cultivate a diverse and inclusive working environment. Measuring diversity within your team, building awareness on these topics, doing a pay equity analysis and creating a more inclusive recruitment process, are examples of what companies can do.



Our results of 2023

## GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Even though our journey makes us extra aware of the potential impact we can have on the community, we also learned that we're already on the right path. Our collaboration with foundations, structural donations to nonprofits and our efforts in organizing valuable events for partners and suppliers, are initiatives we're proud of. Let's tell you more about them.



## Showing youngsters our world

In collaboration with non-profit organization JINC, we host yearly Bliksemstages, in which youngsters from primary and secondary schools are welcomed into the world of CARU. The goal? To give kids a glimpse of our business and show them what roles exist within a company. In 2023, we explored ways to expand our efforts. We could give IT-trainings to kids, help them to make a CV or host a day with our CEO. Plenty of ideas for 2023 and beyond!

## Having an environmental impact in Kenya

Through donations, we want to support (local) organizations close to our heart. In 2023, we therefore donated to the non-profit organization Kenya Birds of Prey, who are committed to protecting and restoring the population of birds of prey in Kenya - an animal that's of great importance for the local biodiversity.

Through this contribution we helped make a significant difference for the nest discovery and protection of birds of prey in Kenya. Also, we donated to A Rocha Kenya, supporting them in their nature conservation projects so that one of Africa's most threatened habitats was saved from deforestation.

## A vision for our philanthropy

Throughout the years, CARU has given back to society through occasional donations and volunteering. But in the future, we want to give our volunteering efforts a more structural character and encourage all our employees to participate. That's why, in 2023, we've co-created a vision on CARU's philanthropy with our colleagues - deciding how we want to make an impact through our volunteering and donations.

## Reconnecting at Intermodal Europe

The container business is a global business, with people and companies working together from different parts of the world. Through events, like the Intermodal Europe, people in the container industry connect and get together again offline. Intermodal Europe in 2023 was the first big event after COVID. We grasped the opportunity to organize a party and celebrate with our partners and suppliers. A big highlight of 2023 if you ask us!



## About our philanthropy **CARU CARES**

**Using business as a force for good - that's what we're working on at CARU Containers. This means that we not only create value for our colleagues, customers and the planet, but also positively contribute to strengthening (local) communities and improving the well-being and happiness of people outside of our office walls.**

**We cannot and don't want to do this alone. That's why we created a volunteering program that facilitates and encourages the team to give back to society through volunteering initiatives. These are the two focus areas of CARU's volunteering program that were developed in co-creation with colleagues:**

### **1: Zeemaintainer**

CARU would not exist without the global water system. It is a driver of the container industry - there's no doubt about that. So, it's time to do something in return; to actively contribute to creating a cleaner water environment for all.

Because every year, millions of kilos of large and small plastics still end up in our ocean via the river streams. And this leads to a loss of biodiversity, pressure on our economy and enormous health risks for humans. That has to change.

Through volunteer initiatives and donations, we aim to reduce the (floating) garbage dump and preserve life in and around ports and waters. This direction of CARU cares is linked to Sustainable Development Goal number 14: Life in the Water and number 15: Life on Land.

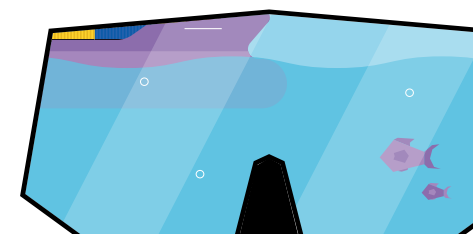


### **2: Go out and play**

Not feeling well or struggling with your mental or physical health is no fun for anyone. But because of social pressure, inflation, political unrest and the digital age in which our children are growing up - to name a few examples - this unfortunately is the case for many people (young and old). That worries us.

So we've been thinking: what contributes to feeling good about yourself? To play! To do fun things. And have fun. Playing is healthy, not only for children, but also for adults. It's good for your head and your body, and at the same time helps many people to deal with stress and the serious grown-up world. A win-win, right?

Through volunteering initiatives and donations, we aim to improve the physical and mental health of young and older people in and around our offices. So that they can perform better (in work and private life) and get more out of life. This direction of CARU cares is linked to Sustainable Development Goal number 3: Good Health and Well-being.

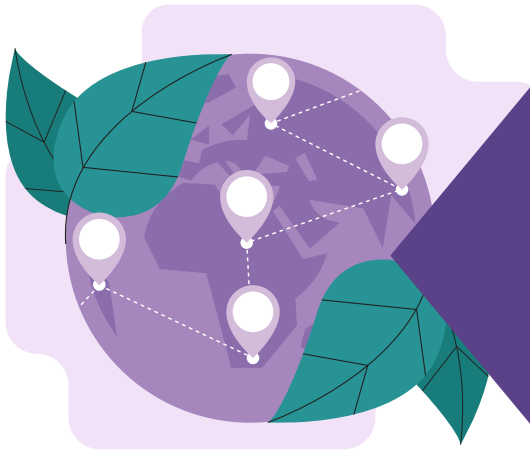




# Community

Personal note

## BUILDING A BETTER SUPPLY CHAIN WITH CLC



**Think big and act efficiently - that's what Laurens Serné from Connected Load Carrier (CLC) strives for. CARU is happily piloting with CLC, as efficiency is key to achieving a sustainable supply chain.**

**Laurens, how does CLC help to boost sustainability performance within CARU's supply chain?**

With our IoT-as-a-Service proposition, we can create more visibility of and insights in their supply chain. By gathering data of CARU's assets, they get access to a new dataset which leads to new insights, like: where are the containers located and for how long, the movements or rotation speed they make and what the conditions are.

Having these insights, CARU can make considerate decisions on the optimal amount of containers needed to serve their clients and what routes are

most efficient. Which has a positive effect on the environmental footprint of both CARU and its clients. Having access to a real-time inventory management dashboard, creates better operational excellence and reduces losses. Therefore, containers don't need to be replaced with new ones before end of life has been reached. Many wins for the supply chain and the planet!

**What do you see happening within the supply chain, which you find promising?**

We see "better environmental performance" becoming a more important reason - next to cost reductions - for companies to map their assets and analyze their movements. They are increasingly keen to measure their CO2 emissions and work on reduction plans. For which collaboration with supply chain partners is key - especially when sharing big ambitions such as achieving circularity!





# Community

Mission

## THE NET ZERO MISSION OF THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY

We as CARU see it as our duty to deliver our part of the Net Zero mission of the entire shipping industry.

### Never waste a good container

With our global network, IT and data analysis, we are able to help the asset owners (shipping and lease companies) to reduce their overall footprint.

Containers that are nominated for sale by the asset owners should have minimum empty movements. Trading the container on the very spot an asset owner wants it to divest, creates a win win win situation. It reduces costs by not transporting empty containers and therefore it also reduces CO2 in the

supply chain immensely, and it maximizes value of the container itself.

By means of a new IT platform, integrating systems in the value chain, and make use of data, we can optimize this process even further than we do already.

It is the very core of our existence in the long run to help reduce this global footprint.



An illustration of a sustainable landscape. In the foreground, a yellow CARU CONTAINERS truck is on the left, and a white CARU truck is on the right, both on a grey road. The background features green hills with several solar panels, wind turbines, and trees. The sky is blue with white clouds.

# CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENT

## Stepping up our environmental game

Over the last years, we've become increasingly aware of our environmental impact, as well as the need to reduce it. Whilst we're glad that we've widened our definition of sustainability and work continuously to improve our overall impact on people and the planet, measuring and reducing our CO2 footprint - in particular - has been an educational journey. In this chapter, we explain what we've learned so far and how we're stepping up our game at present.



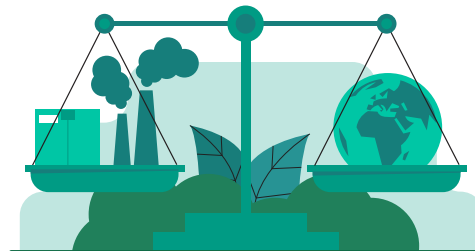
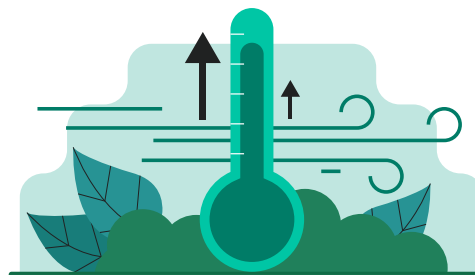
# Environment

## WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

### About Environment

A lot of people tend to think sustainability equals green - that it's about recycling, driving an EV and reducing CO2 emissions. Partially true! Whilst there's more to sustainability than protecting the (natural) environment, our planet definitely is an extremely important stakeholder. So reducing your environmental impact and going green(er) matters.

As a company, there are multiple ways to improve your environmental performance. Often, it starts with gaining insight into for example your energy and water usage, waste streams, your product's life cycle, movements of people and products, and the company footprint. Then, raising awareness, setting and reporting on measurable goals and taking action is key.



This is included:

## Environmental management

For companies, managing and improving your environmental performance can take many shapes. What facilities do you have or lease? To what extent do you encourage good environmental stewardship in your team's home offices? Do your products have a credible environmental certification? Is there an EMS in place, including clear goals?

## Air & Climate

As the serious effects of GHG emissions increasingly have the attention of companies, policy makers and individuals, the need for a solid reduction plan increases. For many companies, this starts with calculating their emissions (scope 1, 2 and 3) - for which data on e.g. energy usage, transportation modes, and kilometers traveled is required.

## Land & Life

In our current reality, the business activities of most companies negatively affect our natural ecosystems - on which we're extremely dependent for both living and doing business. For companies, it's thus important to make responsible decisions regarding packaging, waste, use of chemicals. And to consider their impact on biodiversity.

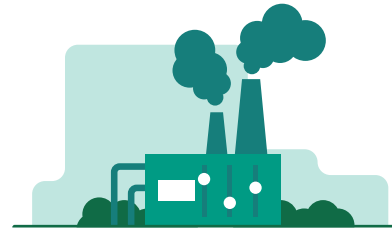
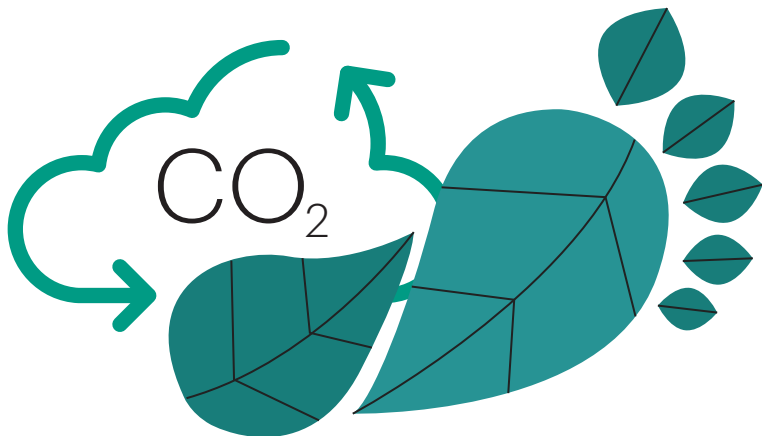
# Environment

Greenhouse Gas Protocol

## HOW WE MEASURE OUR CO2 FOOTPRINT

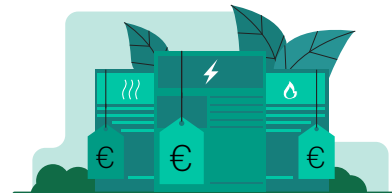
When measuring one's CO2 footprint, companies often make use of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. This is a third party framework that helps companies to gain insight into their emissions and its origins. Specifically, the GHG Protocol differentiates between direct emissions, caused by a company's own operations, and indirect emissions, caused by a company's supply chain.

**This gives rise to three scopes of emissions:**



### Scope 1

emissions are direct emissions that stem from sources owned or controlled by the company itself. These include the emissions created by company-owned facilities - like factories or office buildings - and vehicles.



### Scope 2

emissions are indirect emissions that are generated from the purchasing of electricity, steam and heating. These emissions are created at another facility, but the consuming party is still responsible for the generated emissions.



### Scope 3

emissions are indirect emissions that are caused by sources not directly owned or controlled by the company, but necessary to deliver the company's products or services. These include the emissions from purchased goods or services, transportation and distribution, outsourced activities, and business traveling or commuting. Usually, this is by far the biggest category of GHG emissions.

# Environment



## OUR CO2 JOURNEY SO FAR

**It's no secret that the container industry is a big emitter of greenhouse gasses. We can't nor want to hide from the fact that, as CARU Containers, we have a significant environmental impact. Minimizing our negative impact is a big challenge, but something we take very seriously.**


Feeling responsible and committed to making a positive change, we measured our carbon footprint for the first time in 2019, meaning to create a baseline measurement we can use to manage and improve our environmental impact. Since dealing with data and numbers is something we're very used to at CARU Containers, we decided to build our own CO2 dashboard and measured our CO2 footprint, combining our own data with verified emissions factors. The result of this approach can be seen in our precious impact reports.

In 2023, CARU decided that making a good effort doesn't make us experts in carbon footprinting. As we were increasing and professionalizing our

sustainability efforts, we desired a third party verified baseline, giving us more certainty on having a correct picture of our environmental footprint. We thus decided to collaborate with an expert consultancy. Our goal? To create a credible baseline, which insight enables us to A) make effective reduction decisions and B) allows us to both monitor and report on our environmental footprint in the upcoming years.

Through this new partnership, a different approach was applied: calculating our carbon footprint based on financial transactions that took place during 2023. Also, we gained access to another carbon database with **emission factors**.

This resulted in a much different, much higher carbon footprint than we had calculated ourselves. Lesson learnt: sometimes it's best to stay in your lane! We're glad to have a more realistic picture now, on the basis whereof we can create our reduction plan.



Emission whats? An emissions factor is a valid estimate for the amount of greenhouse gasses released in the atmosphere by a particular activity, enabling companies to measure their CO2-footprint."





# Environment

Key ambitions

## BUILDING AND REALIZING PLANS

We would say we are doers. Our team consists of pragmatists that are driven to get things done. However, taking effective action (often) requires a solid plan. As Confucius apparently said: “a man who does not plan long ahead will find trouble at his door.”

### Comprehensive reduction & compensation plan

Having gained renewed insight into our CO<sub>2</sub>-footprint, we want to fully focus on reduction. Based on the data we now have, we will thus work on creating a solid reduction plan which CARU can execute over the next couple of years.

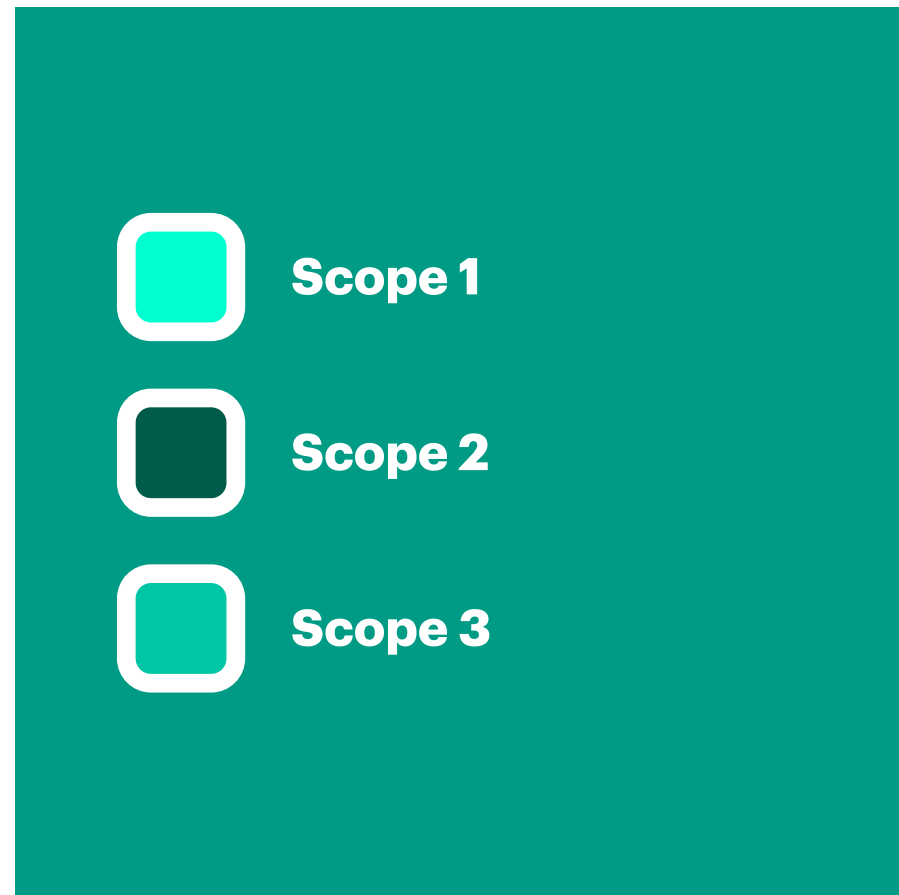
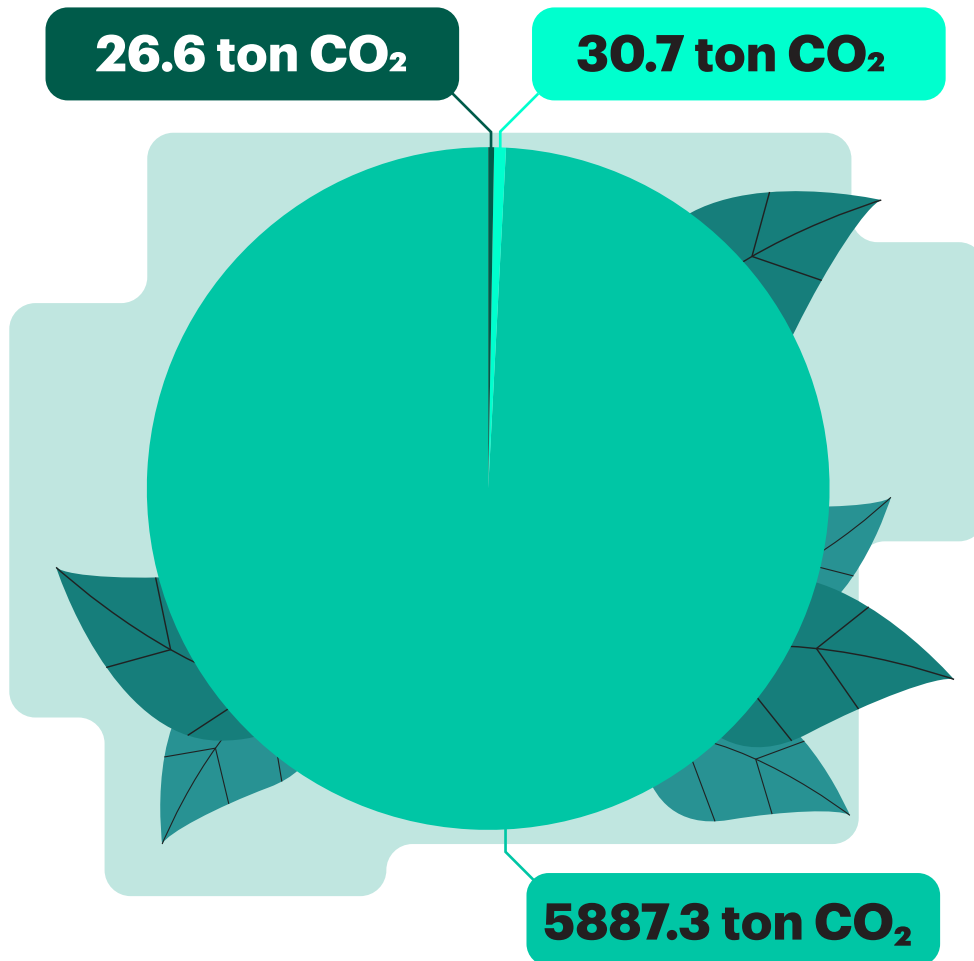
We expect that living up to our empty container vision and intensifying collaboration on sustainability with our supply chain partners will play a key role in achieving our ambitions of being climate neutral before 2030.

Whilst leading, reduction won't be sufficient. That's why in 2023 we will also dive into credible, effective ways of CO<sub>2</sub> compensation.

### A CO<sub>2</sub> neutral office

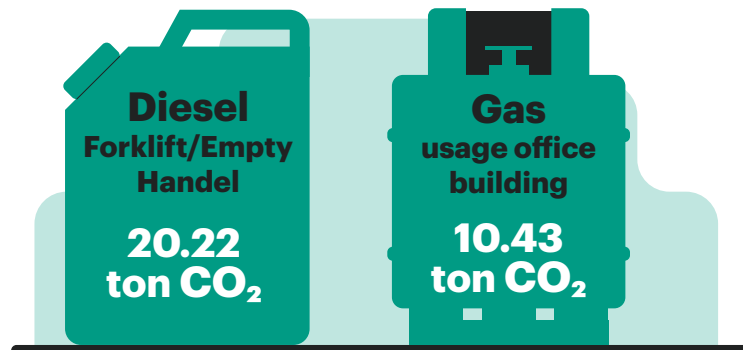
CARU envisions a sustainable future. And in that picture, our home base is a sustainable office. We strive to work with sustainable partners as much as possible, who too highly value and apply sustainable practices. In our new sustainable office, gas is a thing of the past. We use solar panels, we monitor our water usage and if possible re-use water. The office should be a pleasant place for everyone to come to, contributing to a positive atmosphere and the well-being of our colleagues



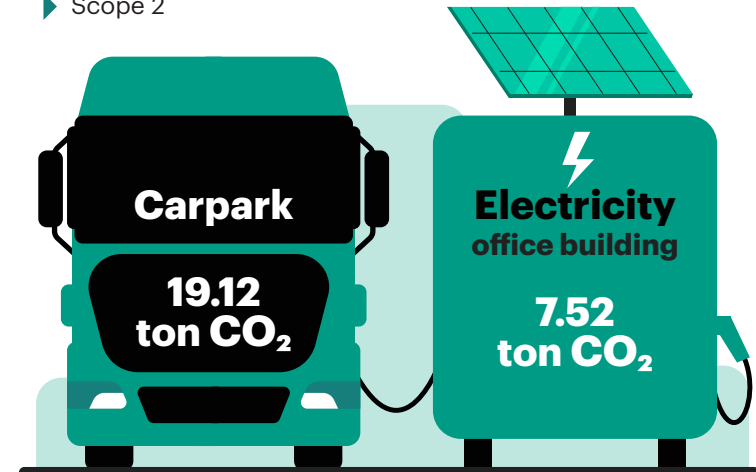


# Environment

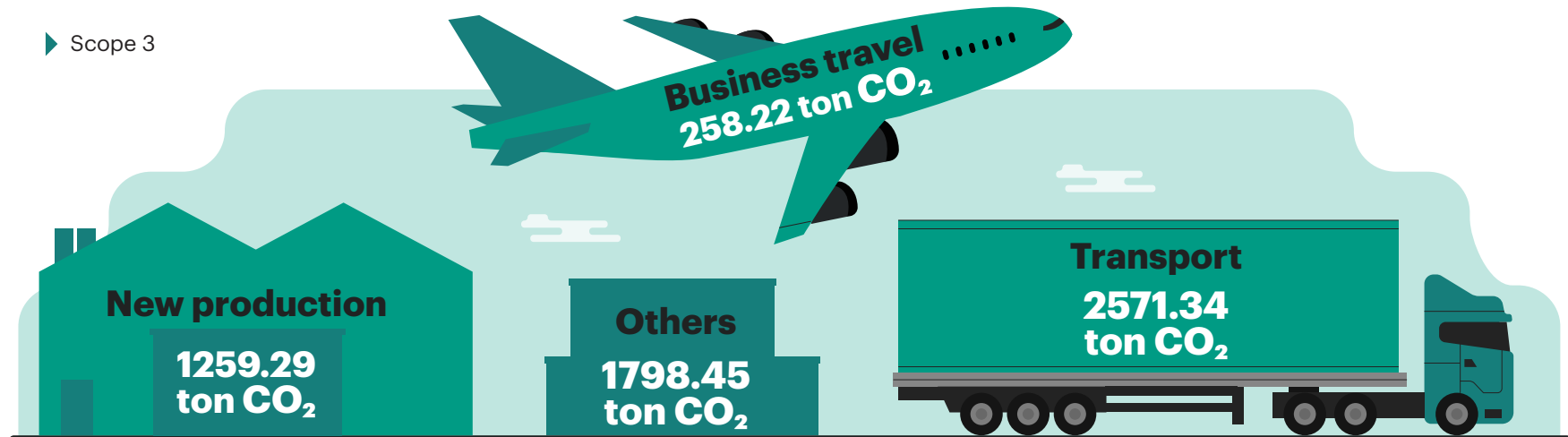
## ► Scope 1



## ► Scope 2



## ► Scope 3





An illustration of a harbor scene. On the left, a white ship is docked at a pier, with several stacks of yellow and blue containers on its deck. In the background, a city skyline with blue buildings is visible under a light blue sky with a few clouds. On the right, a woman with red hair and a man with black hair, both wearing blue shirts and pants, are shaking hands. The man is holding a blue briefcase. A white document with lines of text is floating in the air above them.

# CHAPTER 5 CUSTOMERS

## **More value for our customers**

CARU Containers would be nowhere without its customers. We do the things we do with a customer-first mindset. And now that we're evolving as a business, standardization and professionalization are key. Last year, we therefore took some big steps when we started developing a new customized IT-system that makes many of our customer-related processes easier and better. What that entails and how it helps us progress, is what you'll read in this chapter.

# Customers

## WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

### About Customers

**Whilst companies have multiple important stakeholders, one group very much front-of-mind is of course the customer. Without customers, no business. And without a value-creating product or service, no customers. The various ways in which you create (maximum) value for your customers, are considered in the Customers impact area of the B Corp framework.**

**As part of this impact area, companies are challenged to (re)consider how they assure great quality of their products or services. But also, how they handle data security and privacy of their customers. Whether and how customers are involved in the improvement of the company's offering - e.g. through feedback channels or satisfaction surveys - is included too.**



This is included:

### Quality assurance

In order to continuously deliver high-quality solutions that create (long-term) value for customers, companies can turn to credible third-party standards, methodologies and certifications. One can think of ISO, Lean Six Sigma or industry-specific accreditations. Such frameworks can serve as inspiration, guidance, and acknowledgement.

### Customer feedback

Having insight into how your customers truly think and feel about your company and your offering is highly valuable. In order to gain insight, companies must create channels and a process to collect feedback. Where some ask for a quick rating after every purchase, others conduct in-depth interviews to listen to their customers.

### Data privacy and security management

How a company handles its customer data and safeguards their privacy is key, as data hacks and leakage pose great risks to both parties. Companies can therefore consider training their employees on handling customer data with care, create policy around data privacy, and frequently put their systems' security to the test.

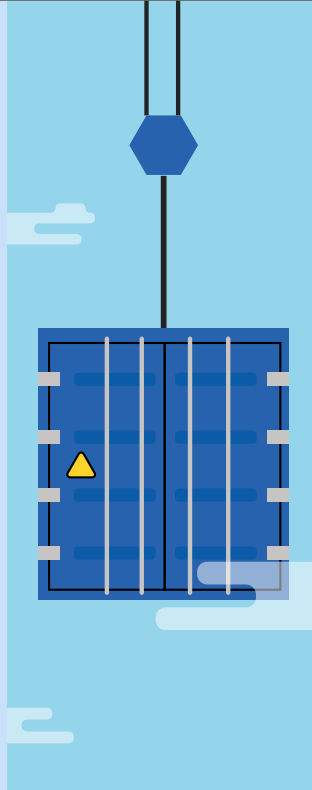


# C

Our results of 2023

## **BRINGING CUSTOMER SERVICE TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

2023 was the year in which we made great improvements in how we service our customers. A lot of time and effort went into developing a future-proof, state-of-the-art system - called >NEXT - that enables and facilitates remote working among our employees, improves data security and provides self-service to our clients. Below we tell you more about it. Tromp as the CEO.



## **Making remote working safer and easier**

Our new enterprise resource planning-system (ERP) runs in the cloud. This means that we can provide access to different sorts of data to our employees at all times, regardless of one's location. This helps specific employees - like Accountmanagers who are traveling much - to have quicker insight into important client information and use this to provide better service. Also, it gives everyone in the team more freedom in regards to their working location.

## **Enabling constant innovation**

We are shaping >NEXT ourselves. Because, on the one hand, there was no solution in the market that fitted our needs. And on the other hand, this gives us flexibility and the opportunity to improve and innovate constantly. When we have an idea or want to add a new feature, we can quickly build it, set up a prototype and see if it has value for our customers. This freedom will help us to keep playing into our customers' evolving needs.

## **Giving our customers more power**

Our business is a people-business. At times, it's important for both our customers and our team to talk face-to-face. There are things, however, which customers want to be able to arrange by themselves. In the past, this has not always been possible.

With >NEXT, we can now provide self-service to our customers, by introducing portals that customers can use to see open and previous orders, invoices and depot notifications, or request a CSC certificate. This not only makes their lives easier, but also enables us to focus on what we're good at: making buying and leasing containers a pleasure.

## **Depot management software**

As part of our technological advancements of 2023, we've also launched a new management software at our depots. Controlling incoming and outgoing containers and managing their placement on our depots is of course something that should happen with care. This software, built in only three months, runs on an iPad. Which allows our people to for instance use the camera to scan a container ID, thereby minimizing the chance of errors.



# Customers

Personal note

## HERBERT ABOUT IT-DEVELOPMENTS AT CARU



### **Three questions to Herbert Lieftink, our Head of IT who runs both software trials and marathons.**

#### **Herbert, what role does sustainability play within your domain?**

Sustainability - in its most literal meaning - is at the very heart of all projects we start within IT. What we roll out must be valuable to our business for a long period of time. You don't implement new software for a few months - people need a bit of time to get accustomed to it. And then they should be able to trust the system to support them in their job for years to come.

Speaking of trust: at CARU, we build relationships on trust and personal connection. That makes our relationships with clients, suppliers, partners and our colleagues both genuine and durable. Which is crucial to the sustainability of our company. The people we work with, know that we keep our promise and that CARU's team goes to great lengths to help them out.

#### **How has CARU grown in doing business as a force for good throughout 2023?**

Questions on our social and ecological impact are way more front-of-mind now, than in previous years. For me personally, but also noticeably across our

company. We used to not even think about flying - now we experiment with flight (CO2 emissions) budgets.

We deliberately start discussions on what's the right thing to do, which I also see as my responsibility as part of CARU's leadership team. And now, I even do so with my friends. I make changes in my own consumption behavior, when searching for a new pair of pants for example. Because it feels right. And well, once your eyes have been opened, you can't close them anymore.

#### **With those eyes being open; what direction do you see CARU heading into?**

The way I see it, burying our heads in the sand, whether as a company, professional, or individual, is no longer an option. With increasingly demanding legislation approaching, we cannot and - more importantly - do not want to seek excuses on why not to improve our social and ecological impact.

You now have an opportunity to stay ahead of legislation and make sustainable business practices a genuine part of your brand, your values, your story. I have no doubt that companies in general, and CARU in specific, will reap the benefits of doing so. And that those benefits will trickle down to our clients.

# Customers

Key ambitions

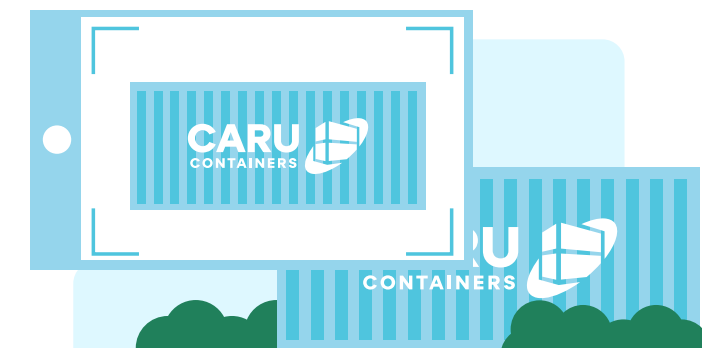
## HEADING FOR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

**Last year, we put the dot on the horizon in regards to how we want to service our customers. And with the development of >NEXT, we have a solid foundation to head for operational excellence.**

### Implementing >NEXT across the globe

Now >NEXT has been developed, it's time to embed it into our daily operations. This year we've hosted a series of training sessions for all employees to explain what >NEXT is, what its features are and how employees can use it, starting with our offices in Sweden and Germany.

For some, this new development won't change much. But for the ones who are directly involved in purchasing and selling containers, it has a large impact on their daily job. In ensuring a successful and sustainable implementation this year, we are mindful of this. Also, we have to pay extra attention to onboard employees who are a little less tech-savvy.



### Customer Relationship Management-tool

At the moment, CARU's sales team helps customers in ways they consider to be the best, based on their experience and expertise. But now that our business is evolving, we feel the need to structure these processes, too. That's why we'll develop a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool that facilitates our sales team in providing good customer service, but also standardizes how we want to assist our customers through different phases of the customer life cycle.

### Collecting customer feedback structurally

In line with the new CRS tool that'll be developed this year, we aim to implement a structural process for collecting customer feedback and measuring customer satisfaction. Currently, feedback is being collected spontaneously by our sales team. Standardizing this process, however, will enable us to keep our finger on the pulse continuously, staying up-to-date about our customers' needs and improving our service with good follow-ups and new solutions.

