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DRIVING CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2023

ABOUT THIS REPORT

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

Group-GTS

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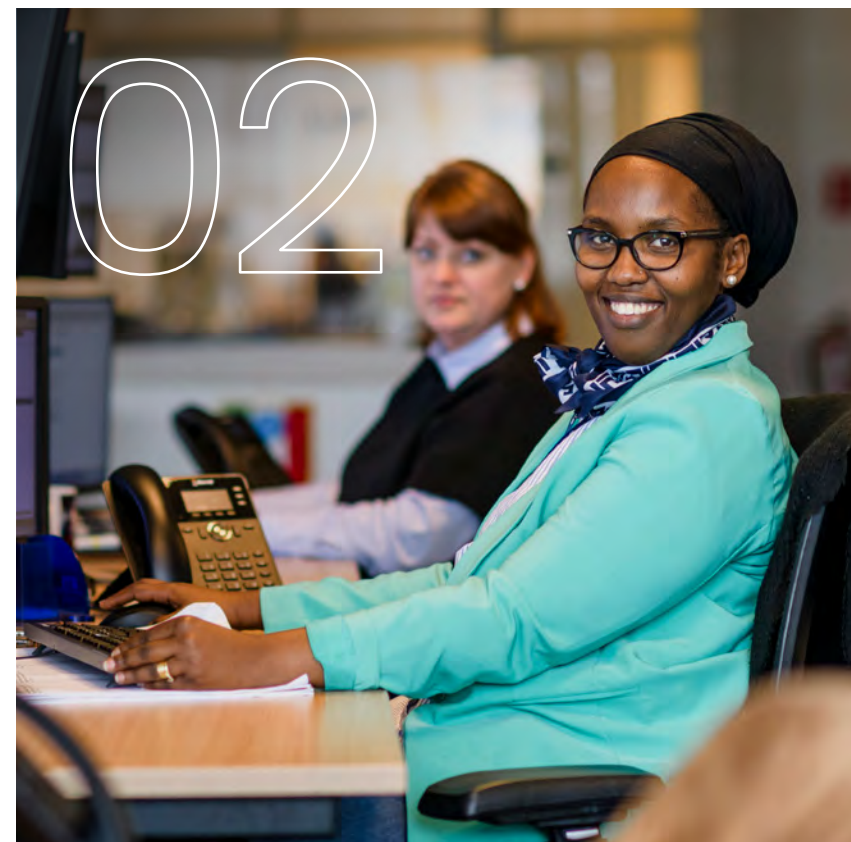
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01 FORE- WORD

EVERY CHALLENGE IS AN OPPORTUNITY



Ben Geybels
CEO

Roel Smets
COO

Group-GTS is a transport and logistics company that focuses on European mainland transportation. This makes us a vital link in the supply chain of many companies. Therefore, it is important that we work together with our partners to drive change, toward a more sustainable future.

In 2023, we celebrated our 40th birthday. This makes it as opportune a time as any to look back at the journey we have taken so far as a company, while looking ahead to future decades. We seized this occasion to produce this, our first, sustainability report. **CEO Ben Geybels** and **COO Roel Smets** explain our strategy, and how we wish to accomplish the ambitions laid out in it.

“
**We are a vital link
in the supply chain
of many companies”**

Why is it important to pay more attention to sustainability?

Ben Geybels: “It is imperative that the global temperature increase is limited as much as possible. In order to do this, global greenhouse gas (GHG) levels need to drastically decrease. Part of this challenge is reducing the emissions attributed to transportation. We and our clients are aware of this, and are searching for green alternatives.”

“An additional driver is the European Green Deal, the EU program to become the first climate-neutral continent worldwide by 2050. Key to this is the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), a directive that requires all large companies to disclose information on their ESG strategy. This, in turn, pushes larger European companies to transform their business models.”

“Lastly, we need to shift toward a sustainable business model in order to continue to grow as a company at the same rate as we have done over the past decade. Group-GTS is a family-owned business, and one day in the future I will want to pass it down to the next generation. We believe that non-sustainable businesses have no future in the climate-neutral economy of tomorrow. This means we have to make the right choices now, so as to avoid jeopardizing the future of our children.”

What does being sustainable mean to you?

Ben Geybels: “First of all, our motto is that we build our future by respecting the past. We have an immense respect for our own history, and that of everyone that has made their mark upon the world. In particular, we often find inspiration in sporting legends: their courage, perseverance, and ability to push boundaries resonate with our values.”

“Secondly, working on the ‘P’ of Profit also means working on the ‘P’ of Planet. New solutions have to be both ecologically and economically viable. As the margins in the transport sector are relatively small, we don’t have unlimited funds for R&D and trial runs. Group-GTS is also not a major global player, meaning we have little influence over which new technologies will take over the market. So, our approach is to analyze upcoming technologies, evaluate the pros and cons, and implement them step-by-step when the time is right.”

Roel Smets: “Diversity and inclusion is also an important topic to us. We employ people of more than ten nationalities, and it is crucial that they feel like they are a part of our family. Although our company has grown a lot in the last few years, the family atmosphere is still there. Our efforts have paid off: in a recent anonymous employee survey carried out by CLB Group, we received high scores for job satisfaction, job security, and belief in the future of the company.”

How is sustainability being integrated in the company?

Ben Geybels: “We focus on three main pillars: ‘On our way to carbon neutrality’, ‘We transport happiness: people make the difference’ and ‘Empowering sustainable partnerships’. We have also allocated goals to each pillar. Together, these pillars and goals form our sustainability strategy. This strategy is embodied by all, but in particular by our new Business Unit, Solutions & Sustainability, established in 2022. This Business Unit works as a ‘shared service’ for all. We see it as a knowledge center where sustainable solutions are tested and trialed in cooperation with the other units.”

“
**At Group-GTS,
we build our future
by respecting the past”**

Ben Geybels
CEO





“In line with our strategy, we set up a number of pilot projects. A few examples: with regard to the pillar ‘On our way to carbon neutrality’, we are investigating alternative fuels and modal shift alternatives. For our pillar on ‘Empowering sustainable partnerships’ we have begun to forge partnerships with clients, suppliers, and even competitors to develop sustainable solutions. We also participate in ESG rating audits, such as EcoVadis.”

Roel Smets: “We don’t impose a top-down strategy. Team leaders from different Business Units are given ownership of the goals. They report to the management and to each other on the progress toward these goals at the end of the reporting year. We give our people the freedom to come up with creative and feasible solutions to achieve targets. If there is an issue, we are,

“
We cannot make the green transition happen alone: we will only drive change by working together with others”

Roel Smets
COO

of course, there to help. As a result, our employees know they can have a tangible impact on the company’s future.”

What is the biggest challenge with regard to sustainability?

Roel Smets: “Nobody knows what the future holds. Are batteries the Holy Grail for trucks? When will those batteries have a long enough range? Are there other solutions? At the moment, we are still in limbo. We are also merely one of the many links in the supply chain, and thus we cannot make the green transition happen by ourselves. That is why the third pillar of our strategy is important, namely ‘Empowering sustainable partnerships’ with everyone in the supply chain, both upstream and downstream. Because we will only drive change by working together with others.”

Ben Geybels: “We also need to change the mindset of our customers. They are not always willing to pay more for greener transportation. Their utmost priority is a timely delivery of their load. For us, this sustainability journey offers a chance to prove to our clients that we have the experience, the willingness, and the agility to offer them the best possible solutions. Ultimately, we don’t see sustainability merely as a challenge, but also as an opportunity. Just as Niki Lauda, the Formula 1 driver, said: ‘I’ve been through a lot, and I realize the future can’t be controlled. I’m not worried. You can always learn to overcome difficulties.’”

“
I’ve been through a lot and
I realize the future can’t be
controlled. I’m not worried.
You can always learn to
overcome difficulties.”

NIKI LAUDA



GROUP-GTS'S TOP SPORT MENTALITY!

At Group-GTS, we don't see sustainability merely as a challenge, but also as an opportunity. Just like Niki Lauda!

We understand that unforeseen challenges may arise along the way, and we embrace the idea that the future is unpredictable. We view sustainability not just as a goal to achieve, but rather as a journey marked by continuous improvement and innovation. We prioritize flexibility and agility, recognizing that our strategy must evolve in response to changing circumstances and emerging sustainability trends.

Just like Lauda, we cultivate a culture of perseverance and proactive problem-solving, ensuring that we remain steadfast in our commitment to environmental and social responsibility despite the uncertainties that lie ahead.

**OUR
ORGANIZATION**





WHO ARE WE?

In the 1950s we started as a one-man business: Ben Geybels' grandfather bought one truck to transport potatoes and coal. In 1983, GTS NV was born, focusing on container transport across the whole of Europe. It is the 40th anniversary of this event that we celebrated in 2023. Today, we have become an internationally respected logistics partner. Ben Geybels is the third generation to lead the family business, having become CEO in 2006.

While the initial activities of the company were centered around (container) transport, several strategic acquisitions have broadened the scope to **transport, logistics, warehousing, and supply chain activities**. Since 2016, Group-GTS has had a strong presence in ports and related facilities, allowing us to offer new supply chain solutions to our business partners. While continuing to expand its activities, our company changed its name from 'GTS NV' to 'Group-GTS' in 2013.

We are headquartered in Geel, and also have offices in the Port of Antwerp-Bruges and Tesselenderlo, as well as agencies in Germany, Poland and the Netherlands.



“
It all started with
that one truck”

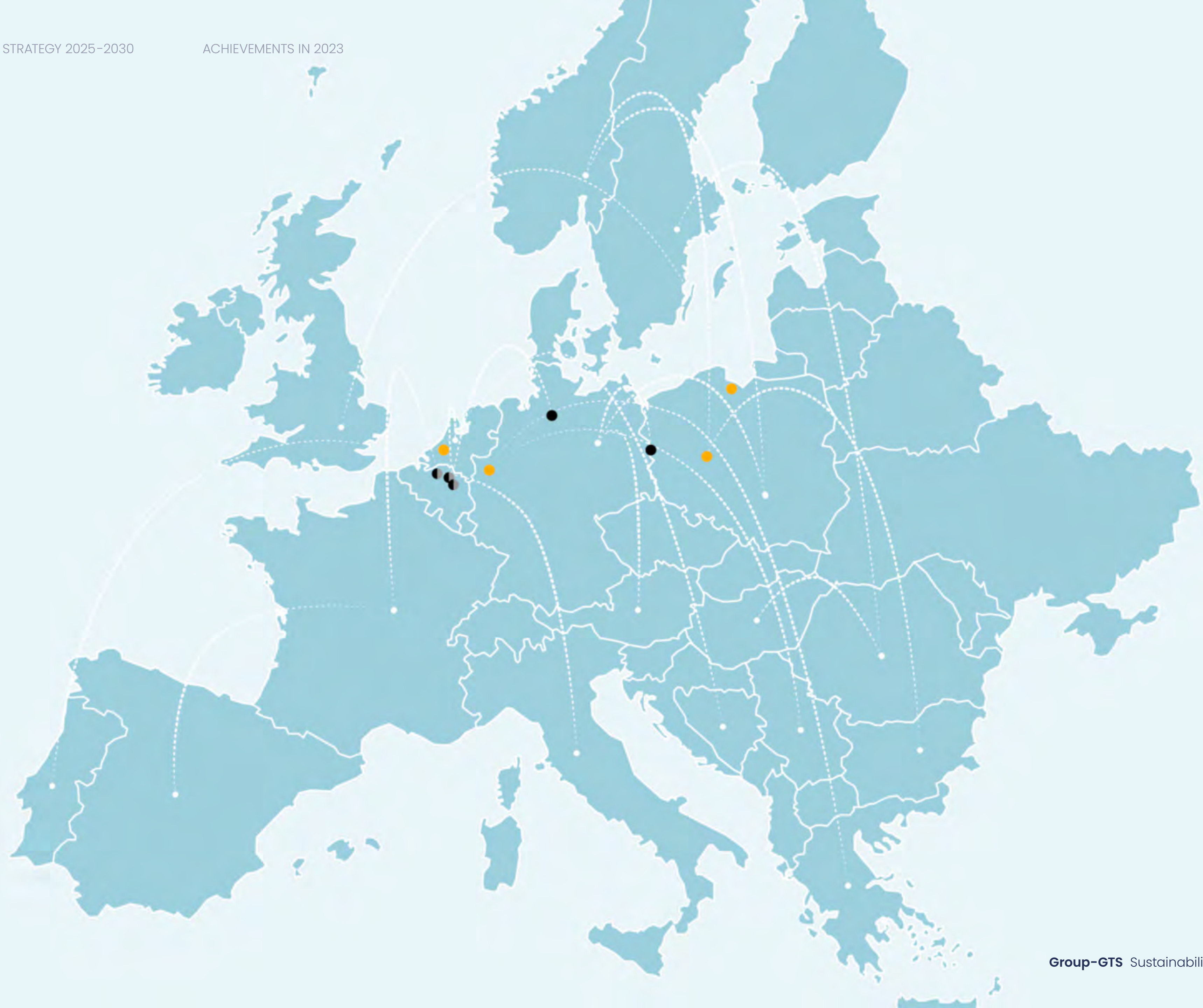




Illustration 1

Our services and facilities in Europe

- Agency
- Truck
- Warehouse





OUR BUSINESS MODEL



Over the years we have transformed our transport business into a **full-fledged logistical engineering service**.

We are a **loyal partner to several multi-nationals** that transport their goods by air or cargo ship. They rely on us to further distribute their products on the European mainland. Furthermore, we handle reefer shipments – or refrigerated containers – for pharmaceuticals and food. Group-GTS still organizes conventional transportation to and from Benelux, France, Germany, Poland, Austria, Switzerland, and most European countries. Customers can also count on our expertise to find tailored solutions for complex logistical issues, such as large relocation projects, warehouses on wheels, shuttle services and in-house logistics.

Our goal has always been to build long-standing partnerships, as **COO Roel Smets** explains: “We put our customers at the center of our operations. We have worked with the majority of them for many years, so we know their supply chain and their needs very well. This expertise allows us to work together to find the best way to transport their goods, whether by truck, railway, or barge. Today, we see ourselves as ‘transportation engineers’, more than as the traditional trucking company that we were a few decades ago.”

To continue to **meet the needs of our customers**, we are constantly investing in modernizing our warehouses, in digitalizing our processes, and in new means of transportation. Adding a fifth Business Unit – Solutions & Sustainability – is part of that strategy.

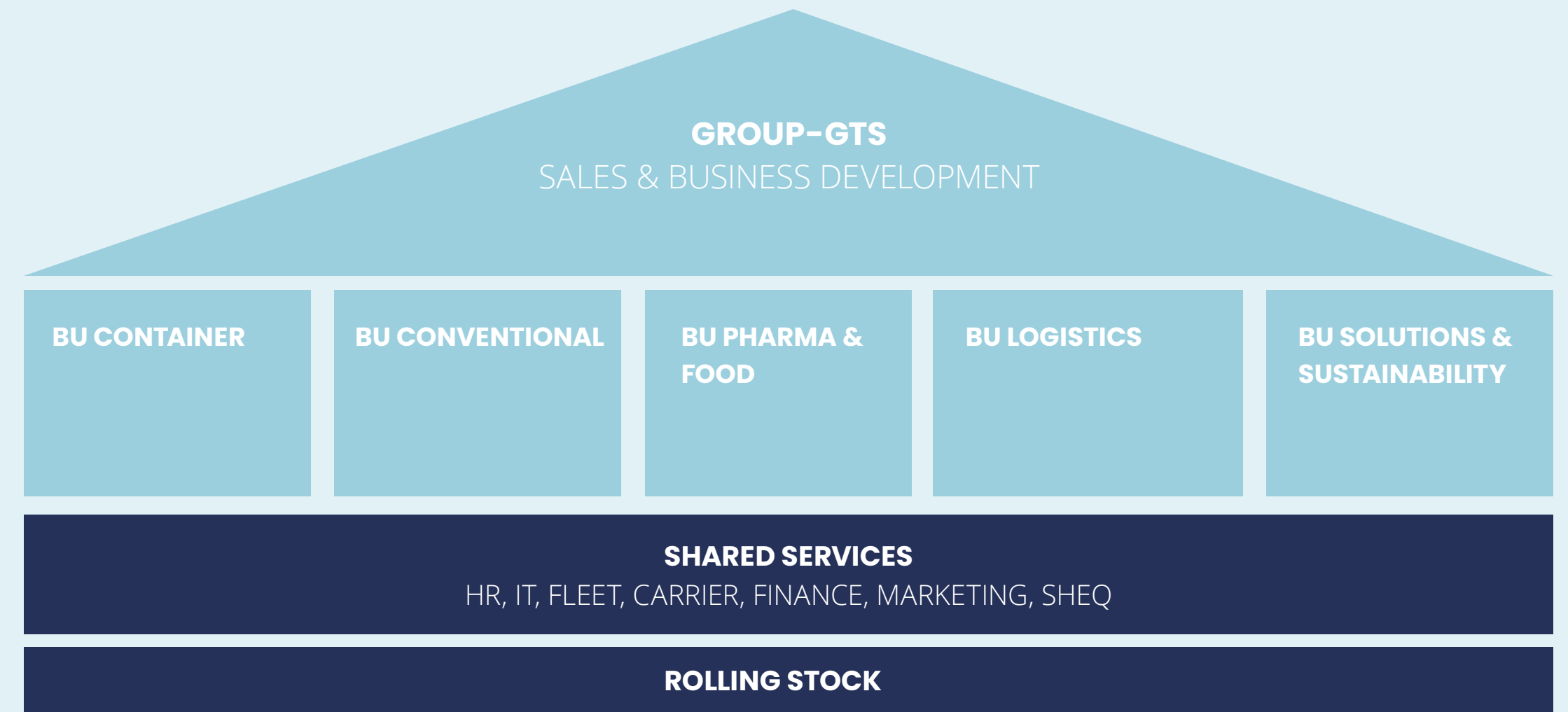


Illustration 2
Group-GTS’s company house

We like to present our company as a house. The **foundation** of our operations lies in our **rolling stock**: the trucks that travel all over continental Europe to provide logistics solutions for our customers. One of our advantages is that we partly own our own fleet, which allows us to schedule trucks very smoothly. In addition, we collaborate with long-term partners, enabling us to offer intermodal solutions and shared transport.

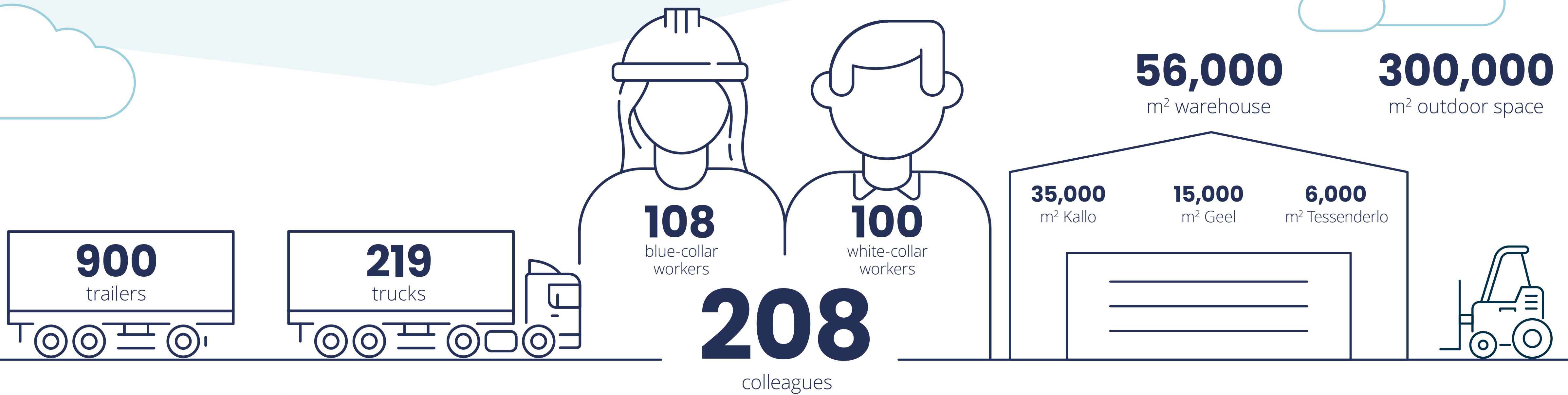
The **building bricks** of our ‘house’ further consist of our various Business Units: containers, pharma and food, and conventional transport, together with our warehousing solutions. Essentially, these correspond to the main **markets** we serve, or the **services** we offer. A few years ago, a fifth brick was established: our Solutions & Sustainability Business Unit.

Finally, the **roof** is formed by **umbrella teams** active in sales, business development and marketing. They literally keep a roof over the heads of the other departments.



2023 KEY FIGURES

Founded in 1983. In 2023 we celebrated 40 years of Group-GTS.

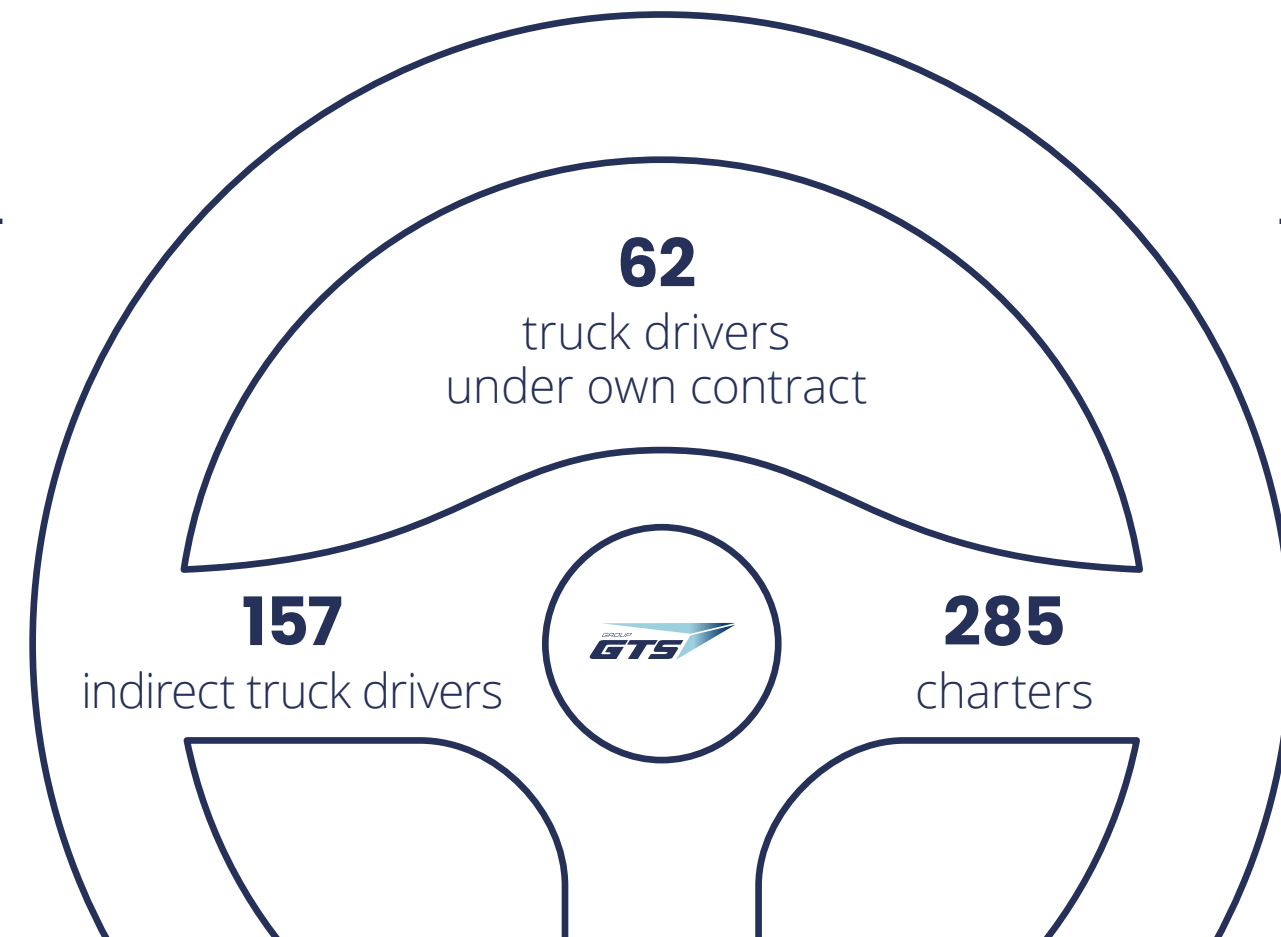


40,749,131
number of kilometers driven

107,404
shipments

24,081,312
km containers

16,667,819
km conventional



66,949
containers

40,455
conventional



OUR MISSION AND VALUES

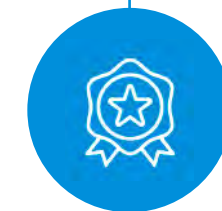
Group-GTS's strategy is anchored in our **company purpose**: 'your business, our drive'. We are a caring enterprise that provides and manages daily supply chain solutions for our business partners, offering our clients tailor-made solutions to transport and store their products, while prioritizing quality, safety, automation, and sustainability.

We are an agile company, able to flexibly respond to market changes. This is a vital characteristic in the complex and challenging supply chain environment. Likewise, we make our business **future-proof** by maintaining autonomous and organic growth.

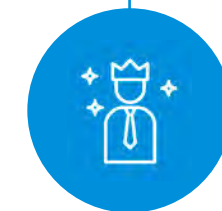
Corporate values are indispensable to our continued growth and professionalism. By bringing these values to life every day, we show customers and suppliers who we are and give them a taste of the Group-GTS spirit. Our Group-GTS Company Values are summarized by the acronym COCA-OK, which stands for:



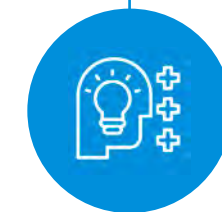
C - Communication: we are transparent and empathetic toward each other and toward our customers



O - Operational Excellence: we deliver quality and strive to excel in our jobs



C - Customer Centricity: we strive for long-term relationships and strong partnerships, by putting our customers first and offering them an excellent service



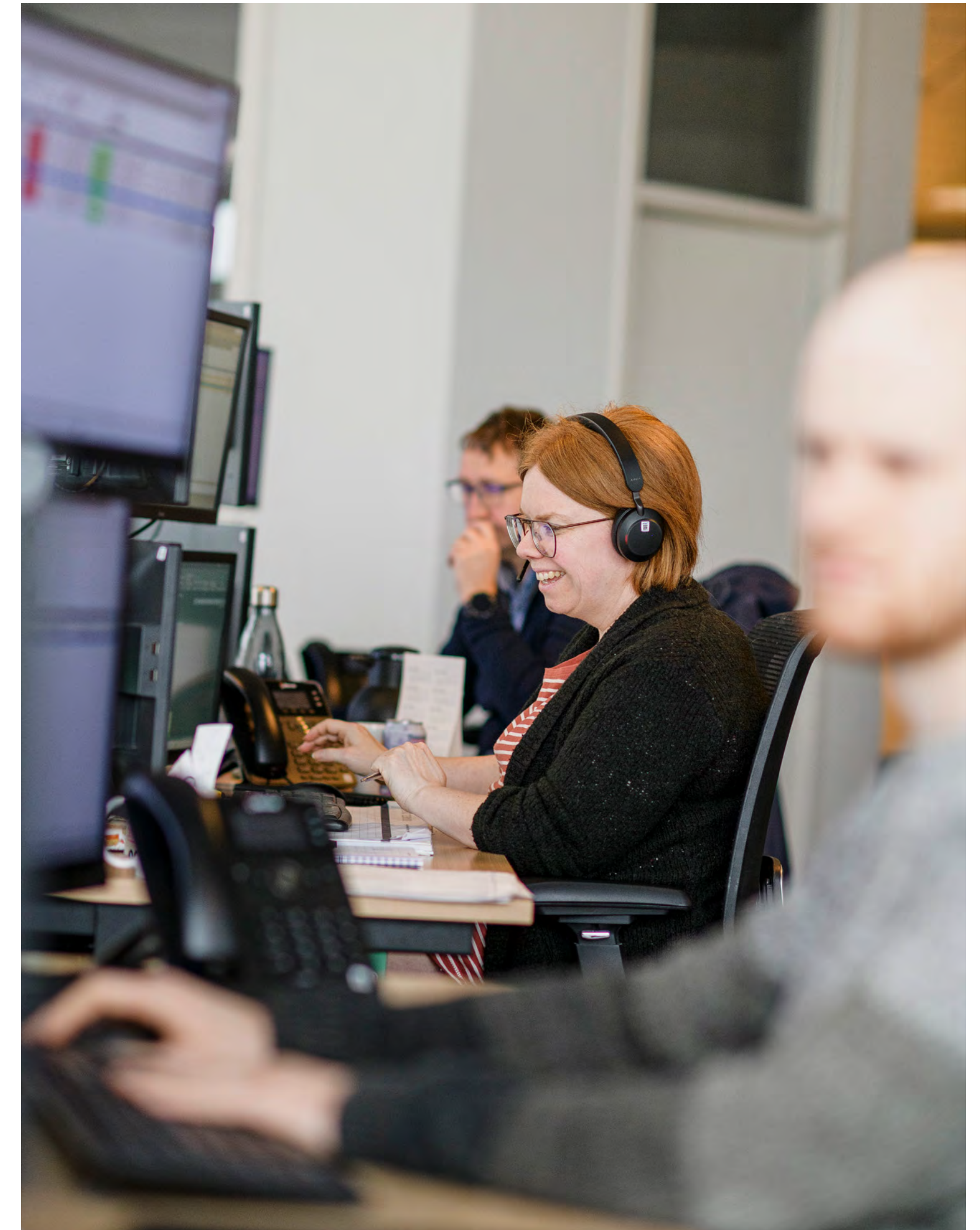
A - Attitude: we learn from our mistakes and are constructive when thinking about solutions



OK: in our daily work, we constantly check if we are working according to our COCA values. If we do, we assign the OK mark.

In 2024, we will start a campaign about a fifth, new value: ownership.

“
Our Group-GTS Company Values are summarized by the acronym COCA-OK”



GROUP-GTS PEOPLE

“What sets us apart in our industry, and certainly as a medium-sized player, is that we have our own sustainability strategy. This strategic plan is independent of the customer inquiries we receive in relation to sustainability: it’s drawn up from our core business and operations. Our strategy really shows who we are.”

“In fact, our sustainability strategy serves as a first introduction for many customers to our sustainable activities, and often answers many of their questions before they’re even asked. However, if customers have additional suggestions, we are open to discuss these with them.”

“This is a credit to the employees in our dedicated Solutions & Sustainability Business Unit. Our day is literally devoted to working out future-oriented solutions and making the business more sustainable. I feel I need to mention that our Business Unit is the most dynamic within all of Group-GTS, although my colleagues might not like to hear this!”

“

Formulating our own sustainability strategy sets us apart in the sector”

Nick Sterckx
Business Unit Manager
Solutions & Sustainability



03



STRATEGY 2025-2030



APPROACH

One of Group-GTS's strengths is our own sustainability strategy, tailored to our company activities and focusing on the areas in which we can have the greatest impact. This sustainability strategy first took shape a few years ago, and ever since, we have been further developing a **long-range plan with milestones for 2025 and 2030**. Our ESG Steering Committee – consisting of the CEO, COO, and the Solutions & Sustainability Business Unit – is responsible for overseeing our progress.

WHAT IS OUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY?

Group-GTS's approach to sustainability has evolved over recent years. We have already had a company-wide strategy in place for some time now. This strategy has been based on a SWOT analysis, numerous workshops, and an extensive carbon footprint analysis conducted by an external consulting partner. The sustainability strategy is based on **three pillars**:

- On our way to carbon neutrality
- We transport happiness
- Empowering sustainable partnerships

Having a clear strategy helps ensure that everything and everyone within our organization is aligned and working together to achieve our targets. It also helps us prioritize our efforts and deploy resources in the best way to implement the strategy.

Each year **some 20 goals are put forward**. Team leaders from different Business Units are given the responsibility of monitoring these goals. To track progress in each area and make sure that we continuously enhance our efforts, the team leaders meet every three months. The ESG Steering Committee meets every two months. And at the end of the reporting year, we organize an annual evaluation meeting. It may well be the case that, in the wake of this, we then adjust some of our short-term targets.



↑ Our ESG Steering Committee

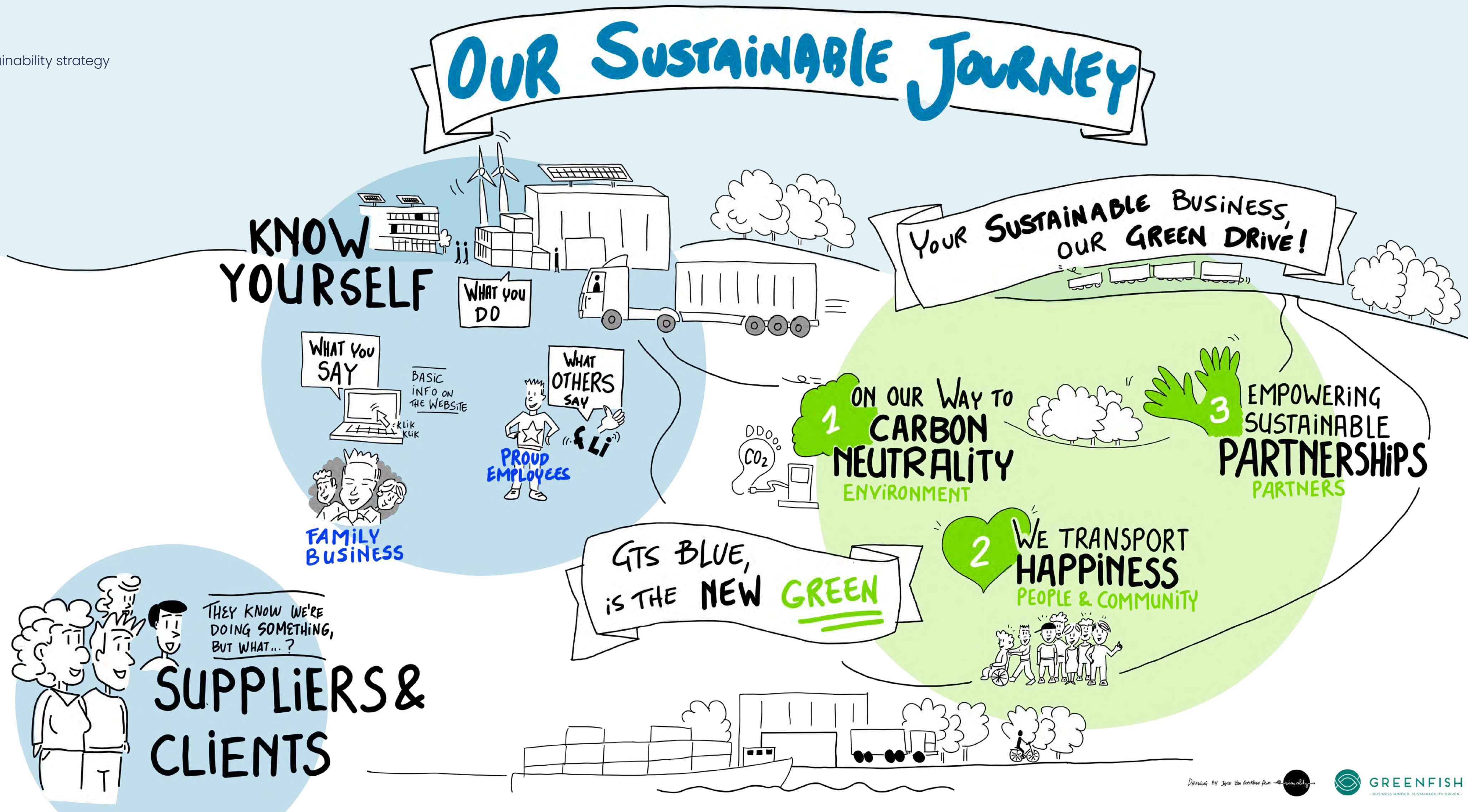
RENEWED STRATEGY UPCOMING

In 2024 we are entering a new phase of our journey. We will align our roadmap and goals with the new Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), which will be a statutory requirement as of 2026 (for our 2025 fiscal year).

“**Having a clear strategy helps ensure that everything and everyone within our organization is aligned and working together to achieve our targets”**



Illustration 4
Group-GTS's sustainability strategy



Developed by Jeroen Van den Broek from with






1 ON OUR WAY TO CARBON NEUTRALITY ENVIRONMENT

To achieve carbon neutrality, we put forward these goals:

- Reduce our scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by 25% by 2025 and by 40% by 2030
- Ensure that 10% of our turnover is linked to multimodal transport by 2025 and 15% by 2030
- Keep our weekly empty mileage below 4%
- Our alternative fuel usage should be 25% by 2025 and 35% by 2030



2 WE TRANSPORT HAPPINESS PEOPLE & COMMUNITY



Our social pillar is based on the following commitments:

- Reduce our accident frequency and severity rate by 4% annually
- Achieve a 'Great place to work' certificate in 2025 and achieve a score >90% in 2030
- Have a welcoming, diverse, and discrimination- and harassment-free workplace



3 EMPOWERING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS PARTNERS

Regarding our collaborations, we have established the following sustainability priority:

- Set up long-lasting relationships with our clients with the aim of working together to find the best ecological and economical solution for them. In 2024, we want to discuss sustainability with each of our top 50 customers.



GET TO KNOW OUR SOLUTIONS & SUSTAINABILITY BUSINESS UNIT

The Solutions & Sustainability Business Unit is our coordination and knowledge center for sustainability. It was created in January of 2022, and at present is composed of three colleagues. The **manager of the unit, Nick Sterckx**, explains how his team functions within Group-GTS: “We are a shared service for all of Group-GTS, meaning that we work together with all other units across all locations. At the same time, we are in direct contact with clients who have sustainability-related questions. All the sustainability expertise is thus centered within our team, making us a clear point of contact for everyone, and helping us as a team to continuously build on the knowledge already acquired.”

The Business Unit works on various projects, both internally and externally. **Multimodal & Sustainability Manager Tom Pauchet** gives an example: “When a client asks for a sustainable transport solution, our team enters the picture. Together with the client and colleagues from other Business Units, we set up pilot projects, for instance to test whether or not electric vehicles could be a viable option.”

One of the priority issues nowadays is that of the **modal shift**. As **Tom Pauchet** explains: “We are frequently asked to investigate whether other means of transportation, such as trains or barges, could provide an alternative. I then lean on my personal experience in multimodal transportation to make suggestions. But decisions are always made after taking into account the valuable opinions of the colleagues who know our client best.”

Nick Sterckx describes how the Business Unit contributes to a more **sustainable mindset** within Group-GTS: “We also inform colleagues on how they themselves can contribute to the sustainability goals. A major topic is, for instance, avoiding empty mileage. But here the COCA-OK values come into play: while some scenarios may work in theory, they cannot always be put into practice by our planners. Open communication is therefore crucial to jointly find the best solution and to maintain our excellent service. Likewise, each time colleagues see that our suggestion is of added value, we make additional progress in instilling the sustainable mindset of our company.”

“

The Solutions & Sustainability Business Unit is the coordination and knowledge center for sustainability”

Nick Sterckx
Business Unit Manager
Solutions & Sustainability



ACHIEVEMENTS
IN 2023





ON OUR WAY TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

Group-GTS strives to contribute to a carbon-neutral future. An important pillar of our strategy is therefore the search for more sustainable transport solutions. As there is no agreement among experts on which technologies will ultimately replace fossil fuels, we are testing a wide range of sustainable solutions, such as hydrotreated vegetable oils (HVO), multimodal transportation, all-electric yard tractors and longer heavier vehicles (LHVs). We follow the market and developments closely, allowing us to take the right steps at the appropriate time.



OUR AMBITION TO BECOME A CARBON NEUTRAL COMPANY

As laid out in our sustainability roadmap, our ambition is to become carbon neutral. In 2023, we calculated our scope 1 and 2 emissions for the first time, establishing a baseline year to which we can compare our progress in the coming years. Our carbon footprint is calculated according to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, and we take into account emissions from both our transport (cars and trucks) and our warehousing activities.

In 2023, Group-GTS generated **17,310 tons of scope 1 and 2 CO₂ emissions.**

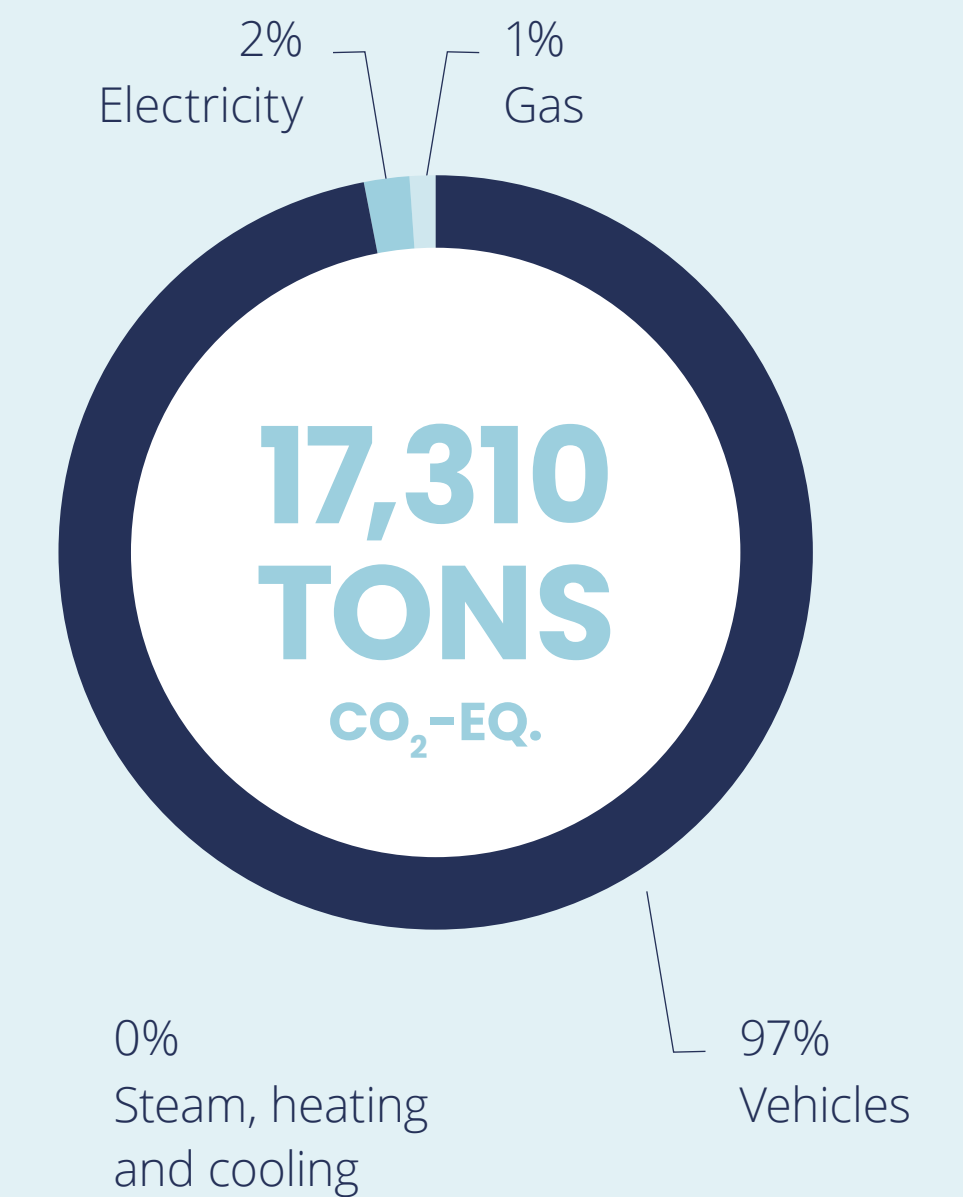
Scope 1 emissions include stationary combustion, our heating, cooling and steam, and vehicles, while scope 2 emissions involve the CO₂ generated in the production of electricity used throughout our sites. As you can see from our carbon footprint analysis, our **vehicles** (trucks) were overwhelmingly responsible for the CO₂ we generated in 2023 (accounting for 97% of our carbon footprint).

As our transportation is critical to our customers' supply chains and is part of their scope 3 emissions, we believe the decarbonization of our

own ways of working must be a priority. **Our efforts** in this regard **will help our customers** to conduct their own business more sustainably and **to lower their emissions.** In recognition of this, we provide a range of offers and services to our customers, helping them to both rethink and greenify their own supply chains. Key among these are:

- **Greener fuel offerings:** via our HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oils) offer, see next page.
- **Optimization of the transportation:** we are continuously optimizing our logistics chain, both by reducing our fuel consumption and empty mileage, and by choosing alternative transportation setups such as multimodal transportation, [see below](#).
- **CO₂ reporting:** we are currently building a platform that will provide our customers with an analysis of carbon emissions related to the transportation of their goods, see [chapter 5](#).

OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT SCOPE 1 AND 2 COMBINED



DISTRIBUTION OF HVO VERSUS REGULAR DIESEL IN 2023



“**HVO reduces CO₂ emissions by 90% compared to traditional diesel**”

HYDROTREATED VEGETABLE OILS

One of the first steps we took with the aim of decarbonizing our activities was the introduction of HVO. **HVO reduces CO₂ emissions during the life cycle of the fuel by 90%** in comparison with regular diesel.

Multimodal & Sustainability Manager Tom Pauchet explains how Group-GTS proceeds: “A few years ago, we started using HVO100, an oil that is thermochemically treated with hydrogen. These oils can be made from different kinds of vegetable oils (such as rapeseed or sunflower), waste cooking oil, or animal fats. HVO is a drop-in fuel, which means you can use it in diesel engines.”

In order to make correct claims on our HVO fuels, our supplier is audited every year. Auditors verify the oils’ origins, and check if the amount of HVO purchased matches the amount of HVO sold. Our customers then receive a certificate that contains the number of liters of HVO and what the amount of CO₂ emissions have been saved as a result. These CO₂ reduction calculations are based on our fuel consumption and are multiplied by the externally published emission factors from co2emissiefactoren.nl.

Thanks to this HVO certification and [our monthly CO₂ calculator](#), our customers are able to obtain a clear understanding of their CO₂ emissions linked to transportation, as well as the carbon reduction we achieve together.

ELECTRIC YARD TRACTOR

In November of 2023, we purchased a Terberg all-electric yard tractor. We are very proud of this purchase, as it is **among the first in Belgium**. And its climate benefits are pretty impressive:

- **CO₂ emissions:** yard tractors are used for labor-intensive jobs. Because of the continuous accelerating and braking, diesel all-yard tractors produce a significant amount of CO₂. All-electric yard tractors provide a greener alternative to those running on diesel.
- **Noise level:** the electric tractor operates at much quieter levels than its conventional variant, which yields great gains in terms of wellbeing.

Our own all-electric yard tractor has a battery capacity of 160 kWh. The batteries are located at the sides of the vehicle, which gives service engineers easy access to the components.

In time, we aim to gradually expand our **fleet of electric vehicles**. As we believe in the electrification of our fleet, we have already ordered another electric yard tractor. Our experiences with the electric yard tractor will serve as input to determine if and when we will start working with electric trucks. We are very eager to get started with the electrification of our fleet, but are a bit cautious about it at this point.



CHARGING STATIONS FOR TRUCKS AT OUR SITES: A QUICK WIN?

Yes and no! At present, we don’t have on-site charging stations for our trucks. In 2024, this may change as there are plans to investigate the feasibility. Our Geel site would be the first to qualify, because of the solar panels already installed on the roof. We only use about one third of the electricity we produce ourselves, so installing stationary battery and/or charging stations could be highly beneficial. For our site in Tessenderlo, installing charging stations for trucks is not possible at the moment. We first need to replace the high-voltage cabin and renovate the building.

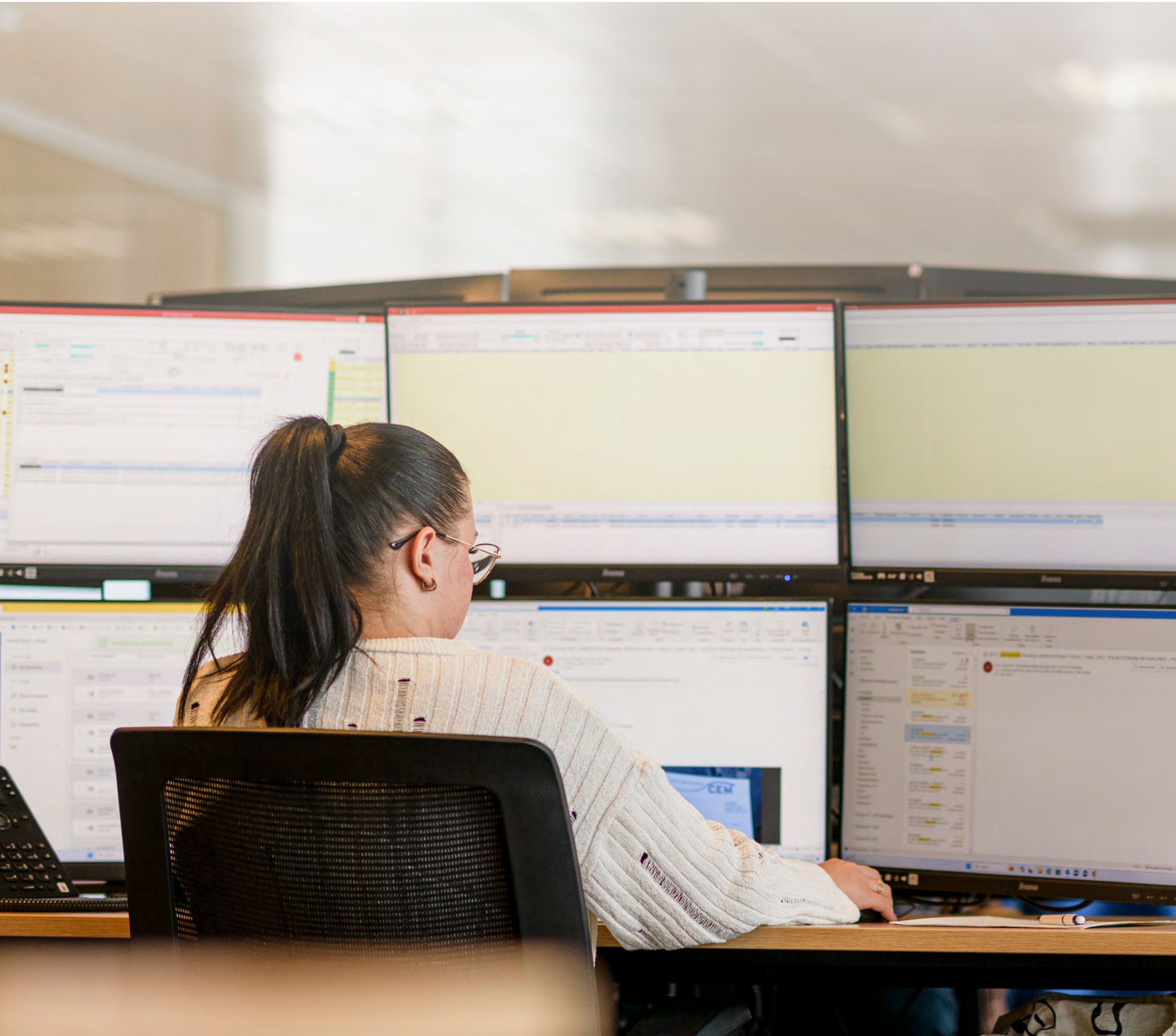


**“
Implementing greener
transportation
strategies is crucial for
global supply chains.
At Group-GTS, we
want to be part of the
solution.”**

Tom Pauchet
Multimodal & Sustainability
Manager

GROUP-GTS PEOPLE

“Studies show that the transportation sector is responsible for a large amount of global carbon emissions. As is expected, when you consider that trucks use up until 30 liters of diesel per 100 kilometers, and that each truck regularly drives several hundred kilometers a day! It's only natural that people are looking toward our industry and expecting it to come up with solutions. And that's what we at Group-GTS definitely want to do. For us, working for our profit goes hand in hand with contributing to a sustainable planet. Implementing greener transportation strategies is crucial for global supply chains. At Group-GTS, we want to be part of the solution.”



REDUCING EMPTY MILEAGE

The most effective way to reduce our CO₂ emissions is to ... avoid driving. But of course, we cannot stop driving entirely. We can, however, avoid driving when there are no goods to be transported. This is akin to 'driving the lines' for every talented Formula 1 driver.

Our colleagues, true 'transport engineers', make it their mission to find a solution for empty mileage by scheduling pick-ups of goods near our previous drop-off locations, and transporting the goods to a location close to our next destination. It is our weekly goal to **keep empty mileage below 4%**.

REDUCING FUEL CONSUMPTION

We aim to reduce our fuel consumption as much as possible by buying **more efficient trucks** and by using the **NEXTdriver software**. NEXTdriver gives insight into our fleet and driver performance. With these data, we provide driver coaching in order to optimize driving behavior.

And we are winning the race! We had set the initial target to consume not more than 27 liters per 100 kilometers. Over the past two years, our average fuel consumption was even lower than that. We are now at 25.24 liter per 100 kilometers. Hooray! And we want to decrease even further. The technology is evolving and continuing to improve, allowing us to continue to adjust our targets in the future.

“

We aim to reduce our fuel consumption as much as possible by buying more efficient trucks and by using the NEXTdriver software”



WHAT ELSE ARE WE DOING?

We want to achieve carbon neutrality by decarbonizing our own operations and by partnering with other companies in this regard. **Multimodal transportation** is one of the solutions that we aim to explore with our partners. You can read more about our multimodal projects in the ‘Empowering sustainable partnerships’ chapter.

We are experimenting with an Eco-Combi or a **Longer Heavy Goods Vehicle (LHGV)**. One such truck can carry three twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). By using LHGVs, we can **lower fuel consumption by 30%** and further **reduce CO₂ and NO_x emissions**. Moreover, if these LHGVs can run on HVO diesel, our consumption will decrease even further. Because these trucks are massive, we need governmental permission to drive them. We have obtained a permit for one particular route, between the port of Antwerp and our site in Tessenderlo, which is about 79.5 kilometers in length. This administrative process took quite some time, as government experts needed to be absolutely sure that the route was feasible and safe. Now that process is out of the way, we will soon start to test the route.

We have also changed our **company bike and car policy**. Employees are rewarded when they travel to the office by bike. In 2023, 17% of our people came to work by bike on a regular basis; 14% of them use a leased bike. We also organized

a ‘bike to work day’, which received great deal of enthusiasm. And from now on, we only purchase electric cars for our white-collar employees. To this end, we ordered 13 new electric cars in 2023. Our employees can charge their cars on our sites, as we now have 8 charging stations in Geel and 2 in Kallo, with additional charging stations to be added in the future.

Finally, we are constantly working on **improving the sustainability of our sites**. Some examples: to reduce our energy consumption, we have 4,600 m² of solar panels on the roof of our offices in Geel, LED lighting, and automatic light switches. In 2023, our solar panels produced 225,421 KWh of electricity.

BIODIVERSITY AND WATER USAGE ON OUR SITES

We capture rainwater and use it to wash our trucks, thus eliminating the need for drinking water for this purpose. We follow local guidelines on how to organize our sites by including natural elements to promote local biodiversity. And we are implementing various solutions and programs to reduce waste and minimize related pollution across our operations.



↑ Group-GTS's LHGV

PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Group-GTS is a workplace that fosters inclusivity and respect. We make an effort to attract and motivate talented people who share our values, and we respect different cultures and the rights of all with whom we work. We promote a safe physical and psychological environment, giving everyone the opportunity for personal development.





↑ Britt De Wilde, HR Manager

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF OUR OPERATIONS

Our company has grown exponentially over the past few years. As we consider our colleagues to be our most important asset, we took the decision to **professionalize our internal operations**. To that effect, we hired an experienced HR manager: **Britt De Wilde**. As she explains herself: “At Group-GTS, we are constantly looking for new colleagues. It is my job to search for those candidates who adhere to our values, and to help them develop their top competences according to their strengths. When our employees feel motivated and know they are growing every day, they will hopefully remain with our organization throughout their entire careers.”

Britt is responsible for monitoring the HR KPIs (see p. 30). “We still have a way to go to fully digitalize all relevant KPIs, but we are making progress in the implementation of an overall HR system.” As HR manager, Britt is also involved in **evaluations, personal development, and potential training programs**: “We take into account the strengths and level of ambition of each individual employee. And, of course, we also pay close attention to their work-life balance. These efforts pay off: we have a very low staff turnover rate.”

To welcome newly hired employees, we are elaborating our onboarding program, which will be linked to our new digital training policy: the GTS Academy. “This program will be implemented in 2025, and consists of online videos and webinars that new employees will have to watch in the first three months of their onboarding. We pay extra attention to buddy programs, both for blue- and white-collar employees. For instance: new drivers are paired up with our experienced ones. Even if new colleagues have a lot of driving experience, we make sure that they are fully evaluated.”



“**When our employees feel motivated and know they are growing every day, they will hopefully stay in our organization for their entire career path**”

“

The most important thing is to have a good team around you”

EDDY MERCKX



GROUP-GTS'S WINNING MINDSET!

One obvious way in which our internal processes have been professionalized has been the relocation of our headquarters to a new office in Geel at the beginning of 2023. Before this, our office employees were spread across several different locations. That situation arose due to our strong growth in recent years, but it was certainly not an ideal situation, due to the fact that some of our departments needed to remain in close contact throughout the day.

Our new building in Geel literally brought us together. The friendly and familial atmosphere is evident to all. Visitors also notice our unique interior straight away: our meeting rooms are named after cycling heroes, and the walls and halls are decorated with the outfits of different cyclists and Formula 1 icons. These sportspeople inspire us every day, and strengthen the teamwork mentality in everything we do. Like Eddy Merckx, we know that we can only achieve great things together.



GET TO KNOW OUR 208 EMPLOYEES

In our offices in Geel, Tessenderlo and Kallo:

108 blue-collar workers

work together with 100 white-collar workers.

40 employees older than 50

We have a quite regular distribution per age category. A special category of employees are our retired drivers: these are known as 'jumpers' because they jump into action whenever we need them.

10 nationalities

Most employees are Belgian, but we also have 11 Romanian and 8 Ukrainian colleagues, as well as people from the Netherlands, Morocco, Germany, Italy, Poland, Syria, and Sweden.

38 women

work in our team, compared to 170 men.

+20 years of service

Each year, we celebrate employees with a long service record. The majority of our employees have spent up until 10 years in the company, due to Group-GTS having grown significantly over the last few years.

39% of our employees

live within a radius of 20 kilometers of our sites.



HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Safety is an important topic for Group-GTS, and for this reason we have put a lot of effort into developing a **strategic plan** unifying all health and safety policies across the group over the last year. The plan has an ISO 9001 certification, which is the standard for quality management.

If unsafe incidents do occur, our SHEQ manager uses CAPA (Corrective And Preventive Actions) lists to follow up on certain issues. Every month he has a meeting with the COO to discuss our progress on safety. The incidents are reviewed in a meeting with the Business Unit managers, and they then discuss best practices on how to avoid them in the future. The company also has a committee on prevention and protection at work, which consists of directors and union members.

Moreover, we have an **internal audit system**, and we are also supervised by **external assessors**. Because we transport chemicals, we also conduct a Safety & Quality Assessment for Sustainability (SQAS). It shows how we mitigate risks and improve operations, all while manifesting our commitment to sustainability. We have obtained the label Good Distribution Practice for the transport of medicinal products for human use. The GDP is a standard developed by the EU.



WORKSHOP ON AVOIDING CARGO THEFT

Cargo theft is an extremely important safety issue for us. In November 2023, Group-GTS organized a workshop on how to avoid cargo theft, on cybersecurity, and on organized crime. In this workshop, colleagues learned that half of all incidents of cargo theft can be linked to unsafe parking spaces, while 24% are due to carrier fraud. They also found out how to recognize phishing emails and how to spot fake accounts. Lastly, colleagues were given up-to-date information on organized crime, a dangerous trend for which we need to remain vigilant.

“

Group-GTS's culture of open communication and opportunities is highly motivating”

Inias Van Cauwenberg
Team Leader International
Planning



GROUP-GTS PEOPLE

“Hello, I’m Inias! What do I do at Group-GTS? Well, I take charge of our international planning. This includes setting up projects, drawing up the planning, undertaking price agreements with customers, providing volumes, having customer discussions, adhering to and adjusting KPIs, analyzing sales and margins, managing my team, and that’s just for starters! As you see, the role involves a wide range of tasks.”

“And I enjoy it! The freedom and responsibility I have here, combined with the opportunity to constantly learn, make my job a truly enriching experience. From my first day at Group-GTS, I experienced a culture of open communication and opportunities, which is highly motivating.”



↑ Multimodal transport in action: transporting goods by barge via Flexible Bulk Containers (FBCs)

FACTS AND FIGURES ON ACCIDENTS AT WORK

In some of our divisions, there have been zero reported accidents at work for several years in a row. In other divisions, the frequency and severity rates are quite high. As a result, we have begun to organize specific **digital toolbox meetings**. These meetings include tests to evaluate the knowledge of our employees. Furthermore, we continue to educate our drivers on blind spot accidents and are attempting to identify a number of key root causes. One of our colleagues is currently investigating the ways in which we can improve our drivers' behavior and increase their attention to safety.

LECTURE ON BLIND SPOT ACCIDENTS

Of course, we not only care about our own safety. We consider the safety of all vulnerable road users and children to be of paramount importance. This is why every year we give away a free workshop on blind spot accidents. In 2023 one of our truck drivers visited youngsters of the 5th and 6th grade of the VBS De Wereldwijzer school in Tessenderlo to teach them all about road safety.

GVA (warehousing)

Year	Frequency rate	Severity rate
2019	0	0
2020	0	0
2021	0	0
2022	0	0
2023	0	0

TDS (conventional transport)

Year	Frequency rate	Severity rate
2019	28.45	2.30
2020	53.50	2.80
2021	15.35	0.10
2022	22.19	1.33
2023	7.15	0.16

HVA (conventional transport)

Year	Frequency rate	Severity rate
2019	24.17	1.14
2020	0	0
2021	16.88	0.24
2022	35.55	1.72
2023	17.87	2.25

GTS (container transport)

Year	Frequency rate	Severity rate
2019	0	0
2020	0	0
2021	0	0
2022	0	0
2023	0	0

Frequency rate formula: number of work-related injuries x 1,000,000 / number of hours worked
Severity rate formula: (total number of days of incapacity for work x 1,000) / number of hours worked

GROUP-GTS PEOPLE

“Cybersecurity is a major topic for our sector in general, and for us at Group-GTS in particular. Our operations are heavily reliant on information technology and systems to provide logistics solutions for our customers. In just a single month, no less than 7 computer viruses were detected across our network. Our firewalls stopped 14,602 spam emails, and there were 26,321 failed external attempts to connect to our network. Even though we already have a robust detection system, we want to better arm our company and people against cyberattacks in 2024 (see the ‘Next steps’ chapter for more information).”

“
We are also
protecting our
digital supply
chain”

Nele Vandewal
CFO





INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND DIVERSITY

OUR POLICY

Group-GTS believes that having a diverse team stimulates innovation and creativity. Considering the fact that we operate across a number of countries, hiring people with different nationalities is a competitive advantage. This is why we have a diversity policy and an ethical code in which we strive to actively hire more people with different backgrounds. We do this, for instance, by implementing **objective hiring criteria** and by using a variety of channels to promote vacancies. We also monitor the diversity in our management team and create equal career opportunities. Moreover, we organize trainings and stimulate intercultural exchange.

We are aware of how discrimination and prejudice can affect employees, which is why we set up a **complaints office**. If incidents take place, we take measures and monitor their results. All of our employees have the right to speak their minds and to be heard. Finally, we promote equal career opportunities for everyone. We have a monitoring and coaching system in place, with a personal development plan for all employees.

WE PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH

Employee survey

In 2023, CLB Group conducted a survey on psychosocial risks, the overall response rate to which was 53%. So, what were the detailed results? **96% of respondents enjoy their job.** 98% of them say they are eager to start their day at work, and the same proportion thinks their job is useful. However, 34% highlighted the fact that they needed a lot of time to recover from their job, which they perceive as very intense.

CLB Group says Group-GTS's biggest strengths are our company values, a pleasant working environment, and the freedom and job security that employees experience.

MyGTS

In 2023, we launched the **MyGTS internal communications app**. This app is intended for use by all our colleagues. Important, because it allows us to reach our drivers efficiently, as an app works so much better than an email. The messages are translated into any language with the aid of AI, which is very useful! What do we post about? We introduce new colleagues and communicate important milestones. We also use MyGTS to disseminate practical information, for instance on traffic accidents or severe weather.





Our colleagues Dovelé (left) and Titziana (right).

Support for Ukraine

As mentioned above, we have a number of Ukrainian employees. **HR manager Britt De Wilde:** "We know that they went through a lot and have left everything behind to start over in Belgium. By making them a part of the Group-GTS family, we hope to give them a stable future. We appreciate their commitment to the job and their sense of responsibility."

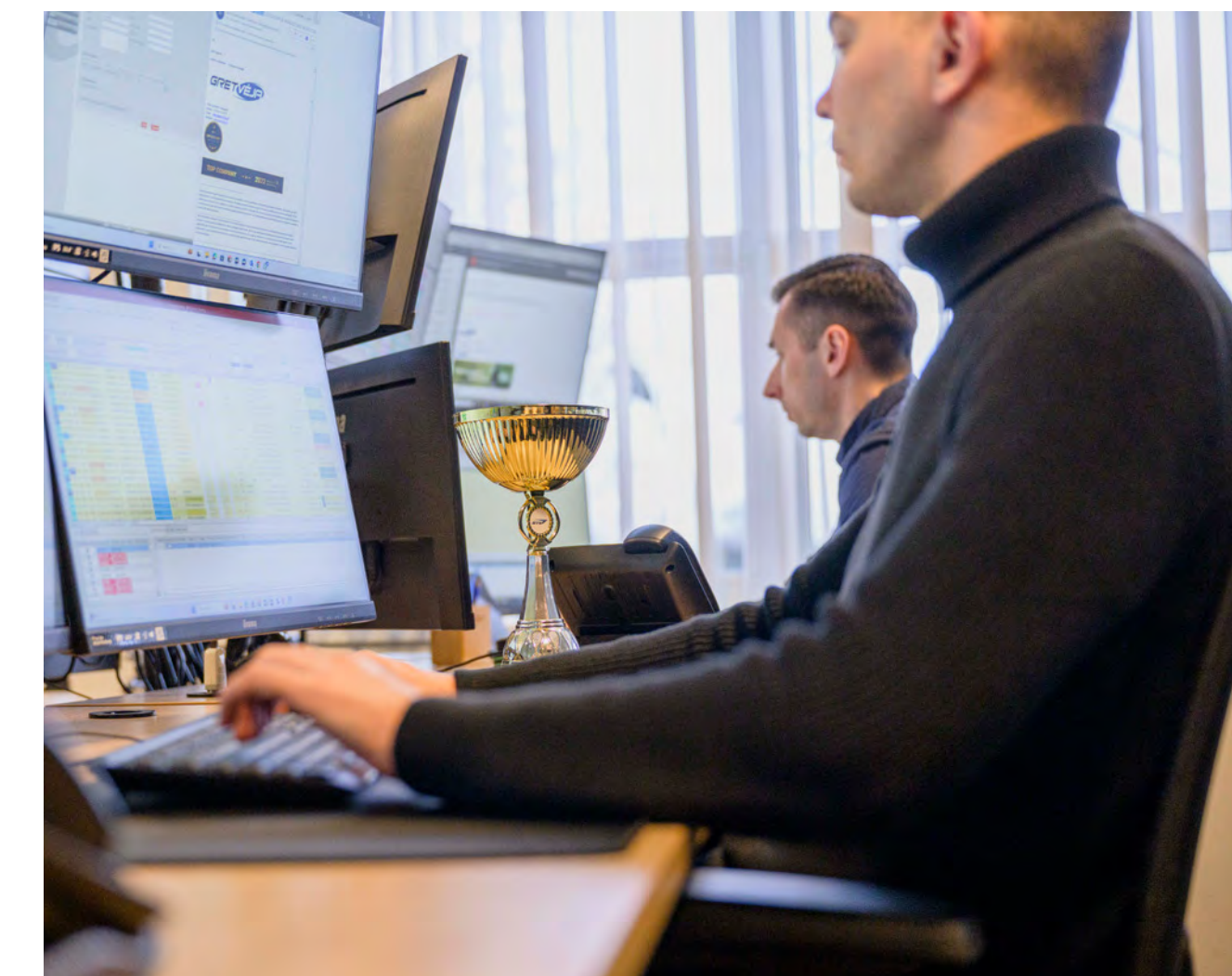
Women on top

The transport sector is considered a male-dominated sector. Not at Group-GTS! We actively encourage women to apply for jobs. The team in our Kallo office is even predominantly led by talented and passionate women who bring a great deal of knowledge, experience, and innovation to our operations.

Of course, we welcome female truckers with open arms. **Christel**, for instance, started her truck driving career at 57. Or what about **Dovelé**, a 24-year-old truck driver who has roots in Lithuania, but lives in Belgium. Another story to highlight is that of **Titziana**, who graduated as a childcare worker but is now a truck driver. All of them love the freedom and independence their job gives them. They all agree that Group-GTS offers a supportive environment where no distinction is made between men and women.

Sustainable employee of the month

To make sure everyone gets involved with the topic of sustainability, we launched a Sustainable Employee of the Month contest. **Multimodal & Sustainability Manager Tom Pauchet** explains: "This competition is a fun and accessible way to draw attention to different aspects of sustainability. The topic of the contest changes. One employee won because he comes to work by bike every single day, another employee was chosen by their colleagues. The winner receives a sustainable gift, for instance a coupon for a bicycle store. We have also made a special trophy that the winner can display on their desk. The friendly competitiveness between nominees goes hand-in-hand with our company's ethos."





WHAT ELSE ARE WE DOING?

EVENTS FOR OUR EMPLOYEES

We organized numerous **events for and together with our employees**, which we find important in the light of wellbeing and staying connected. One of our favorite highlights? That would be the communal **breakfast**, which we organized especially for our truck drivers, as we find it important to gather them all together from time to time. And maybe one more: in 2023, we celebrated our **40th anniversary**, an important milestone for Group-GTS! Of course, we celebrated in style.

“

The party to celebrate our 40th anniversary was a great success. I hope that we make it to 80 years, at least!”

Ben Geybels
CEO

COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOLS

We see close collaboration and interaction with **colleges and universities** as a win-win. It increases everyone’s knowledge and allows us to keep in touch with tomorrow’s job candidates. In 2023, we were invited to speak at colleges and universities on 3 different occasions, and we have trained 7 interns. We always try to offer employment to at least one of these interns after completion of their internship. Last year, we hired one of our interns.





EMPOWERING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

The road to carbon neutrality is still long. But we don't despair, as we know we can travel it together with partners and competitors. COO Roel Smets: "You can compare it to the World Cycling Championships or any other sporting event where competitors from different teams come together to win the race for their country. They put their differences aside and have one common goal. In our case this common goal is a better planet." Through partnerships we come up with innovative solutions. For instance, we have launched several multimodal projects. We also partner with independent organizations such as CIFAL (United Nations) and EcoVadis to point us in the right direction.

IN DIALOGUE WITH OUR CLIENTS

Group-GTS has its own sustainability strategy and a long-term plan with firm milestones set in place for 2025 and 2030. At the same time, our clients impose their own terms and conditions. Finding a **balance between the two in our collaborations** on sustainability is a prime example of empowering partnerships. Nonetheless, we manage to achieve this, as evidenced by one of our strategic clients having awarded us a golden medal on their sustainability questionnaire. **Multimodal & Sustainability Manager Tom Pauchet:** “This score is quite unique for a medium-sized family company in our sector. We are thrilled with this recognition, as it is proof that we have already achieved a lot sustainability-wise.”

“
In 2023, we transported
2002 containers by barge”

MULTIMODAL SOLUTIONS

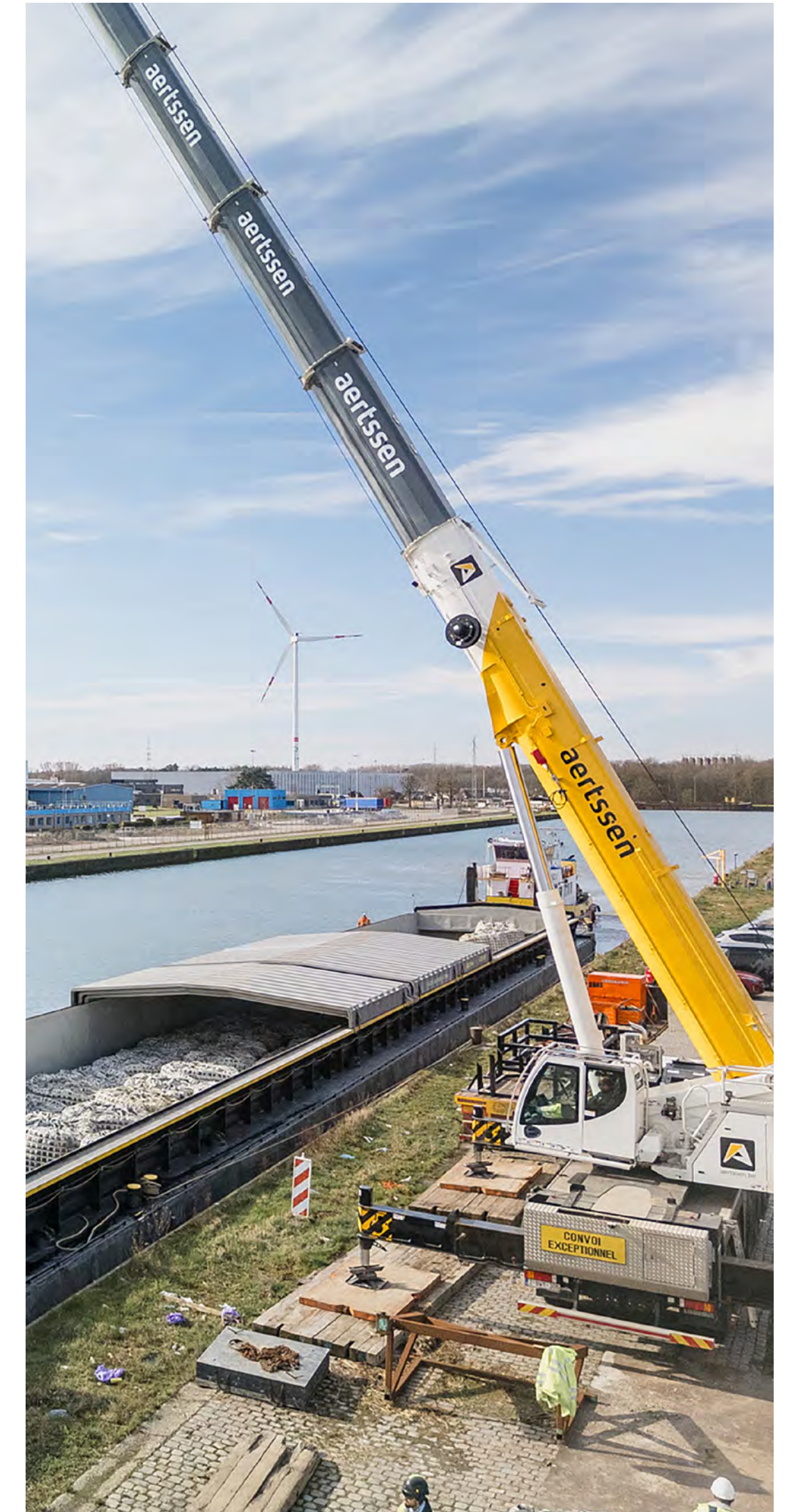
TRANSPORTING WEAVING MACHINES BY BARGE

In recent years, we have invested a great deal into multimodal solutions, especially into transport by barge. One of our key projects in this regard involves a collaboration with a weaving machine manufacturer. **Tom Pauchet** explains: “We worked out this interesting transportation chain in direct collaboration with our client. Empty containers are picked up at an inland terminal in Wielsbeke and transported to the client’s site in Yper. There, the containers are filled with weaving machines and then moved once again to River Terminal Wielsbeke, where they are shipped to the port of Antwerp-Bruges by barge. One round trip reduces the number of kilometers by road by 180, which is about **60% fewer kilometers**. This results in a reduction of 61 kg of CO₂ during the whole trajectory, meaning our client’s footprint shrunk by 44%.” Last year, we transported 506 containers by barge for this client, while in total, we transported 2002 containers by barge in 2023.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

We launched another promising multimodal project at our site in Tessenderlo. A company in the neighborhood that is strongly connected to the offshore wind farms industry was in need of a partner who could sustainably transport their products. We came up with the solution of transporting them by barge along the Albert Canal. To do so, we use Flexible Bulk Containers (FBCs) instead of regular shipping containers. These FBCs are loaded and then transported to our own site in specially built cages, where they are stored until they can be shipped to their destination.

In 2023 we transported 1,469 FBCs by barge, offering an **alternative solution for more than 565 truckloads**. Another advantage is that, after their load is discharged, the FBCs can be folded and transported back to the site in Tessenderlo all at the same time, avoiding 56 trips.



“
The only way
to have a friend
is to be one”

ENZO FERRARI



GROUP-GTS'S WINNING MINDSET!

Enzo Ferrari said it so beautifully: 'The only way to have a friend is to be one'. How much better would the world be if we all worked together? At Group-GTS, this comes naturally.

Colleagues help each other with a smile, and the number of activities outside of work are too numerous to count! It's great when colleagues (or rather teammates) become friends, and vice versa.

We adopt the same mentality to the outside world as well: at Group-GTS, we don't consider anyone a competitor. On the contrary; we are always open to working together and discovering new opportunities. It is only through such an approach that everyone can continue to learn and excel. Let's speed up, together!



OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

ECOVADIS

In 2023 we tested our sustainability strategy for the third time through the EcoVadis questionnaire. This certificate reflects the fact that we have a management system in place that addresses the following sustainability criteria: Environment, Labor & Human Rights, Ethics, and Sustainable Procurement. We were awarded a **silver medal** in 2023. Thanks to the clear feedback we see clearly where we can still take steps. We know we are on the right track: our score puts us in the top 25% of companies rated in 2023. To improve our score again, we can make strides on endorsements and reporting. Therefore, in 2024 we will focus on KPIs and write our first sustainability report.

SDG PIONEER

On October 26, Group-GTS proudly became an SDG Pioneer. The certificate was presented by Voka and CIFAL Flanders/UNITAR as part of the Voka Charter for Sustainable Entrepreneurship. SDG Pioneers are companies that have undertaken at least **10 Sustainable Development Goals initiatives** in each of the past three years. The SDGs lie at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the United Nations' member states in 2015, and calls for peace and prosperity for people and for the planet. Our next target? Become an SDG champion!

OTHER CERTIFICATIONS

Our good business practices are further substantiated through several other memberships and certificates. To name a few:

- **AEO**: we have the AEO certificate, which stands for Authorized Economic Operator. AEO recognizes companies that meet strict security standards in international trade.
- **GDP**: the Good Distribution Practice confirms that our Food & Pharma department meets strict standards for the distribution of medicines and food products.
- **ISO 9001**: each entity within Group-GTS holds the internationally recognized ISO 9001 certification, a quality management standard that helps companies improve efficiency, increase customer satisfaction, and promote sustainable business practices.

WHAT ELSE ARE WE DOING?

Sustainability remains an important topic in our conversations with customers. In 2023, we advised our ten biggest clients on sustainable transportations. In 2024, we aim to **reach out to our top 50 clients**. Topics may include, but are not limited to: multimodal transportation, alternative fuels, route optimization, digitalization ...





You've now read what we did this year. So, what's next? Multimodal & Sustainability Manager Tom Pauchet gives insight into some of our key projects.

"A major project we are working on is that of building a platform where our customers can look up the scope 3 emissions related to the transportation of their products. The **dashboard will be updated on a monthly basis**, which is practically in real-time for this industry. We aren't there yet, but we think this will have a big impact on the willingness of clients to look for greener alternatives."

"Furthermore, we are tracking a broad range of different innovative sustainable solutions. For instance, we are in close contact with manufacturers of electric trucks. In 2024 we will purchase **electric forklifts** for our team in Kallo. These aren't just good for the planet, but also

“
In 2024 we will introduce a CO₂ dashboard for our customers with monthly updates”

Tom Pauchet
Multimodal & Sustainability Manager

05 NEXT STEPS

for our employees. Diesel forklifts can no longer be used in closed spaces, as the exhaust fumes are toxic."

Also on the agenda? **Cybersecurity**. "The transport sector relies heavily on ICT, and this dependence will only increase in the future. The European Union has therefore highlighted our sector as being at risk of cyberattacks. We need to take the appropriate measures to even better protect our systems."

Another European directive that will change our way of working is the **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)**, which will be a statutory requirement as of 2026 (for our 2025 fiscal year). "First, we will assess what our ESG impacts, risks and opportunities are. This double materiality assessment will involve both our colleagues and our stakeholders. So if you are one of our colleagues or stakeholders, you will probably hear from us very soon!"

“
You don’t expect
to be at the top
of the mountain
the day you start
climbing”

RON DENNIS,
MCLAREN CEO



GROUP-GTS’S WINNING MINDSET!

One of the most enthralling aspects of elite sport is its philosophical side. The challenge, cooperation, the trial and error, the many training sessions that lead to triumph ... it’s all part of the attraction.

We also notice a clear parallel with the road to sustainability. Yes, it is a real challenge to make the green transition. And nobody will succeed alone: cooperation is key. Let’s face it, sometimes a good idea won’t work after all, and we have to try something new: trial and error, you know. But we have to continue each and every day to try to achieve our ultimate goal.

Ron Dennis put it nicely when he said that you don’t expect to be at the top of the mountain the day you start climbing. Well, we have the same mindset. We are on the right path, along with many others. Climbing, climbing, climbing!



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