# Sustainability Report

2023

EXOVE

# Contents

# About us

Exove is a software company with over 15 years of experience in creating and implementing digital services. We develop services for various organizations, from listed companies to startups, and media companies to universities. We use agile methodologies to find the best solutions – always looking into the future. We help our clients achieve digital growth by building digital solutions that are user friendly and work seamlessly – without causing digital frustration.

This is Exove's second sustainability report. It has been built on the basis of our Sustainability program, the Sustainability Compass. The report summarizes and describes our sustainability practices and actions done in 2023 in order to make progress in each direction of the Sustainability Compass.

In the spring of 2023, Exove became part of the PunaMusta Media corporation. This means Exove is now part of a larger family, but the heart of Exove has remained the same. Sustainability and positive development are common values between Exove and PunaMusta Media, and along with the acquisition we have even more capability to invest in these themes, and are looking excitedly towards the future.
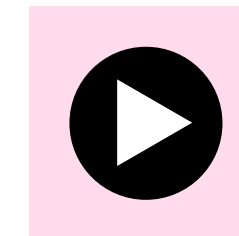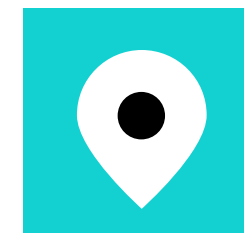
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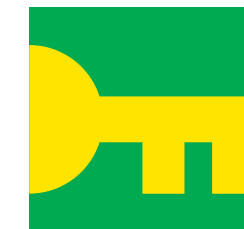
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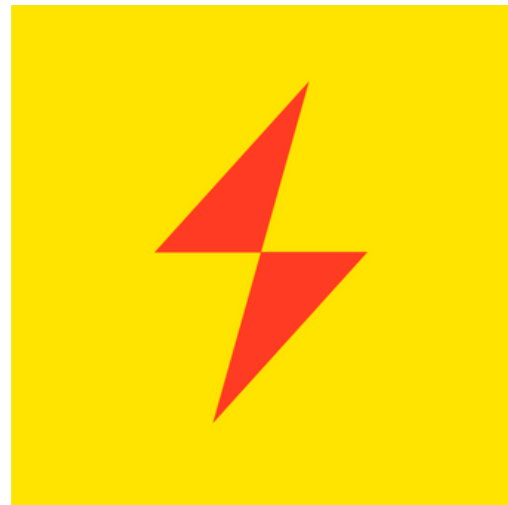80

Offices
4

# Our culture principles

## Passion

We have a drive to work a little bit harder and to push a little bit further than the rest. We do not give up and we love what we do.

## Expertise

We offer our customers the best expertise in the business. As a company we invest into the continuous development of our staff and we all do our best to grow our own as well as our friends expertise.

## Openness

We are committed to openness and transparency. At Exove we share knowledge and information. Our working style is transparent and communication open.

## Care

We care for our employees and invest a lot in staff wellbeing and development. We care for each other and for the community. We care about our customers and their business.

## Sustainability

We are dedicated to minimizing our environmental impact and promoting sustainable practices within our company and the broader community. We are mindful of the long-term effects of our actions, working towards a greener future for all.

# Our Sustainability Strategy

We want to lead by example in our industry and improve sustainability in our projects by creating and implementing principles for social and environmental sustainability.

## EXOVERLASTING FUTURE =
## Exove's sustainability promise

1. A more equal world through digitalisation

2. Solutions with as little environmental impact on the world as possible

3. A safe workplace

4. Economically sustainable and long-lasting solutions

5. Leading the way to a more sustainable digital world

In our sustainability program, we have chosen the following UN Sustainable Development Goals as our point of focus:

- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate action
- Partnerships for the goals
- Gender equality
- Good health and wellbeing



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# The Exove Sustainability Compass

**External**

Sustainable Web Design and Development

**People**

Social Sustainability

**Planet**

Environmental Sustainability

**Internal**

Responsible Company Governance
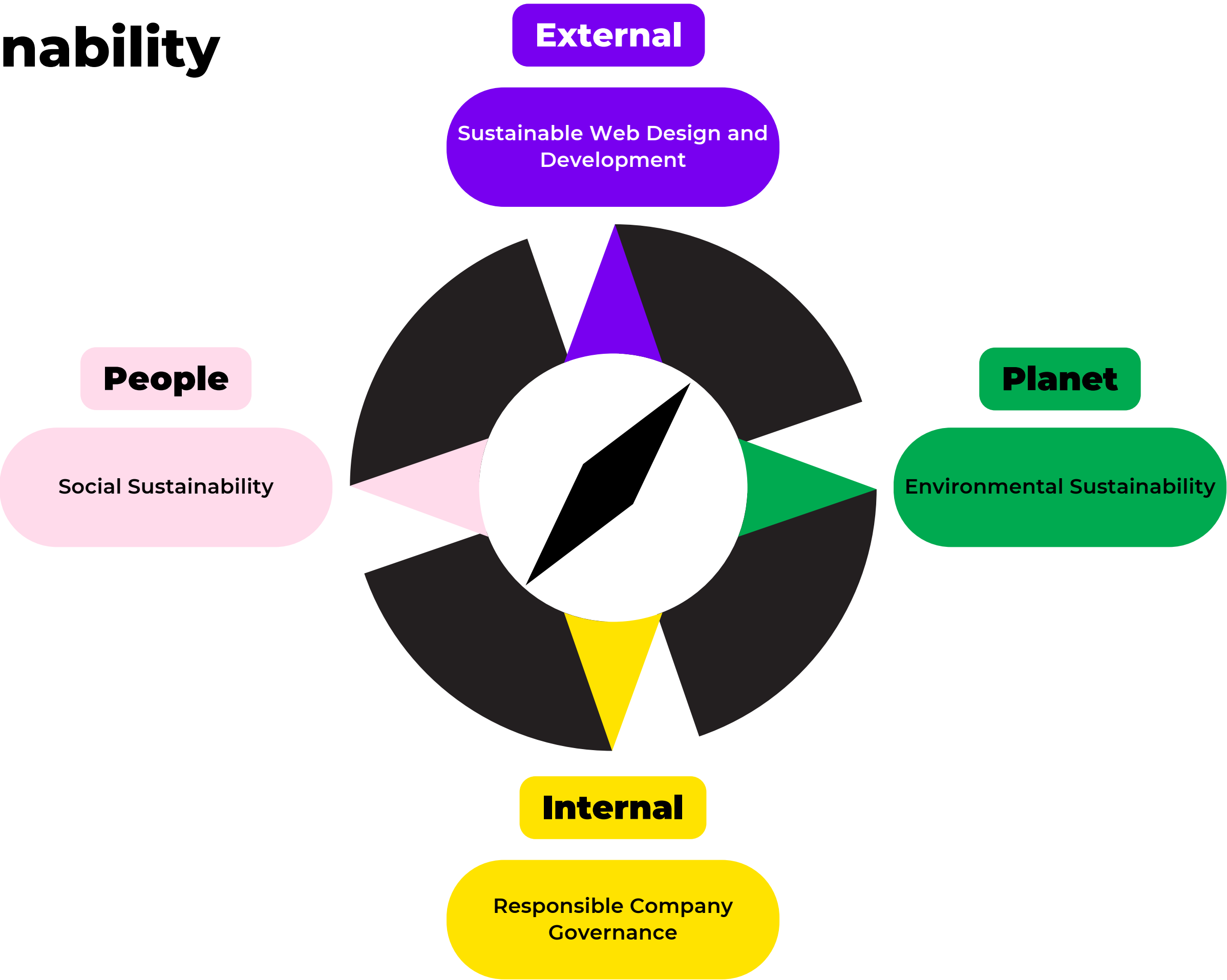
The sustainability program development process for Exove was facilitated by Exove Design Ltd. It started with a materiality assessment in early 2021. The design team mapped out different sustainability frameworks, sustainability aspects often seen relevant for IT and possibilities for unconsidered impact even further than that. Insights were gathered both from inside Exove and external stakeholders. To be able to hear out everyone at Exove and get internal validation, an internal hybrid workshop, "The Compass Game", was arranged. As a result, Exove's sustainability program was finalized - The Exove Sustainability Compass.

The Sustainability Compass guides our sustainability actions with four dimensions. We recognize our sustainability influence internally within Exove as well as externally through partnerships and client projects, and from the point of view of both social and environmental sustainability. The four directions of the Sustainability Compass are:

1. Sustainable web design and development
2. Social sustainability
3. Environmental sustainability
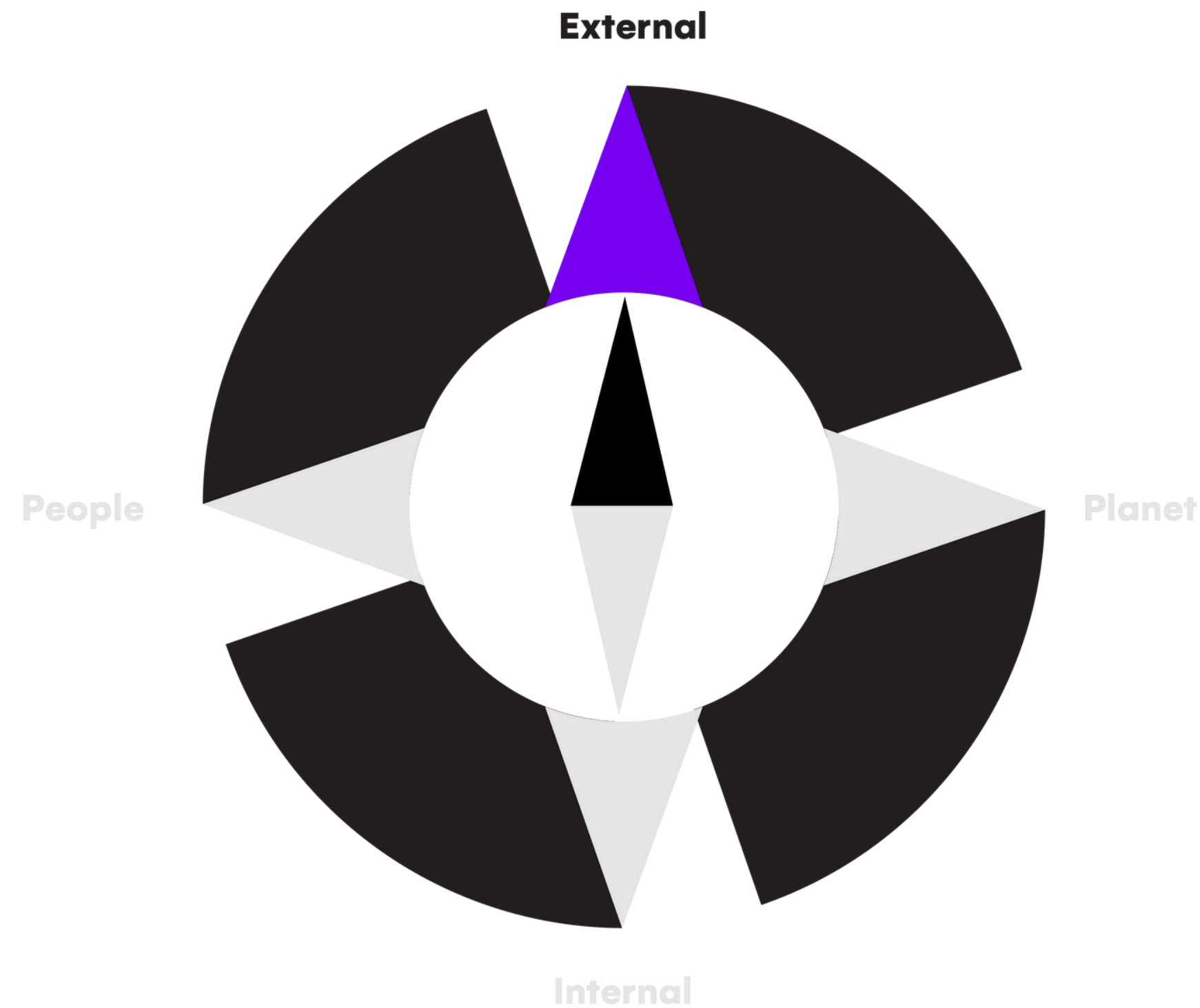4. Responsible company governance

This report follows the themes of the Sustainability Compass and related subtopics. This report describes the actions and highlights in each Compass direction from the year 2023. More information about the Sustainability Compass can be found on the Exove website.
https://www.exove.com/sustainability/

# Sustainable Web Design and Development

We want to cover both social and environmental aspects in our work processes and results, and lead the way in the sustainable ICT world. Sustainable web design and development cover the ways of working in client projects as well as the actual web services produced as a result.

We aim to be active spokespersons for both social and environmental sustainability in software development through accessibility as well as green coding practices. More and more we aim to bring these aspects into our project work, and for our excitement, we have also noticed more and more interest towards sustainability in the industry.



**External**

**People**

**Planet**

**Internal**

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3** GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | **5** GENDER EQUALITY | **13** CLIMATE ACTION | **17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS | **12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION |

# 01

## Creating sustainable web services

Sustainable web services can mean many different things: green code or hosting, accessibility and ethical design, information security and data protection as well as longevity and maintainability of the service, to name a few. We commit to creating digital services in a sustainable way, and our goal is to create future-proof services that work on any devices and even on poor connections.

We offer green hosting in collaboration with our partner UpCloud, and we aim to develop and enforce green coding principles in our way of working. We have extensive accessibility expertise at Exove and many professionals who are passionate about the topic. We take security issues seriously, and in 2023 we received the ISO27001 certification for information security. At the core of our Exove Care service is active maintenance, continuous development and taking care of our services so that they live a long and happy life.

We aim to contribute to sustainability throughout the whole value chain of web services. We are happy to collaborate and work with organizations who share the same values and also commit to sustainability. Not only do we create sustainable web services through our own processes at Exove, but also want to participate in building a digital world that is sustainable for clients that directly aim for increasing sustainability.
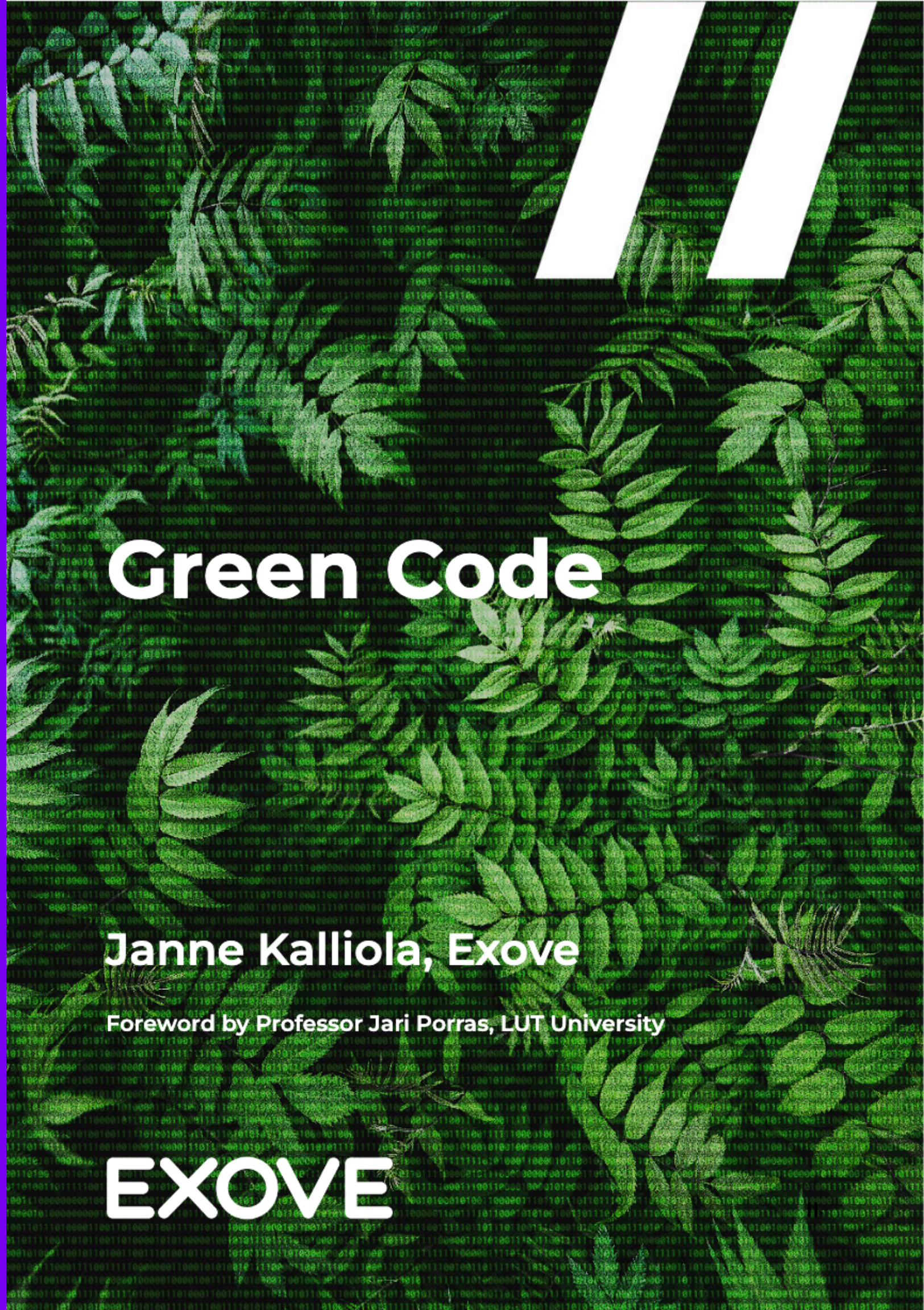
## Towards a greener ICT sector

Green IT and green code have recently been a topic of wide discussion, which we have been actively taking part in. Climate change and the energy crisis in Europe are forcing everyone to reassess energy consumption, and this should also include that of software.

The ICT sector accounts for 4-10% of global energy consumption and 1.5-5% of greenhouse emissions, and these numbers are growing. 1) Emissions are generated from end-user equipment, transmission networks, and data centers – from both their construction and usage. However, this issue is still not addressed at an adequate level.

Due to the growing customer expectations for fast and frequent deployment of new software, efficiency and environmental impact is rarely among key priorities. Further, as the technical constraints of the programming environment have diminished over the last decades, the quality of software has deteriorated, leading to unnecessary energy consumption: due to exponential growth in processing power, networking capacity, and cheap hardware, there simply is no incentive to optimize. However, extending environmental responsibility to software development is very important in order to reach climate goals.

First editions of the Green Code book (Vihreä koodi) written by Exove's founder and Chief Growth Officer Janne Kalliola was published in late 2022. In 2023, a second and improved edition of the book was published. The book aims to define and harmonize the understanding of green code and provide tools for developing software in a more energy-efficient way. It lays out reasons for the inefficiency of current code as well as solutions and recommendations for developers, designers, software companies, and users. In addition to his book, our CGO Janne has also been active in public speaking about green code and the sustainability of ICT in many different events and institutions in the past year.

You can download an e-copy of the book on the Exove website. (Note, we do ask for your e-mail but you can download Green Code book without subscribing Exove's news or #DreamFriends newsletter.) However, please do not print the book: the carbon footprint of the paper needed is about 400 gCO2eq.

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# Social Sustainability

We embrace our responsibility regarding social sustainability both in internal and external contexts. We constantly build the Exove culture and practices to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). We strive to embrace our societal responsibility e.g. through training future talent, working to make Exove a safe space for all employees and aiming to increase diversity in the IT industry.
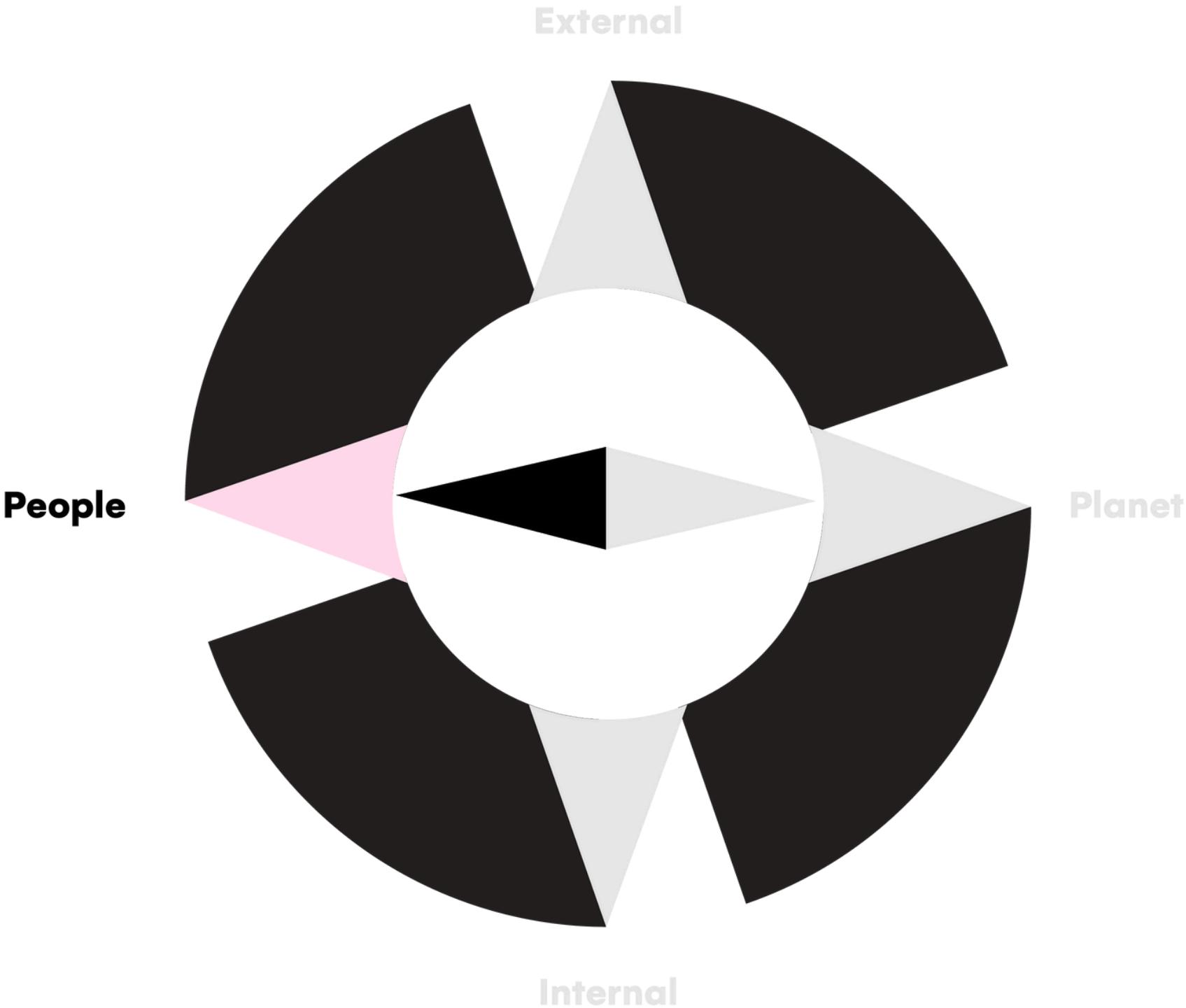
# 01

## Trainee program offering opportunities for future talent

Exove's trainee program ran for the 11th consecutive year in 2023. In the past years, the training program has been renewed and developed based on feedback from earlier years, and effort has been put into improving the quality of trainee mentoring. In 2023 we had four trainees in total, and at least one in each of our Finland offices – we are very happy about the improvement in diversity in trainee locations! In addition, our recent change of publishing the trainee program job postings in English instead of Finnish opened up the position to non-Finnish speaking applicants. Most of the trainees have stayed with us after the trainee program, either full-time or part-time alongside their studies.

In addition, sustainability training is now a part of the trainees' training selection!

The trainee program is also returning for the summer 2024, and we have been collaborating actively with our student association partners to spread awareness of our trainee program to young talents for example via office excursions and job fairs at universities.

# 02

## Supporting DEI via internal and external communication

For 2023 we set a goal to train our staff more about diversity, equity and inclusion. Throughout the year we have been developing a training material for DEI, and two parts of the training has already been held to our Competence Managers. There are so many important things to discuss that the trainings needed to be split into smaller parts! After the manager training round, we are planning to make a lighter version of the training to our whole staff in order to educate everyone about diversity, equity and inclusion.

In 2023, from the initiative of our marketing department, we had discussions and reflections about our internal and external practices and communications in regards to different holidays and special days. From a diversity perspective, we are aware that not all of our employees or other stakeholders necessarily celebrate all the common holidays the same way, and we want to be inclusive and non-discriminatory in all our communication, regardless of the topic.

In light of this, we reviewed our way of internally celebrating different days, as well as our public statements and communication about different events and holidays. For example in 2023, we brought back the Family Day event to celebrate together with all our loved ones. We also celebrated girls' and boys' days by making donations to UN Women's "Digitaitoja tytöille" initiative and to "Poikien puhelin".

# 03

## Accessible web services

Accessibility plays a key role in building inclusive digital services, and it is an important core principle in our way of working. We believe accessibility is closely related to inclusivity and a human-centered way of thinking, which are both highly valued at Exove. Our aim is to improve accessibility through not only technologies and design, but also website contents, which we also help our clients with. In 2023 we created a Guide to Accessible Content that our clients can access by contacting us!

The accessibility point of view is present in our projects from the very beginning, already in the definition and design phases. We also offer accessibility audits to our clients in order to help them with the accessibility of their existing web services by recognizing possible points for improvement with the help of the accessibility criteria.

Many of us are very passionate and experienced about accessibility – Exove even has an in-house certified accessibility specialist. On top of that, we have an active and enthusiastic Accessibility Guild that continuously develops our internal accessibility processes and related service offering, as well as discusses relevant accessibility topics. In 2023 there have been internal trainings organized by the Accessibility Guild, as well as a webinar which is available to download on our website (in Finnish): https://www.exove.com/fi/webinaarit/webinaari-tiistaina-23-5-tavoitteena-laajempi-yleiso-optimoi-sisaltosi-saavutettavuus/



# 04

## Group action towards social sustainability

In 2023, by request from our employees, we applied for the Finnish Red Cross' Donating Blood During Working Hours certificate, and it has already been in active use at Exove! The certification means we permit donating blood twice per year during working hours. In late 2022, exovians organized an excursion to go donate blood and contribute to the common good together as a group.

# Environmental Sustainability

Climate change and resource shortages are causing various crises in the world that lead to inequality and loss of biodiversity. We aim to contribute to solving these issues through the advancement of material and energy efficiency. Carbon footprint is only one part of the whole picture of our environmental thinking, but something worth reporting on its own. In the future, we want to clarify an even bigger picture of our environmental sustainability effect – to avoid carbon tunnel vision.

External

People

Planet

Internal
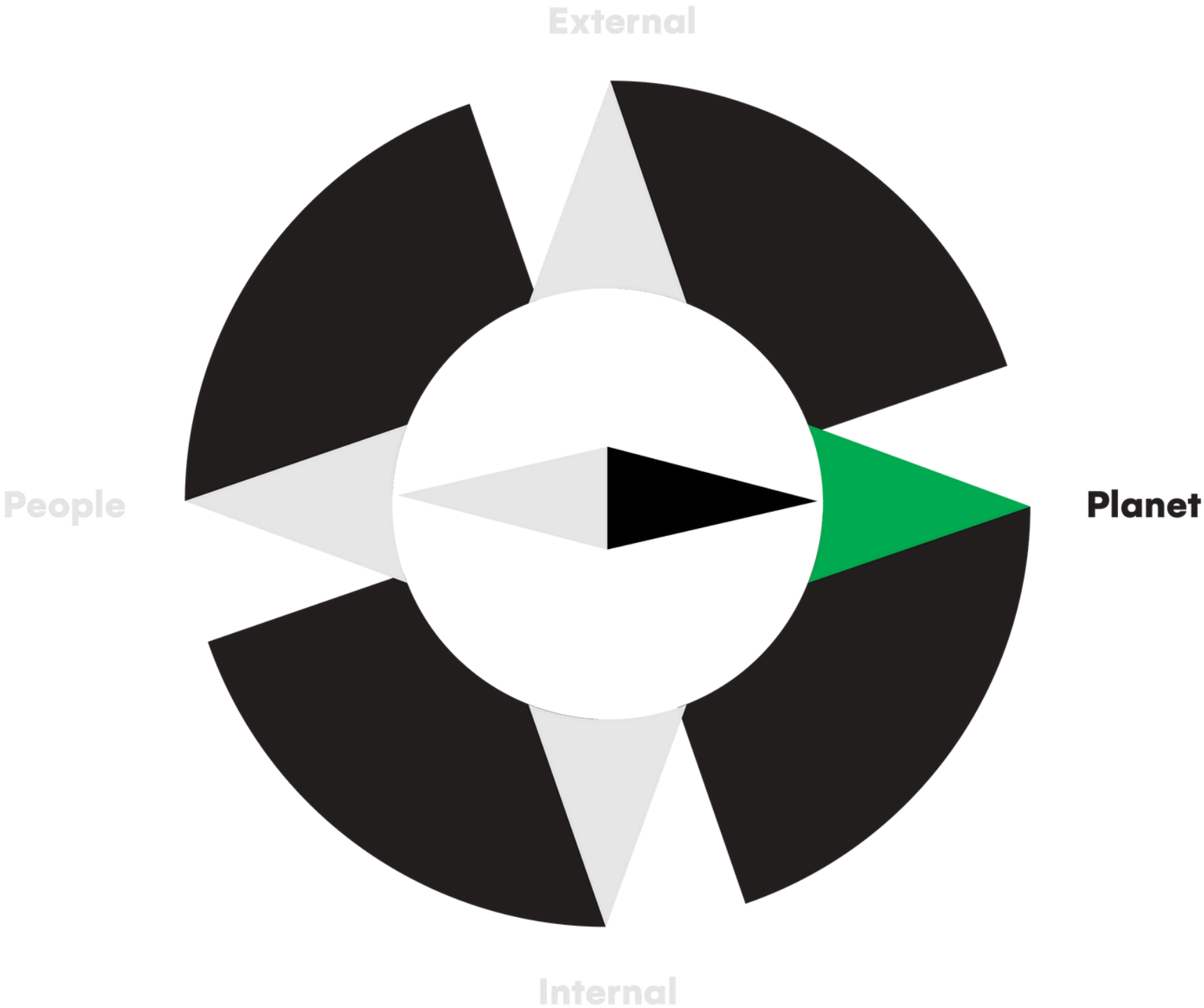
# 01

## Green IT Maturity model

IT-related activities are estimated to consume 4–10% of energy and contribute to 2–4% of carbon emissions globally. These figures are rapidly increasing, and according to some estimates, the share of IT in energy usage could rise to 50% in the future. Since a suitable tool for measuring the environmental friendliness of IT operations was not found in the market, Exove started developing the tool in collaboration with Finnish and international green IT experts. The result is a tool named the Green IT Maturity Model.

Using the Green IT maturity model, an organization can assess the level of responsibility in its practices related to information technology and software. The maturity model covers all dimensions of ICT operations, from device acquisitions to data center usage and coding practices. We examine and measure IT practices from the perspective of sustainability and environmental friendliness. The maturity model enhances understanding of Green IT and its effects, laying the foundation for the company's transformation towards more sustainable IT, cost savings, without forgetting other business-driven goals. Our experts accompany the company from the initial meeting to the final report presentation.

Read more about the Green IT Maturity Model on our website. Our CGO Janne Kalliola will happily discuss the topic in more detail! https://www.exove.com/services/green-it-maturity-model/

# 02

## Towards carbon neutrality

In early 2023 we were granted the Code from Finland Carbon Neutrality label. The label is an indicator of carbon neutral software development: it means that we have calculated and compensated our carbon footprint, and actively aim to minimize it. For this purpose we have a carbon policy that guides our way in decreasing our carbon emissions.

As this year we became part of the PunaMusta Media, along with the rest of the group we have now committed to the Science Based Targets initiative. Therefore, the 2022 carbon footprint calculation was conducted during the year 2023 with the SBTi compatible formula along with PunaMusta Media's carbon calculation.

Exove's carbon footprint for the year 2022 was **552 tCO2e**. This was 1% of the footprint of the whole PunaMusta Media group. The largest share of the footprint are Scope 3 emissions, especially resulting from purchases of services and work devices, for instance.

There is a significant increase compared to our 2021 footprint, that we acknowledge. However, it is explained largely by using a different method for doing the calculation compared to before.

We are currently in the process of calculating our 2023 footprint.

**552t** CO2e

**Exove Carbon Footprint 2022**

# 03

## Advancing circularity

We aim to decrease the use of natural resources on our part by reducing new material purchases, reusing what can be reused, and recycling what cannot to the highest possible extent. Recycling is included in the Exove Code of Conduct and encouraged to all employees. Our main office in Helsinki recycles everything that is currently possible in the property. In other offices we aim to do the same.

In order to increase the lifetime value of company property, we have extended the laptop rotation policy up to 5 years and renewed the employee personal budget to allow for purchasing higher-quality phones that last longer. We have also added and presented the opportunity to use personal budget for device repairs, as well as purchasing used phones as work equipment.

Our personal budgets are also increased by quick rewards, which are a form of public praising that we can give each other. At the end of 2023, we offered the opportunity for our employees to donate their unused quick rewards from the year to Save the Children charity. This allowed spending the reward money on something good and meaningful, in case there wasn't a need to purchase new work equipment!

Laptop and phone auctions have been a best practice at Exove for a long time, and one was also held in 2023. Since the auctions are a recurring event, an improvement to the auction process was made by implementing our internal auction tool for the purpose!

# Responsible Company Governance

Responsible Company Governance reflects our culture principles. We want our culture to support and create willingness to change. Communality and taking care of each other is key in our company culture, and our most important internal focus. In addition, while maintaining profitable business, we want to do good and create an impact through business decisions, clients and partners. We believe transparency is in the heart of sustainable business - and also one of our principles.

External

People

Planet

Internal

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

5 GENDER EQUALITY

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

13 CLIMATE ACTION

# 01

## Taking care of employee wellbeing

At Exove we are following our employees' wellbeing actively with the personnel survey tool Winningtemp. Winningtemp gives a visual impression of the employees' engagement and wellbeing in different categories such as leadership, meaningfulness, and job satisfaction. The platform is anonymous, and also acts as one channel for our employees to raise and discuss possible issues. Managers and system admins are notified of any negative responses, and aggregated data about the responses is visible to all employees.

During the past year Winningtemp has helped us to identify trends and development areas which have led to concrete improvement paths, like increased manager trainings, and the anonymous comments have given us valuable insight to dig in deeper in how we could improve as a company. The data of the feedback is viewed monthly by People Operations and the managers, and quarterly by management. On top of that, Winningtemp reports trends worth noticing on a weekly level.

At Exove it is important for us to really follow if our initiatives are working as wished and creating a positive impact on our people. Winningtemp helps us with this goal and has worked well in our company.
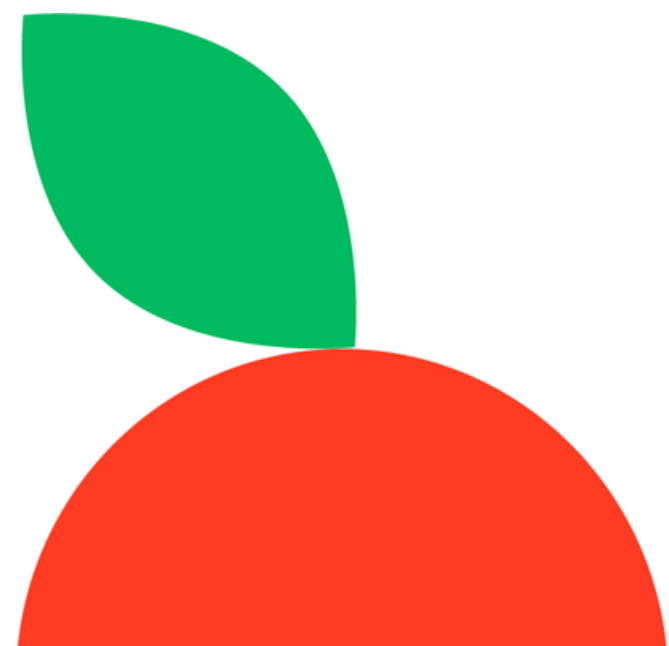
# 02

## Code of Conduct

In 2022 we published a renewed Code of Conduct, which guides us to operate openly, ethically, and according to our values. It delineates the ways in which we work, communicate, and report to stakeholders. In essence, it provides the resources we need in order to make ethical decisions. All staff members are encouraged to refer to the Code of Conduct and enforce its use with clients and partners as well. The Code of Conduct includes social and environmental sustainability topics??

In 2023, we implemented an internal whistleblowing channel that provides the opportunity to anonymously report violations against the Code of Conduct. The whistleblowing channel follows the EU Whistleblower Directive 2019/1937 and ensures anonymous and confidential reporting about suspected misconduct.

In order to make sure our whole staff has read and become familiar with the Code of Conduct, in 2023 we also implemented a light test about it for our employees to ensure that they are familiar with our value principles and ethical guidelines.

# 03

## Training and personal development

Guilds are an integral part of our culture and also work as pillars for employees' personal development. We have active guilds related to security, Artificial Intelligence, knowledge sharing, and UX to name a few. Employees can join any guild in order to develop their knowledge and skills, and new guilds can be started up according to needs and interests – in 2023, three new guilds were established!

At Exove, our Knowledge Sharing Guild organized Continuous Training Days for the whole company, where trainings with different kinds of topics, some of which are more general and others more technical. In 2023 there was one Continuous Training Day, which included trainings about accessibility and security as well as Git and debugging, to name a few.

In addition, we have had an allotted time slot every other week for short demo sessions, a more informal knowledge sharing event, where any employee can arrange a demo about a topic that may interest or benefit others. In 2023 there were at least 6 demo sessions held, with topics ranging from presenting recent new kinds of projects to using our internal tools efficiently, to more general themes like AWS and software development practices.

We want to ensure that all employees have the opportunity to influence their own future and role in the company. Personal development discussions are arranged twice a year, offering employees the chance to discuss any interests and future goals with their manager.

# Moving forward in 2024

Our current sustainability strategy was developed in 2021, and we are now reporting on it for the second time in 2023. In the year 2024 we are facing some changes in the organization in the form of a merger with Gredi Oy, another digital company in the PunaMusta Media group. Throughout these changes, we aim to keep sustainability in the center of our activities and to develop it further both with the help of our Sustainability Compass as well as together with the PunaMusta Media family.

In **Sustainable Software Design and Development**, our focus is on clarifying the meaning and increasing understanding of the topic within our staff and also externally. We want to increase awareness of green IT and green code, and to influence the industry by creating practices to support sustainability in software.

In terms of **Environmental Sustainability**, we aim to understand our carbon footprint and to find ways to decrease it. We are committed to decreasing our carbon footprint together with the PunaMusta Media family and the SBTi targets we have set. We work towards keeping our Carbon Neutrality label granted by Code from Finland (Koodia Suomesta ry).

For **Social Sustainability**, we aim to increase understanding of DEI themes via training. Our plan is to extend the DEI trainings we have been having for our supervisors to our whole staff, so that everybody can learn more about the topic. We all have a lot to learn about diversity, equity and inclusion, and we want to support each other in doing so.

We aim for **Responsible Company Governance** in everything we do, and in 2024 this is a particular point of focus as there have been significant organizational changes. Throughout the changes, we aim to pay attention to as well as continuously improve and learn when it comes to transparency and communication.

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EXOVE