

Kevin Weij - Arcade Mensen en Wonen

Daring, doing and a touch of boldness: Arcade Mensen en Wonen on sustainability

At housing corporation Arcade Mensen en Wonen, sustainability is not an abstract concept but a concrete challenge that resonates throughout the entire organization. Kevin Weij, Sustainability Director, explains how Arcade translates its ambitions into tangible results. "It ranges from strategic to operational levels, and I'm given full freedom to create impact," says Kevin. Arcade manages approximately 10,000 homes and faces major challenges in the areas of energy transition, material transition, and climate adaptation.

The role of Sustainability Director

Kevin describes his role as multifaceted: "I'm a spider in the web—sometimes a process manager, sometimes a project manager, sometimes an advisor. My role is to steer the energy and material transitions in the right direction, set targets, and define strategy." He works closely with various departments, from maintenance and asset management to new construction, and coordinates with municipalities and tenant associations.

Ambition and objectives: from policy to execution

Arcade has formulated clear ambitions, such as achieving 30% circular construction by 2030, with a minimum baseline of 15% circularity per project. "We start with a 15% circular baseline and gradually work toward 30% by 2030," Kevin explains. "We calculated that additional costs should remain between 1% and 3%, so it's a cautious step forward." The focus lies on balancing financial feasibility with sustainable impact.

The power of small successes and awareness

Kevin emphasizes the importance of small wins in creating awareness among colleagues and tenants. "It's not always about achieving the largest CO₂ reduction. For example, a bio-based kitchen primarily serves as a catalyst for conversation about sustainability." By pioneering and sharing successes, enthusiasm and engagement grow within the organization and among tenants.

Daring, doing and a touch of boldness

Kevin stresses that change starts with action: "You have to get started and have the courage to act. Sometimes you need to roll up your sleeves yourself and go the extra mile. Don't overthink it." According to him, real momentum only emerges when you experiment—even if you're unsure whether it's the most efficient approach. "Sometimes you just have to take a shot. Eventually, you gain supporters, direction develops, and initiatives start to take shape." That bold energy and the enjoyment of pioneering make change not only necessary but also rewarding, strengthening internal support for sustainability.



Learning, monitoring and collaboration

Monitoring and sharing performance are essential. Arcade manages several indicators aligned with “het nieuwe normaal” and uses bci gebouw to make environmental performance and circularity measurable and transparent. “We steer on indicators such as biobased share, secondary material share, and the Paris Proof standard. It’s a continuous learning process in which we keep improving together with project developers and advisors.”

Practical example: material transition in new construction

A concrete example is a new-build project in which an apartment building is being assessed for circularity. “We’re still in the design phase, but the goal is to analyze at element level where the low-hanging fruit is and where we can effectively steer toward circularity,” Kevin explains. This project serves as a pilot to inspire others within the organization and to build familiarity with circular construction.

Opportunities and challenges for the future

Looking ahead, Kevin sees opportunities in further developing value creation mechanisms, such as making CO₂ storage and residual material value financially transparent. “The circular economy will positively influence the affordability of social housing. New concepts and tools help unlock projects and secure financing.”

End note: building sustainable impact together

Kevin concludes with a pragmatic and personal reflection: “Ultimately, it’s about the people we do this for. Sustainability is a means to contribute to the well-being of our tenants. Small choices create significant impact, and together we are taking steps toward a circular future.”