



Vorwerk

Sustainability Report

2020



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Dear Reader,

Climate change and its consequences are no longer a distant future scenario but have long been a reality for people all over the world. This was clearly demonstrated by numerous extreme weather events in the summer of 2021, such as the heat waves and forest fires in southern Europe, Russia and America, and the severe flooding in Europe and Asia. All the more reason for us to act now. This is the only way to ensure that our world remains a place worth living in for people and animals. Therefore, striving for sustainability is both an imperative and a priority of our time.

At Vorwerk, we are very aware of this responsibility. In the 2019 and 2020 reporting years, we developed a new corporate strategy in which sustainability plays a fundamental role. Senior management – the Executive Board, the Supervisory Board, and the owner family – were involved in the development of our Strategy 2025. Our sustainability management has been reorganized, and is developing and pursuing specific objectives to make our products more sustainable and position us as a company to face the future with confidence.

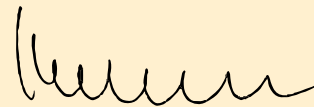
What exactly that means, we demonstrate in the field. Vorwerk is known for high-quality,

durable products. In addition to quality management, we also have other certified management systems in place for dealing with environmental and energy issues. On this basis, we are tackling new aspects of sustainability, such as increasing the use of recycled materials and ensuring a verifiably responsible supply chain. We have also set ourselves an ambitious climate target: By 2025, we will have reduced our own CO₂ emissions by one-third compared to 2016. For us, sustainability also means being a true partner to the people who work for us. We would like to express our special thanks to all those who work for Vorwerk – both employees and self-employed advisors – for their above-average commitment in 2019 and 2020. This is especially relevant in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly affected and changed our lives and daily work. This commitment and our ability to adapt give us the confidence that we will also successfully master the challenges ahead.

We are heading in the right direction, particularly in view of the increase in positive ratings we have received in the sustainability rankings of well-known companies in the industry. But one thing is certain: We will not rest on our lau-

rels but will resolutely and consistently continue to expand our commitment to people and the environment – “To keep the world our home.”

With this in mind, we wish you an insightful read,



Dr. Thomas Stoffmehl

Spokesperson for the Executive Board and Chief Sales Officer, Vorwerk SE & Co. KG



Hauke Paasch

Chief Financial Officer for the Executive Boards, Vorwerk SE & Co. KG



Responsibility and Sustainability

What does responsible corporate governance mean to us? For Vorwerk as a family-owned company, responsibility means taking a perspective that spans across generations. We shape markets to maintain our success for tomorrow. We change as the general framework changes. Sustainability is becoming part of our business operations and our corporate strategy so that our world can still be our home tomorrow. We keep an eye on the risks from early on and act according to the law and regulations. That is what responsible corporate governance means for us.

Strategic

In 22 virtual town hall events, we communicated sustainability as one of the elements of our new Strategy 2025.

Structured

The sustainability management system, revised in 2020, features four strategic areas and eight fields of action.

Risk-aware

32 corporate guidelines regulate topics such as compliance, data protection, and responsible risk assessment at Vorwerk.

This is Vorwerk

Having the courage to innovate and setting standards of the highest quality have made Vorwerk an internationally successful company with a long tradition. Vorwerk was founded in 1883 in Wuppertal, and over the course of its 137-year history, it has developed into a broadly diversified international group of companies.

Vorwerk's business model encompasses the development, production, and sale of high-quality products and services. As a direct sales company, Vorwerk always seeks direct contact with the people who use Vorwerk products. We place self-employed advisors and their personal advice to our clients at the center of our activities. For us, the key to success lies in involving our advisors in

sales – regardless of the channel – and providing them with optimal support.

At the core of our brand's products are innovative solutions in the fields of Culinary Journey, Cleaning, Digital Services, and New Business Models. With our products and services, we want to increase the quality of life of our customers in their homes.



The Group is divided into several companies and business units.

1 – Vorwerk SE & Co. KG

Founded in 1883 and headquartered in Wuppertal (Germany), the parent company of our family business is Vorwerk SE & Co. KG – a limited partnership whose general partner has been an unlisted European company (SE) since July 2021. Around 590,000 people work for Vorwerk worldwide, including 578,000 self-employed advisors. Vorwerk generated consolidated sales of approximately EUR 3.2 billion in 2020 and is active in more than 60 countries.

2 – Thermomix®

This business unit represents the multifunctional kitchen appliance Thermomix®, which has been simplifying everyday cooking for 50 years thanks to its special combination of a wide range of functions in one device and more than 60,000 recipes tailored to the Thermomix®. It is mainly distributed via direct sales through almost 60,000 self-employed advisors on average worldwide. The business unit is active in 16 countries with its own companies. In over 30 other countries, sales are handled by distributors. Find out more at www.thermomix.com.



3 – Kobold

Kobold is synonymous with premium home-care products and cleaning solutions. Its diverse product portfolio includes the Kobold VB100 Cordless Vacuum Cleaner, the Kobold VT300 Cylinder Vacuum Cleaner, the Kobold VK200 Upright Vacuum Cleaner, and the Kobold VR300 Robot Vacuum Cleaner. Kobold sells its products worldwide through a variety of distribution channels combining classical sales at the customer's home with digital and physical sales outlets. Find out more at www.vorwerk.co.uk/kobold/home/.

4 – Vorwerk Engineering

The Vorwerk Engineering business unit is represented at the three locations of Wuppertal (Germany), Cloyes-sur-le-Loir (France), and Shanghai (China). The largest production site is in Wuppertal, where our research and development activities are also concentrated. This business unit manufactures products for Thermomix, Kobold, and Temial on behalf of the sales companies that control the development process.

5 – Temial

Temial offers fully automatic tea makers, pre-blended loose-leaf tea, and matching accessories in direct sales, online shops, and Vorwerk stores. Find out more at www.vorwerk-temial.de.

6 – akf group

The akf group is a financial service provider for SMEs. Active in the market for more than 50 years, akf bank, akf leasing, and akf servicelease offer a product portfolio that is attuned to the financing requirements of SMEs. Financial investment products complete the range of services. Find out more at www.akf.de.

Other business segments

Vorwerk Direct Selling Ventures GmbH is included in the key figures of Vorwerk & Co. KG. Not included in this report are the business units JAFRA Cosmetics and Neato Robotics, Inc. Also no longer included is the Vorwerk flooring business unit, which we divested on August 1, 2020, as part of a management buyout.

Facts and figures 2020

On average
60,000
self-employed advisors worked for
Thermomix® alone in 2020



37 men and **99** women
were on parental leave in
the Vorwerk Group in 2020



Typically
10
years after a model's end of
production, we keep hardware
components on hand for repair.



3.2
billion euros in sales was generated by
the Vorwerk Group in 2020

8,528
metric tons of CO₂ were emitted by the
Vorwerk Group in 2020, a decrease of
around 52 percent compared to 2016 –
also due to lower fuel
consumption caused by the
pandemic.



Around
590,000
employees worldwide
provided the basis for our
success in the Vorwerk
Group



Strategic leadership

Vorwerk has always been and will remain a family business operated by a committed owner family that thinks in terms of generations. Through our long-term economic success, we are securing the future of Vorwerk and of our employees.

We inspire people through our active community of self-employed advisors, customers, and employees. Through this community, we create connections, opportunities, and a sense of belonging. We are growing organically, but also through the acquisition of companies that fit our profile. In addition, we have diversified our portfolio across companies which share our values and appeal to complementary target groups.

137 years of family business

In its 137th year of business, Vorwerk is still 100 percent family owned. Today, 18 members of the Mittelsten Scheid family make up the shareholders of the company. The strategic holding company of the corporate group in the previous reporting years was Vorwerk & Co. KG, which was most recently headed by one managing partner. In mid-2021, another general partner, Vorwerk Verwaltung SE, joined the holding company; it has been operating under the name Vorwerk SE & Co. KG from that time. Since then, the members of the Vorwerk Verwaltung SE's Executive Board have been Dr. Thomas Stoffmehl and Hauke Paasch, who will be joined by Dr. Thomas Rodemann

from January 2022. Reiner Strecker will step down as general partner at the end of 2021. The Executive Board, in the year under review chaired by Dr. Rainer Hillebrand, is made up of eight people, half of whom are family members with the other half being external experts. Honorary Chairman and member of the Executive Board is Dr. Jörg Mittelsten Scheid, great-grandson of the company founder.

Strategy 2025: Setting the course for the future

In 2019, we started to further develop the future strategy for Vorwerk. Representatives from the owner family, the Executive Board, and the Group Council took part in two workshops this year. In the proposals for the "Strategy 2025" under discussion in the workshops, the aim was to create a stronger sense of direction, above all for employees and managers, to make goals more comprehensible, and to support this through clearer communication of the contents. This led to the development of a strategic vision for the year 2025, as well as targets for the years 2021 and 2025.

Parts of the company were already involved in the development of the strategy during the conception

phase to obtain suggestions and feedback from the employees' perspective. In February 2020, the Group Council provided the Executive Board with a final update on the jointly developed content. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic just prior to this caused delay but did not prevent further development of the strategy. Consequently, the Group-wide kickoff with 22 virtual town hall events in all the company's core markets related to the strategy did not take place until September 2020. Each event was attended by at least two members of the Group Council.

The Strategy 2025 is based on three core elements that equally play to Vorwerk's strengths (see right).

Goal of sustainability

The strategic vision for 2025 outlines the most important priority topics and goals to be achieved by 2025. One aim of this vision is that, by that time, we will also distinguish ourselves positively from the competition in the market in terms of sustainability. Sustainability is therefore one of the six goals of the strategy. During 2021, specific performance indicators and fields of action will be developed to achieve this strategic goal.

Enthusiastic people

We foster an active community of self-employed advisors, customers, and employees. We are committed to a high-performance culture built on meaning, creative freedom, and trust.

Direct sales in three connected channels

Our business is based on three interconnected distribution channels: person-to-person direct sales, the online store, and local stores.

Outstanding products and services

Our business segments are in the areas of Culinary Journey, Cleaning, Digital Services, and New Business Models.

Managing sustainability

Doing business responsibly means doing business sustainably. We cannot do this without taking a holistic view of those areas of our business that have an impact on people and the environment.

Our understanding of sustainability includes safe and environmentally friendly products and production, but also social issues such as fair employment and diversity. In addition, there are business-related topics such as risk management, compliance, and data protection. We have a responsibility to produce innovative products that enable business growth, to use raw materials carefully, to reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions, to support employee development, and to engage with the society we are part of.

Vorwerk also takes a sustainable approach to

the investment of the company's own assets. To ensure that our investments are compatible with sustainable development, at irregular intervals we have our investment portfolio analyzed in terms of sustainability criteria. When investing new funds or selecting service providers in portfolio management, preference is therefore given to companies that take sustainability criteria into account. In the current 2021 fiscal year, we will once again be subjecting our own investment portfolio to a sustainability check.

Restructured sustainability management

At Vorwerk, we regard sustainability as a management topic. This means that the strategic orientation of our sustainability activities is fixed by the Executive Board in accord with the overall corporate strategy.

Vorwerk has had a strategic sustainability management system in place across all sites since 2016. In the early years, we worked with the Group Sustainability Council made up of representatives from the relevant business units and specialist departments. This initial sustainability organization served to establish sustainabili-

ty development in the company and generated attention to the topic. The Council successfully set topics and sensitized various functions in the company to their relevance. This resulted in an internal network of sustainability supporters, an initial work program, and reporting processes for sustainability indicators.

This development was also closely followed by external stakeholders and led to positive ratings in sustainability rankings. In a ranking of climate-conscious companies in Germany published in the business magazine *Capital* in February 2021, Vorwerk achieved 2nd place among

manufacturers of consumer and household goods and 7th place overall. In a survey conducted in March 2021 by *Focus Money* magazine on the sustainable commitment of almost 1,700 German companies, Vorwerk achieved 8th place among 21 manufacturers of household appliances with a rating of “very strong”. In December 2020, *Stern* magazine awarded Vorwerk with the seal “Germany’s Most Sustainable Companies 2021”. Vorwerk ranked 126th on the list of the 200 most sustainable companies compiled by *Stern* and Statista – a total of more than 2,000 companies were examined.

In 2020, we entered a new phase. On the one hand, structures and processes changed as part of the corporate strategy. On the other hand, we sharpened our focus on key issues. In September 2020, the Supervisory Board, the entire Executive Board of Vorwerk SE & Co. KG, and the owner family intensively addressed sustainability and advancing its strategic development. As a result of these discussions, the Executive Board set two strategic sustainability goals: achieving climate neutrality in terms of the Vorwerk Group’s own CO₂ emissions by 2025 and

ensuring the compatibility of family, workplace, and career. This new phase builds on the foundations of our orientation phase. Through the meanwhile annual reports on our progress, we highlight these fields of action and group them under four major topic areas:

Products and Supply Chain

Environmental Protection

Collaborative Partnership

Social Commitment

Sustainability at akf group

In addition to the strategic fields of action of the Vorwerk Group, the business units develop their own sector-specific approaches and goals. A good example of this is the sustainability strategy of our financial services provider akf. The company’s “Sustainability Vision 2023” reads:

In 2023, akf group would like to be perceived by employees, clients, and market participants as a bank that continuously addresses sustainability in all of its business units and has made sustainability part of its product promise.

The measures to implement the strategy are divided into four topic clusters:

- Sustainability risks
- Sustainability in sales and marketing
- Sustainability inspires employees
- Sustainable, family-oriented employer

Material topics

Vorwerk's sustainability management continues to be based on the analysis of material topics conducted in 2016 (see [Sustainability Report 2018](#), pages 16–18). The eight fields of action into which our 31 material topics have been grouped were endorsed by the Executive and Supervisory Boards in September 2020 (see right side).

In 2020, we integrated the eight fields of action into the four topic areas listed above. For example, the management of real estate falls under

the topic of Environmental Protection, the supply chain is assigned to the topic of Products, and employees and self-employed advisors belong to the topic of Collaborative Partnership. The field of action Corporate Governance and Risk Management runs horizontally through all these fields.

We plan to conduct a new materiality analysis in 2022 to meet the changing demands of our stakeholders.

Employees

Job satisfaction
Training and education
Fair working conditions
Diversity and inclusion
Health and safety
Knowledge transfer

Supply Chain

Environmental and social performance of suppliers

Real Estate

Sustainable building
Facility management
Workplace design

Corporate Governance and Risk Management

Risk management
Data security and protection
Anticompetitive practices
Behavior toward customers
Quasi-self-employment
Personnel leasing
Sustainable investments

Products

Product safety
Product life cycle
Materials used (incl. packaging)
Environmental product performance
Digitalization and service concepts
Customer satisfaction and complaints management

Environment

Energy management
CO₂ emissions

Social Commitment

Social commitment

Self-employed Advisors

Occupation satisfaction
Training and education
Collaborative partnership
Diversity and inclusion
Health and safety

In dialogue with society

Vorwerk strives for an open dialogue with all those interested in the company and its products. We communicate with these social stakeholders in various ways and continue to develop as a result.

The insights from this dialogue with our stakeholders can provide, for example, inspiration for sustainability management, impulses for product development, or suggestions and ideas for human resources.

Our stakeholders include customers, employees, self-employed advisors, shareholders, suppliers, and government bodies. In assessing these groups of people and their expectations of Vorwerk, we distinguished between primary and secondary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders we identify as groups that impact directly on our business success. These include customers, suppliers, employees, self-employed advisors, management, the Supervisory Board, and shareholders. In the case of secondary stakeholders, such as legislators, government bodies, NGOs, or media, the influence tends to be indirect and occurs over the long term.

Multiple communication channels

Vorwerk communicates with its stakeholders in a variety of ways. The mainstay of our external communication is formed by our websites and social media, which provide information for many target groups: actual and potential customers, employees and job applicants, representatives of the media, and the professional users of our award-winning annual report.

Our new social intranet “Coyo”, which was launched in 2020, is aimed at our employees. It provides information on all strategic and employee-related topics and can be used as a



The newly launched intranet “Coyo” provides our employees with information, exchange and feedback opportunities.

channel for feedback, for example to the company management. Through regular usage analyses and recurring opinion surveys, we are continuously working to optimize the user-friendliness of our intranet and increase employee satisfaction with the platform and its content. A number of digital town hall meetings were conducted through Microsoft Teams in 2020. In previous years, we also conducted online employee satisfaction surveys, which could not yet be resumed due to various restructuring measures. In 2021, however, a survey is planned in Germany on the compatibility of family, workplace, and career. We address job applicants through professional networks and events.

We communicate continuously with our self-employed advisors, also over and above the regular business processes. The VORward IT project has enabled us to expand this communication to include digital channels in recent

years by designing and rolling out coordinated business processes and IT solutions on an international basis for the business units Thermomix and Kobold (for more information, see [page 50](#)). We receive feedback from customers through various channels – classically by post and e-mail, by telephone through our customer service, but also in the form of tests for product development and via social media. We also conduct regular customer satisfaction surveys (for more information, see [page 22](#)). We have specific processes for feedback that reaches us via our self-employed advisors. Our customers can be sure that their concerns will reach the responsible departments at Vorwerk directly and will be dealt with there in a targeted manner. At the same time, we use the feedback to constantly further our own development. Customer feedback is an important part of our innovation management.

Acting in accordance with the law

The basic prerequisite for responsible corporate management is compliance with the law and regulations. To this end, we provide our employees with corporate guidelines that regulate areas such as compliance, data protection, and risk assessment.

At Vorwerk, compliance is decentralized and organized according to the specific country. In October 2020, the central Group Corporate Governance department was also created to further boost topics of compliance. If doubts arise in the operational business about the legality or legitimacy of a project, our Code of Conduct, and in many cases also the Compliance or Purchasing Policy, offers the answer. A whistleblower hotline in compliance with EU law and a Compliance Committee will also be established in the 2021 fiscal year.

To help our employees in dealing with these issues, we provide them with corporate guidelines on important topics such as compliance,

data privacy, and risk assessment – 32 guidelines in total. Executives share responsibility for their teams: If a question cannot be fully clarified, the relevant superior must be consulted. Training helps to further integrate the topics and take account of current developments.

32

Group guidelines serve our employees as effective assistance in their day-to-day work

The Code of Conduct and the corporate guidelines also apply to the akf group, the financial services provider of the Vorwerk Group. Regular further training in the areas of law and compliance through face-to-face training or e-learning maintains sensitivity to ethically correct behavior. This also includes an optionally anonymous whistleblower system and a regulated procedure for handling any complaints.

Risk management as a task of executive leadership

Assessment of the opportunities and risks of business activities is an integral part of Vorwerk's executive functions. Group-wide risk

management is a clearly defined, continuous process for assessing and dealing with risks. The risk situation is regularly analyzed and presented in a risk matrix. The process includes the identification and evaluation of risks and the definition of risk management measures, as well as their communication, management, and control. The business performance and the opportunities and risks arising from ongoing operations are discussed in the corporate management reports and Supervisory Board meetings. Fundamentally uniform guidelines apply to all business units. These guidelines are laid down by the management, and compliance with them is monitored as part of internal risk reporting.

Each individual risk owner is responsible for the risk strategy and the management of specific risks and must monitor the effectiveness of the risk management measures, ensuring that they are adjusted if necessary. For further details on risks, see the section “Opportunities and Risks” in the [Group Management Report 2020](#) (page 31ff.).

Due to its capital market business, the akf group holds a special position in the compliance and risk management profile of the Vorwerk Group. In addition to our general internal regulations at Vorwerk, the akf group must also observe other laws and regulations for the financial sector, such as the Banking Act, the Minimum Requirements for Risk Management (MaRisk), and the Regulation on the Submission of Financial and Risk-bearing Capacity (FinaRisikoV). Training courses are held for employees on selected topics from these areas.

Ensuring data protection

Dealing responsibly with business partners and customers also includes the careful handling of data. Each company at Vorwerk has its own data protection officer who reports to the management of that company. The highest level of management carries the greatest responsibility. Those responsible for data protection ensure that the legal provisions are observed, for example by raising awareness, providing advice, or conducting training courses.

They are also the contact persons for customers, employees, advisors, and suppliers. In 2020, one focus of the work was on the implementation of the European General Data Protection Regulation. In addition to data protection, data and IT security are becoming more and more important as digitalization becomes more widespread. Our data security management system includes our corporate guidelines on data protection and an extensive training presentation on the intranet, containing numerous practical case examples.

Data security for products

The more products are networked with the Internet through smart home applications, the more important is the role played by product-related data security. The risks in this area lie in the fact that the devices collect information about their area of application through their sensors and share it with mainframes via Wi-Fi, cloud services, and apps.

Data security and the associated use of customer data exclusively for the purposes for which it is given is an important concern for Vorwerk. In this context, we at Vorwerk are proud to be the winners of independent tests on data security. For example, in January 2019, the Kobold VR300 Robot Vacuum Cleaner won the security review undertaken by the independent IT security institute AV-TEST1. Four premium vacuum robots from well-known brand manufacturers were tested. The Kobold VR300 only collects the data necessary for the operation of the robot. The collected data is only used anonymously for statistics and product improvements. Data se-

curity also applies to other Vorwerk products that are considered “Smart Home Devices” as defined by the European Commission, such as Thermomix® and Temial.



Products and Supply Chain

What is a sustainable product for us? As we understand it, the entire product life cycle is important – from the initial idea to recycling after many years of use. Thinking in terms of sustainability for product development, enabling low energy consumption in the use phase, using separable and recyclable materials, providing a product that is safe to use and will offer many years of service – and for which our suppliers also take their share of responsibility. **That is what a sustainable product is for us.**

Durable

In 2020, we still sold 302,000 FP122 filter bags for the Kobold VK118. That device was last manufactured in 1983.

Repairable

We keep hardware components on hand for a long period of time - typically ten years after a model's end of production.

Resource-efficient

Despite an 11.8 percent increase in production volume, the amount of plastic packaging increased by only 2.7 percent in 2020.

Sustainability in product development

We at Vorwerk have high standards for our products. But quality, innovation, and environmental friendliness are important not only to us, but also to our customers. That's why we involve them in the development of new products at an early stage.

The feedback we receive from our customers is particularly valuable to us because it shows what the wishes and expectations attached to our products are. If we succeed in meeting these expectations, our customers will be satisfied and recommend us to others, which ultimately ensures the business success we need to continue developing sought-after products that offer a high level of benefit. Customer feedback is systematically collected and

integrated into product development throughout the whole process, from the initial idea to the start of production. We work with a variety of methods, from online surveys to super-user and advisor workshops to large-scale market research projects. We examine saleable products in test markets, flanking this process with targeted surveys. In addition, we approach the most active members of our online community to gather their input on potential new product features.



Customer expectations and sustainability

Sometimes we are faced with very special challenges in product development – for example, when customer expectations stand in some degree of conflict with sustainability. The more complex the uses of an electrical appliance become, the more the data volumes and energy consumption increase, either on the device itself or in a data center. From the

customer's point of view, however, an electrical appliance must offer digital services while at the same time being energy-saving and lasting a long time. The aim of our innovation work is therefore to bridge the gap between the demands of modern design, quality, and safety on the one hand and environmental friendliness on the other. Our essential criteria in product development are:

Energy efficiency

Taking account of quality and customer expectations, our devices consume as little power as possible.

Quality

A Vorwerk product is the result of a quality management process certified according to ISO 9001.

Safety and security

Vorwerk products are safe and secure to use and naturally comply with the applicable standards and laws.

Customer satisfaction

To meet customer expectations and continuously improve, we regularly conduct customer surveys.

Modern design

Electrical appliances for the 21st century look good, have innovative functions, and are digitally connected wherever this makes sense.

Supplier engagement

We also expect our suppliers to comply with environmental and social standards.

Repairability

We keep hardware components on hand for a long period of time - typically ten years after a model's end of production.

Recyclability

We are working to ensure that all our products can be broken down into their essential components and recycled.

Durable and reparable

The premium quality and longevity of Vorwerk products have always been the foundations of our success. High-quality workmanship is closely related to sustainability, as it promotes consistently high product performance with low energy consumption and low wear.

Vorwerk products are designed to provide consistently good performance. With our Kobold vacuum cleaners, for example, the sale of filter bags for devices that are no longer manufactured is a good indication of their longevity. For instance, even today we still sell around 302,000 FP122 filter bags annually for the Kobold VK118, which was last produced in 1983. The situation is similar with the VK122, which was withdrawn from the market in 2000. This shows that Vorwerk products continue to provide their owners with consistently good service even after almost 40 years.

Internet auction sites still offer fully functioning Thermomix® TM3300 model appliances, which

were discontinued in 1996. This means that in many cases even products that Vorwerk customers have parted with continue to function for years.

Reparability is a sustainability factor

With our electrical appliances we attach great importance to reparability. For this reason, we keep hardware components on hand for a long period of time – usually ten years after production of a model is discontinued. This is part of our customer promise and at the same time one of the principles of our product policy, which pays specific attention to sustainability. After all, the longer the products are used in house-

holds, the less resources are needed to produce new ones.

However, for some electrical appliances, faster development cycles mean that after a certain time special components such as displays and electronic parts are no longer up-to-date. With certain products or their components, this can lead to them being at some point no longer practical, or sometimes no longer possible, to keep spare parts in stock for such a long time. We are currently in the process of developing solutions for this that meet the customers' needs.

At Vorwerk, durability and reparability are both taken into account in product development. For example, the fully automatic Temial Tea Maker

was designed from the outset so that, if necessary, individual components would be replaceable, rather than having to replace an entire assembly. On the Thermomix®, from the TM5 model onward, the display and its corresponding circuit board have been designed to be separable so they can be repaired individually if necessary. In the case of the EB400 Automatic Electric Brush for the Kobold models VK200 and VT300, since the beginning of 2021 we have made it possible to subsequently disassemble the motor and the gear mechanism so they can be repaired independently of each other if necessary. This will be standard at Vorwerk when redeveloping the next generations of appliances.

Ensuring recyclability

Vorwerk is working on solutions in product development that enable the separability and recyclability of the individual appliance components – even if this is not yet general practice today. For the Thermomix® we are able to separate components such as pot lids, handles, etc. Faulty parts are sorted out during production, separated according to materials, shredded, and returned to production as regranulate. To expand this practice even further, we invested in a new plastics mill in early 2021.

Injection molding during the production process results in scrap in the form of cold plastic pieces



and overflows made of the same plastic as the manufactured product. Standard practice is to throw this plastic waste away. At Vorwerk, we have been recycling these scraps since 2018 by turning them into regranulate and feeding them back into production. For example, in 2020 we produced around 21.6 metric tons of regranulate from the sprue spider for the insulation bodies of the Thermomix® and 16 metric tons of regranulate from the overflow of its pot handle. The leftovers from the production of pot handles thus become the suction channel cover of the EB400 vacuum cleaner brush, which is made 100 percent from regranulate.

Separability and labeling of materials also allows recycling after a product has been disposed of, even if this is not yet practiced on a large scale by the recycling industry. In the case of returned products, we remove parts that are still usable and reuse them, provided they are technically sound. Returns in the countries where we distribute Thermomix® ourselves came to 2.0 percent in 2020 (2019: 2.2 percent), and for Kobold products they came to 4.7 percent (2019: 4.2 percent). Packaging cannot be reused by Vorwerk for reasons of quality.



Increasing material and energy efficiency

The economical use of resources for products and packaging and improvement of their energy efficiency are important goals of Vorwerk's sustainability management.

The sum total of material used at Vorwerk amounted to 34,752 metric tons in 2020 (2019: 30,001 mt), an increase of 15.8 percent over the previous year. The main reason for this growth was an increase in production and the resulting rise in demand for materials such as electronic components, metals, wood, and bought-in finished parts. In 2020, we recorded declines primarily in acids and solvents (minus 39 percent). The share of renewable raw materials rose by 15.8 percent to 3,470 metric tons.

Reducing packaging material

In addition to the increasing use of regranulate in production, Vorwerk is also committed to reducing the use of materials for packaging. We are working systematically to reduce plastics in our packaging and to increase the proportion of recyclable and recycled materials – especially wood and cardboard.

In 2020, the packaging at Vorwerk had a recycled content of around 60 percent. This proportion will continue to increase in the future, because we will not only replace plastics but also

work with recycled plastics. For example, we will soon be using plastic foil with a recycled content of 70 percent.

Of the 4,225 metric tons of packaging materials accrued in 2020 (2019: 3,621 mt), paper/cardboard accounted for 78.4 percent, wood 3.7 percent, and plastics 11.9 percent. The amount of plastic packaging increased by only 13 metric tons, or 2.7 per cent – despite an 11.8 percent increase in production volume in 2020. This is the result of a project to avoid and reduce product packaging that has been underway since

2019. The proportion of recycled materials in the packaging of the Thermomix® TM6 was approximately 56 percent in 2020. For the most important Kobold articles, it lay between 70 and 75 percent.

In search of more sustainable materials

Making the material composition of products more sustainable is a major challenge. This is because possible alternative materials must always be compatible with our high quality and design standards. With this in mind, the Engineering business unit worked with the Institute for Plastics Technology (IKT) in Stuttgart in 2018 and 2019 to identify more sustainable materials for Vorwerk household appliances. This extensive study produced numerous suggestions for substitute materials and their evaluation criteria from a sustainability point of view. Thus, with an annual consumption of 1,600 metric tons of ABS plastic, we can save about 1,300 metric tons of CO₂ through material substitution. We will use this knowledge for further product developments and roll them out in the future.



Key consumption of materials¹

In metric tons	2019	2020
Total material consumption	30,001	34,752
Raw and auxiliary materials	12,326	13,768
Metals	6,011	6,662
Plastics	6,315	7,106
Operating fluids	18	11
Oils, greases, lubricants, chemicals, etc.	18	11
Packaging material	3,621	4,225
Wood	107	156
Cardboard	2,889	3,314
Plastics	488	501
Other	137	254
Bought-in parts	14,036	16,749
Electrical parts	1,378	1,587
Other	12,657	15,162

¹ Vorwerk Engineering only. No data for 2018 due to modified survey methodology. Due to rounding, there may be minor discrepancies in totals.



Energy-efficient products

Energy efficiency is another key factor that influences quality and sustainability. This concerns the performance achieved in comparison to power consumption or, in the case of vacuum cleaners, dust absorption compared to energy used. Kobold appliances, for example, have long been regarded as particularly energy-efficient. For instance, since as early as 2003, our upright and cylinder vacuum cleaners have a maximum rated power of 900 watts. The European Union has only prescribed this value as the maximum consumption for vacuum cleaners since September 2017. The latest generation of Kobold appliances is significantly below that level: the VK200 Upright Vacuum Cleaner has a rated power of 700 watts; the VT300 Cylinder Vacuum Cleaner only consumes between 100 and 450 watts in the “auto” setting, and even only 50 watts in the “soft” setting.

The most recent two Thermomix® generations (TM5 and TM6) have a practical power-saving feature in the form of an automatic switch-off function instead of stand-by mode. The efficiency of the Thermomix® TM6 is demonstrated above when

compared with the conventional stove-top preparation of food, where it replaces other appliances with its numerous functions. Even though, according to customer surveys, the energy efficiency of the Thermomix® is not a decisive factor for purchasing it, we are working toward decreasing its energy consumption in order to reduce the product-related CO₂ footprint. Thus, alongside the materials used, energy efficiency is our most important control parameter in the Product field of action.

Among our efforts to reduce the CO₂ footprint of future products is Vorwerk Elektrowerke's participation in the project “EcoING – Development and Implementation of an Ecodesign Learning Factory for University Engineering Education.” The project has been funded by the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU) since October 2019. The project aims to equip future engineers for the design of products that are more environmentally friendly. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the project has been delayed. As a result, the lecture series on “Environmentally sound product development” did not start until June 2021. We hope to be able to present results on this in the next sustainability report.

Health and satisfaction of our customers

Vorwerk products are safe to use and meet the most stringent safety requirements. The materials and components used in our products are subject to extensive testing and approval procedures – quality factors that contribute to the satisfaction of our customers.

Ensuring the safety and health of our customers when using our products is Vorwerk's top priority. The safety of our products when in use is assured through extensive testing and screening. Despite already being subject to strict consumer protection legislation in all these areas, our ISO 9001-certified quality management systems additionally ensure that we comply with all specifications. Our integrated quality, environmental, and energy management system, as well as the regular internal and external audits at our sites, confirm that the standard requirements are met.

The information from the audits is used to continuously develop the management system. The management system covers all management, core, and support processes so that potential risks to health and safety from our products can be identified, defined, and minimized through modifications as early as possible. In addition to our own inspections and the various audits, we also use feedback from our customers and expert consultants to continuously develop the quality of our products, including from a safety point of view.

Sustainable nutrition with Thermomix®
Vorwerk actively promotes a healthy diet. Our Thermomix® customers receive suggestions for a healthy and sustainable lifestyle in a number of ways. For instance, we are specifically expanding the recipe selection for vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and low-calorie diets. Selected recipes for the Thermomix® process (potential) leftovers from other recipes. By offering this feature, we aim to inspire our customers to use leftover food creatively, because wasted food that is still edible is a major chal-

lenge in the area of sustainable consumption and production.

High customer satisfaction

Product safety is an inherent aspect of quality that is usually taken for granted. So it is no wonder that the quality of our products is one of the key factors in customer satisfaction. For all our business units, we have implemented processes to record and evaluate customer feedback or complaints. The data is used for the ongoing improvement of our products and services.

The results differ significantly depending on country, experience with Vorwerk, and other factors. Satisfaction with the products, as measured by the willingness to recommend them, is generally well above average. Three months after the purchase of a Thermomix®, for example, we survey the satisfaction of our customers on an international basis. The most recent survey was completed in June 2021. More than 10,000 customers from Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Poland, and Portugal took part. In addition to determining how willing customers are to recommend the product to others, this short survey is about finding out what custom-

ers like and dislike about the product. The Net Promoter Score – i.e., the willingness to recommend on a scale of 100 to +100 – was an excellent +64 in this Thermomix® survey. Of those surveyed who would recommend the Thermomix® to others, for 81 percent the reason stated was the ease of use, for 72 percent the time savings, and for 70 percent the integrated recipe platform, the Cookidoo.

We have specific processes for feedback from customers that comes to us via our self-employed advisors. Our customers can be sure that their concerns will reach the responsible departments at Vorwerk directly and will be dealt with there in a targeted manner.

Complaints management

In the event of customer complaints, we offer our customers a satisfactory solution while also taking into account the legislation of the respective country.

To continue growing customer satisfaction in the future and reduce the number of complaints, we will steadily improve our internal processes on the basis of the feedback we receive.

+64

is the Net Promoter Score for the willingness of our customers to recommend us.



Responsibility for the supply chain

The name Vorwerk stands for the entire life cycle of our products. That is why our sustainability management system also covers the essential parts of the supply chain.

The sustainability of products – and ultimately of the company – also depends to a large extent on the sustainable operations of our suppliers. Suppliers of raw materials, finished parts, and consumables must therefore meet our quality, environmental, and social standards.

At Vorwerk, in the manufacture of our own products we are interested in collaborative partnerships with our suppliers to work systematically on improving common issues of sustainability. The production sites of the Engineering business unit are committed to compliance with the SA 8000 social accountability standard. We also

support the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act (CATSCA), whose requirements are integrated into the framework agreements with suppliers. In addition, Vorwerk Elektrowerke also signed the “Code of Conduct on Social Responsibility” of the German Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers’ Association (ZVEI) on behalf of the Vorwerk Engineering business unit.

Contractual obligations

Vorwerk Engineering works directly and exclusively with suppliers who are committed to complying with the environmental and social stand-

ards laid down in the framework agreements. The formal review and documentation of contractual commitments, self-assessments, and codes of conduct is carried out at regular intervals, i.e., annually and when a new contract is formed.

Before placing an order, we survey potential suppliers of production materials on aspects of sustainability and social responsibility in the form of a supplier self-assessment. The feedback flows into our decision-making on new business relationships. Moreover, we require our series suppliers for the manufacture of materials or com-

Assume responsibility for the supply chain

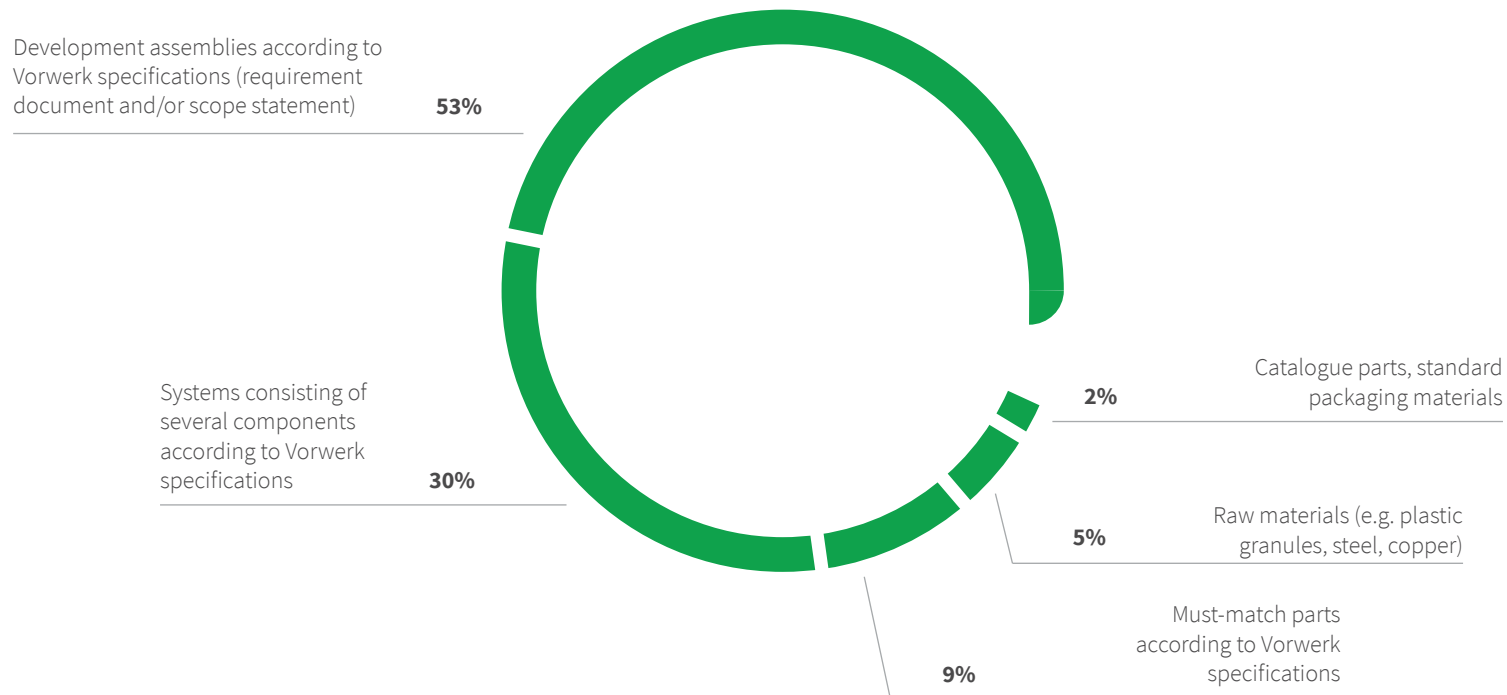
To operationalize our goal of extending beyond all previous measures to assume greater responsibility for the supply chain throughout the Group and to sensitize our suppliers to sustainability issues, we set ourselves measurable milestones and sub-goals, and we continue to develop our internal structure. To this end, we formed a team in 2021 to review the Group-wide due diligence processes and to further extend them where necessary. At the same time, this will enable us to meet future legal obligations under the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz – LkSG). The team includes business units that are affected by the topic.

ponents specific to Vorwerk to sign a purchase agreement that includes a so-called compliance module. This is an agreement on compliance with legal, environmental, and social requirements – including the exclusion of child and forced labor – made by the supplier and its upstream suppliers. If suppliers submit their own code of conduct to us, we carefully compare it with our own values. For high-volume categories, i.e. development and system assemblies, Vorwerk ensures the commitment of suppliers through the compliance module described above. For categories with lower revenue from

Five categories of suppliers

Vorwerk Engineering distinguishes between five categories of suppliers, depending on the type of product parts they supply.*

* Estimated proportion of procurement volume



must-match parts, raw materials, and catalogue parts, Vorwerk accepts the self-assessment of the suppliers in relation to social compliance, if available. If there is none, the compliance module is also signed in this context.

Every year, between 15 and 20 percent of suppliers go through the process of renewing their contracts, which means that they also undergo a review of their documentation with regard to social and environmental compliance standards. In this constellation, we ensure ongoing alignment with legal requirements and updates.

Screenings and reviews

Since 2019, we have also been conducting a risk assessment of our suppliers, and we apply a monitoring and evaluation plan for at-risk suppliers that includes processing the results of compliance screenings and country-specific risks. In this concept, in addition to relying on contractual obligations and self-assessment, we also audit suppliers using random sampling procedures. This assesses classical quality indicators in accordance with the VDA audit standard as well as environmental criteria in accord-

ance with ISO 14001. Should obvious violations of social criteria pursuant to SA 8000 or DIN ISO 14001 be identified during the audit within the scope of VDA 6.3, Vorwerk will take immediate action against this and, in case of doubt, terminate the business relationship. Any violations identified will be subject to action and prosecuted.

As part of the modernization of our processes, we intend to further digitalize contract management and its underlying modules. In this way, we aim to achieve maximum transparency

as well as short access and reaction times across all sites.

In addition, the suppliers are constantly under review via a Web-based risk monitoring system. This monitoring process employs the "riskmethods" tool to report as early as possible on any potential breaches of the law or other suspicious matters that have become public. In our reviews to date, no supplier was flagged as suspicious.

Environmental protection

What does environmental protection mean for Vorwerk? Our certified environmental management system considers all the dimensions of the topic that are relevant to us in relation to production at our sites in Germany, France, and China. We are increasing the use of electricity from renewable sources in our production processes, reducing CO₂ emissions through improved eco-efficiency, and have set ourselves an ambitious reduction target for our own emissions. Creating a circular economy is our goal for the materials we use. We take a holistic view of our sites – including environmental concepts for buildings and premises. **That is what environmental protection means for Vorwerk.**

Certified

All our production facilities are certified according to ISO management standards: ISO 9001 for quality, ISO 14001 for environment, ISO 50001 for energy.

Efficient

We are consistently reducing energy consumption – from 2016 to 2020, we reduced energy consumption from 3.5 MWh to 1.1 MWh per metric ton of electrical appliances produced at Vorwerk Engineering.

Climate-aware

By 2025, the Vorwerk Group will have reduced its own CO₂ emissions by two-thirds compared with the base year of 2016.

Energy: The future is green

The use of energy is a significant environmental factor in any industrial enterprise. At the same time, it offers the greatest leverage for reducing negative environmental impacts.

Climate protection is one of Vorwerk's strategic sustainability goals. As climate change is largely driven by the combustion of carbon-based energy sources and the resulting CO₂ emissions, we see it as our duty to reduce emissions or – wherever possible – to avoid them. Choosing the right energy source and increasing our energy efficiency are therefore crucial for achieving our goal.

Energy and environmental management systems
The most energy-intensive area at Vorwerk is the production of our electrical appliances. Vorwerk Engineering has three production sites for this,

one each in Wuppertal Laaken (Germany), Cloyes-sur-le-Loir (France), and Shanghai (China). Environmental and energy management systems that are certified according to ISO 14001 (environment) and ISO 50001 (energy) have been in operation at all sites since 2017. The sites coordinate with and learn from each other. Internal audits between the sites also assist in this respect.

Following initial certification by external auditors in 2017, the three production sites were successfully recertified according to ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 in 2020.

Vorwerk Energy Scouts win Chamber of Commerce and Industry prize



Trainees at Vorwerk Elektrowerke won the Energy Scouts competition in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia in July 2020. The prize was conferred by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Wuppertal Solingen Remscheid. A jury of experts judged the energy and resource efficiency of the projects based on a project outline and films produced by the teams. The Vorwerk trainees' contribution related to the detection of leaks in compressed air lines and won the jury over with its systematic and structured approach, as well as its solid calculation of economic efficiency.

Green electricity today, green gas tomorrow

Carbon-free renewable energies are a crucial element of our climate strategy. Since 2018, we have been using 100 percent green electricity at our Wuppertal site, both in production and in administration, which we obtain through the public utility provider Stadtwerke Wuppertal. Our IT sites in Düsseldorf and Vorwerk International in Switzerland also obtain their electricity from renewable energies. From 2022 onwards, we will use renewable energies for further prop-

100%

Green electricity is purchased by production and administration at the Wuppertal site.

erties in our ownership.

As part of our “Green Agenda Engineering” project (see page 31), we will also start purchasing “green gas” as heat energy in Wuppertal from 2022. Green gas is a product provided by Stadtwerke Wuppertal, for which the CO₂ emissions resulting from the combustion of natural gas are fully offset by compensation measures. Through a surcharge on the price per kilowatt hour of gas, projects are financed in accordance with the rigorous Gold Standard.

Total energy consumption in 2020 was 55.2 gigawatt hours (GWh) (2019: 60.0 GWh). 50.2 percent of energy consumption was purchased (not self-generated) electricity, 15.4 percent was

from natural gas, and 30.3 percent was for fuel for our company vehicles – the sharp decline in this area compared to the previous year is due to restricted travel and digital forms of collaboration during the coronavirus pandemic. The share of self-generated renewable energy is produced by photovoltaics on roof surfaces in China and Italy. A photovoltaic system at the Laaken plant is planned for 2022. Overall, we were able to reduce energy consumption by 12.4 percent compared to the previous year. With rising production figures, this can be attributed to the implemented efficiency measures, but also to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

With an energy consumption of around 1.1 MWh per metric tonne of electrical appliances produced, we significantly exceeded our target, set in 2016, of reducing energy consumption at Vorwerk Engineering to 1.9 MWh per metric tonne produced by 2020. In 2016 this still amounted to 3.5 MWh. At our largest production facility, Elektrowerke in Wuppertal, we aim to reduce consumption from 5.55 kWh to 5 kWh per product produced between 2020 and 2025.

In the Vorwerk company car fleet, we are progressively replacing fossil-fueled vehicles with electric and hybrid vehicles. At the end of 2020, we launched a project group across all sites aiming to pave the way for electrification of the Vorwerk company car fleet. An important factor is having sufficient charging infrastructure at the sites. We have been expanding the number of charging points for electric vehicles and e-bikes for several years – a development that we will continue to systematically drive forward in the coming years in line with demand.



Energy consumption in production and administration¹

In megawatt hours (MWh)	2018	2019	2020
Total energy consumption²	61,326	63,009	55,168
Energy sources on site	7,653	9,636	8,522
Natural gas	7,653	9,630	8,515
Other ³	0	6	7
Energy purchased	29,831	30,305	29,576
Electricity	28,355	28,588	27,684
District heating	1,476	1,717	1,893
Fuel for company cars	23,588	22,747	16,726
Gasoline	1,697	2,574	2,196
Diesel	21,891	20,173	14,530
Self-generated and used renewable energy	253	321	344

¹ Energy consumption for production- company-owned office buildings, and fuel for company vehicles.

²Due to rounding, there may be minor discrepancies in totals.

³ Diesel or fuel oil for the operation of the sprinkler system at the site in France.

Energy mix of purchased electricity

In percent ¹	2018	2019	2020
Renewable energy	68.1	66.7	65.4
Fossil energy	7.2	6.6	6.4
Nuclear energy	24.6	26.7	28.2
Other	0.1	0	0

¹ Due to rounding, there may be minor discrepancies in totals.

Think globally, act locally

Our global goals in the area of environmental protection and particularly concerning energy consumption require active participation at all our sites in production, administration, and sales. Here is a selection of individual measures in 2020:

- Germany:** Digitalization of internal processes to save paper
- Switzerland:** LED lighting controlled by motion sensors; carbonated tap water to avoid the use of drinking water in PET bottles
- Poland:** Sustainable building certification according to LEED Gold; lighting control through motion sensors; renewal of the vehicle fleet with more efficient vehicle models
- Spain:** Fitting all branches and shops with LED lighting and HVAC systems with an energy efficiency class of AA
- Turkey:** Consistently switching off unnecessary lighting during the day
- China:** Installation of energy-saving light bulbs; switching off lighting and HVAC systems in unoccupied offices; introduction of new containers for recyclable waste

Emissions: Two-thirds less by 2025

Vorwerk is making its contribution to international climate protection goals. In addition to increasing the proportion of renewable energies, we raise energy efficiency in production, develop Group-wide reduction measures, and are striving to reduce our own emissions by two-thirds by 2025.

We have set ourselves a new target for 2025 and aim to reduce our own CO₂ emissions by two-thirds. 2016 is our base year, when we reported our own emissions for the first time (Scope 1 & 2). Our reduction measures are supplemented by offsetting measures. As a result, the Vorwerk Group will already be climate-neutral in terms of its own emissions by 2022 (see [page 31](#)). Our certified energy management systems show

us the potential for reduction measures that also have a direct impact on the level of CO₂ emissions. For example, the Vorwerk Group reduced its own emissions by around 52 percent compared to base year 2016. In this context, we achieved the largest reduction to date in 2018 by switching to green electricity at the Wuppertal sites. We intend to extend this practice to the other production sites from 2022 onwards, with-

in local possibilities (see [page 28](#)). CO₂ emissions from our own vehicle fleet account for about 5,400 metric tonnes of CO₂. The significant drop in 2020 was mainly due to the restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and emissions are expected to rise again in the absence of additional measures. We will counteract this by boosting electrification of the fleet, but the use of videoconferencing tools,

which was practiced during the pandemic, should also help to avoid business trips and thus CO₂ emissions in the future. Through a mix of these and other measures, we were able to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases such as CO₂. By 2018, we had already achieved our 2020 target of reducing CO₂ emissions (Scope 1 & 2) per million euro of sales by ten percent compared with 2016.

CO₂ emissions of the Vorwerk Group¹

In metric tonnes of CO ₂ equivalents (CO ₂ e)	2016 (base year) ³	2019	2020
Total CO₂ emissions	17,816	10,755	8,528
Scope 1 (= direct emissions)	8,328	9,299	7,129
Fuels (fleet)	5,960	7,354	5,409
Natural gas	2,368	1,945	1,720
Scope 2 (indirect emissions)²	9,488	1,456	1,399
Purchased energy (electricity)	9,105	1,416	1,357
District heating/cooling	383	40	42

¹ Scope 3 emissions were not yet recorded Group-wide in the reporting period.

Due to rounding, there may be minor discrepancies in totals.

² Market-based approach.

³ Figures exclude Vorwerk flooring.

Offsetting emissions

Nevertheless, we are not deluding ourselves when it comes to emissions: We know that our business activities cannot be CO₂-free until every energy source is CO₂-neutral. But for climate protection, the crucial factor is not where a reduction takes place, because emissions are nonetheless globally distributed.

We will therefore offset the share of our own emissions that we cannot reduce or avoid from 2022 onwards. This applies in particular to the CO₂ emissions in our production processes and for our fleet of company cars, whose gradual conversion to electromobility also depends on external factors such as the availability of suitable driving technologies or the charging infrastructure for batteries. But even green electricity as we know it in Germany is not available in every country. In such cases, we will compensate for the emissions.

When CO₂ emissions are offset, the remaining emissions are reduced to net zero by investing in global climate-protection projects. In this process, climate compensation certificates are acquired to meet the balance of the emissions to be compensated for by Vorwerk. The certificates are issued by an external service provider who operates the climate protection projects locally or acts as an intermediary for such projects.

To ensure the projects are bona fide, we will only purchase certificates that meet the ambitious Gold Standard, which was developed by environmental organizations, among which, for example, is the WWF. These are usually projects in developing and emerging countries that could not afford the measures themselves, including projects for reforestation and for renewable energy such as wind and solar farms.

Green Agenda Engineering

Production, and consequently the Engineering business unit, plays a key role on our path toward climate-neutral business operations. This is where we intend to step up our eco-efficiency efforts as part of the Green Agenda Engineering so as to reduce CO₂ emissions. We are tapping savings potential, for example, through the almost completed conversion of lighting to energy-saving LED lamps. New energy-saving machines will be purchased for the plastic-injection molding facility in 2021, which will reduce electricity consumption in this area and cut CO₂ emissions by 350 metric tonnes a year compared with the previous models. In the new production halls in Wuppertal Laaken, which we moved into in 2019, we use the excess heat from the machines for heating and can thus reduce gas consumption. By replacing the heating systems in the older production halls, we also intend to achieve a reduction of three percent in gas consumption by 2023.

The measures also include changing over to renewable energies at our international sites. In Laaken, we are currently looking into installing solar collectors on the 6,000-square-meter roof space of the production halls. Electromobility and the digitalization of work processes also play a role.

In addition, we have stepped up our internal communication initiatives to provide employees with suggestions on how they can reduce energy consumption in their areas. As a result, we also receive a range of suggestions from employees on how to further reduce energy consumption in the company.

Climate protection target 2025

Our goal is to save two-thirds of our own CO₂ emissions (Scope 1+2) by 2025 compared to the base year 2016. The remaining emissions will be offset. We will already start with this next year: From 2022, the Vorwerk Group will become climate-neutral with regard to its own CO₂ emissions.

2/3

Reduction

We reduce CO₂ emissions from production by purchasing green electricity, green gas and energy efficiency measures.



1/3

Compensation

By investing in ambitious international climate protection projects, we offset the amount of CO₂ emissions that we are not yet able to reduce.



Waste: The less, the better

Material consumption and waste management belong together in Vorwerk’s environmental management system. Our goal is to close the loop on more materials in the future.

Waste management at Vorwerk is particularly relevant in the production areas at our sites in Germany, France, and China. Waste is collected separately there, recycled if possible, or otherwise disposed of properly. The materials in question are mainly plastics, metals, and oils. While metals can usually be recycled to a large extent already during production – for example, through the routine use of scrap in blast furnaces – plastics are usually produced from virgin material by the manufacturer. For our part, we can control the recycled content to a limited extent by collecting production waste, shredding it, and returning it to the injection-molding machines. New plastic mills were purchased for this purpose in 2020. In this way, we can reduce our plastic waste

and increase material efficiency. This contributed to a decrease in the percentage of “waste for disposal” (minus 66.6 percent). However, the sharp reduction in „waste for disposal“ is mainly due to renovations at the Laaken site, which were completed in 2019. The total volume of waste increased significantly in

-10%
specific waste volume
by 2025 is our target.

Waste generated¹

In metric tonnes	2018	2019	2020
Total waste generated	4,949	5,615	5,281
Waste materials for disposal	86	99	33
Nonhazardous	75	94	29
Hazardous	11	5	4
Waste materials for recycling	4,863	5,516	5,248
Nonhazardous	4,766	5,426	5,197
Hazardous	98	90	51

¹ Vorwerk Engineering only. Due to rounding, there may be minor discrepancies in totals.

2019 in parallel with the growth in production at Vorwerk and fell again slightly in 2020 – by just under 6 percent – despite the continuing high production volume. The percentage of „waste for recycling“ increased from 98.2 percent (2019) to 99.4 percent (2020). Vorwerk Engineering is pursuing the goal of reducing the specific waste volume – i.e. the waste weight in relation to the number of products – by 10 percent by 2025.

Focus on the circular economy
Closing the loop on materials is also relevant for climate protection. With the inclusion of Scope 3 emissions in our carbon footprint from fiscal 2021, the topic will assume an increasingly important

role in materials purchasing. We are currently testing the use of recycled plastic in a pilot project with the VK200 Upright Vacuum Cleaner. At the same time, we are promoting the development of new circular business models through the Circular Valley® project, an initiative of the non-profit organization Wuppertalbewegung e. V. in cooperation with the renowned Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy. As part of this project, Vorwerk will provide 1,000 square meters of office space in Wuppertal from June 2021 and support 15 international start-ups in developing technologies and business ideas for the circular economy. The materials used by Vorwerk are described in the chapter Products and Supply Chain (see [page 20](#)).

Water: Closed circuits

Water plays a rather minor role in Vorwerk's environmental management compared to other factors. It is essentially used as process water and not consumed.

Fresh water is used at Vorwerk either for sanitary installations and kitchen areas or for machine cooling in closed circuits. The values measured for water withdrawal and wastewater generation are therefore the same because water is not consumed or is consumed only in negligible quantities. The wastewater quality complies with the respective local laws.

Two Vorwerk production sites – France and China – are located in designated water stress areas and are therefore shown separately in our data.

The above-average withdrawal of water from the public water system in 2019 resulted from the extensive construction activities at the Wuppertal site that year. The significantly increased withdrawal of surface water in 2020 – meaning from the river Wupper – was caused by the commissioning and configuration of a new, innovative, energy-saving cooling system during ongoing operation. Both values are expected to return to normal in the coming fiscal years.

Water withdrawal by source¹

In thousands of cubic meters	2019	2020
Total water withdrawal	47	55
Public water supply	41	25
of which from areas with water stress	14	14
Surface water	6	30
of which from areas with water stress	0	0

¹ Vorwerk Engineering only. No data for 2018 due to new GRI Standard 303 (Water and Effluents).
 Due to rounding, totals may show minor discrepancies.

Wastewater output by type of discharge¹

In thousands of cubic meters	2019	2020
Total wastewater	47	55
Public sewage system	41	25
of which from areas with water stress	14	14
Surface water	6	30
of which from areas with water stress	0	0

¹ Vorwerk Engineering only. No data for 2018 due to new GRI Standard 303 (Water and Effluents).
 Due to rounding, totals may show minor discrepancies.

Ecologically redesigned properties

The environmentally compatible management of real estate – both buildings and operational sites – is an important element of environmental protection at Vorwerk. This applies to conversions and new buildings, as well as to ongoing maintenance.

Between 2016 and 2019, Vorwerk undertook intensive construction work: The “Wupper Süd” project involved expansion of the engine plant for the Elektrowerke to 20,000 square meters, including an integrated high-bay warehouse, and construction of a 14,000-square-meter building for the Innovation Center and sections of the business administration. Including completion of the remodeling of Laaker Teich (“Laaken Pond”), the building works extended into May 2021.

Latest standards

Our new and refurbished buildings employ advanced environmental systems for HVAC and lighting and observe high standards of fire protection and occupational safety. Today, we use the excess heat from the machines for heating purposes, ventilate the buildings efficiently using heat-recovery systems and the adiabatic humidification of exhaust air for evaporative cooling, and use energy-saving LED lighting. In

addition, a mobility concept was developed for employees, works traffic, and incoming and outgoing deliveries.

Another new building was constructed at the Vorwerk International site in Wollerau, Switzerland. The building, which was occupied in May 2019, replaced a previous older structure and is certified according to Minergie, the Swiss standard for low-energy buildings. In addition to having thermal insulation glazing, we use geothermal energy

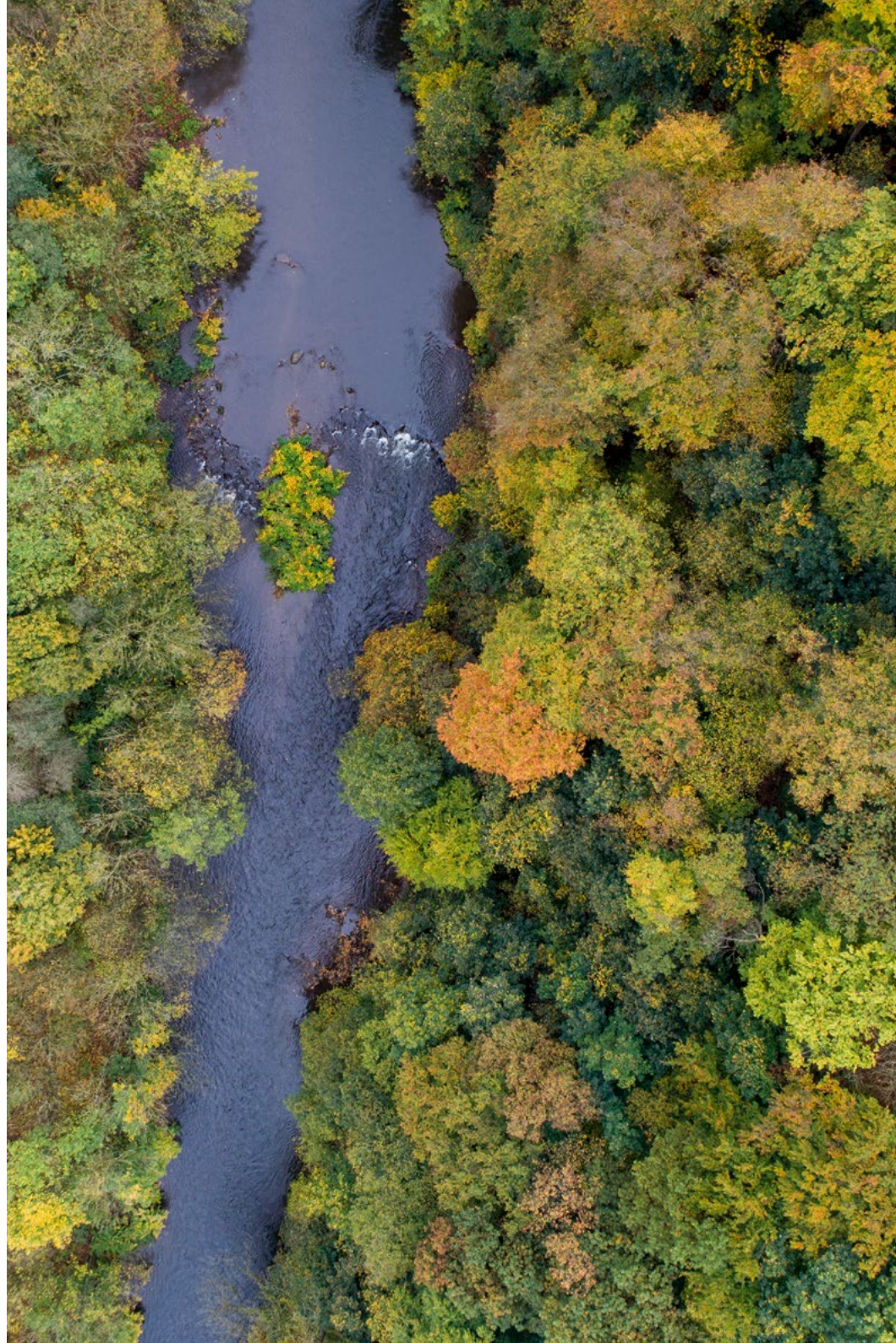
for heating and cooling, and the ventilation system recovers moisture and heat. The company has also created an incentive model to motivate employees to make greater use of public transport. Under the scheme, each employee receives four credits a year, which can be used or exchanged – the use of a parking space costs all four credits. Two credits, worth 700 Swiss francs, can be used as a subsidy to buy a bicycle or to finance public transport, etc.

Renaturation of grounds

In the construction work, we included the immediate surrounds of the sites by focusing on environmentally friendly design. In Wuppertal, we renatured a 1,100-meter stretch of the river Wupper, which runs directly past the company's premises. In close cooperation with the city of Wuppertal and the Wupperverband river basin management organization, we redesigned the riverbed and riverbanks to create a more natural habitat for flora and fauna. Among other things, a weir was removed, new river obstacles were created, and the riverbed was doubled in width to improve the living conditions for fish and small organisms. A simulation by the Wupperverband found that the renaturation of the

Wupper prevented greater damage during the flood events in summer 2021.

Also found in the immediate vicinity of our site in Wuppertal Laaken is the Laaker Teich pond. The works here have increased the quality of the water and improved protection for amphibians. For instance, in spring 2021, three toad tunnels were built as part of the road renovation after completion of the renaturation works. The tunnels lead under the road so that amphibians in the area can travel through them to the pond and back. At the same time, a tunnel for smooth snakes was built on the other side of the Wupper. We can observe the ecological success of the renaturation works within our bio-monitoring process.



Working together

What does sustainability in the workplace mean for Vorwerk? Working for Vorwerk is characterized by an international and diverse environment that offers room for personal development and for assuming responsibility. In our family-run company, career and family are not mutually exclusive – on the contrary. Balancing family, workplace, and career is one of our strategic sustainability topics. We also place a high priority on health and safety. And all of this applies to both our employees and our self-employed advisors, who are the heart of sales at Vorwerk. **That's what sustainability in the workplace means for Vorwerk.**

Like a family

The compatibility of family, workplace, and career is a strategic sustainability goal for us.

Agile

Five “Target Pictures” illustrate what agile working means at Vorwerk.

Healthy

Vorwerk companies are engaged in local nonprofit community projects at their locations worldwide.

Successfully navigating the crisis

The employees at Vorwerk form an international team with a wide variety of personal backgrounds and qualifications. Together, we pursue the goal of inspiring as many people as possible with our products and making their everyday lives more pleasant – even in times of crisis such as during the coronavirus pandemic.

The basis of working together at Vorwerk is a collaborative partnership built on our Leadership Principles – five principles that our executive leadership internalizes to ensure that the entire Vorwerk community remains an agile, efficient, and committed organization.

Corporate strategy and corporate culture

As part of the new Corporate Strategy 2025, one of the goals of human resources work at Vorwerk is to establish a performance culture based on meaning, creative freedom, and trust. This culture combines appreciation and enjoyment of what we do with consistency and transparency in decision-making. We experience open

feedback as enrichment and practice agile working methods.

Among the employee-specific fields of action in our corporate strategy is our Go4Courage (G4C) cultural initiative, which is closely dovetailed with the strategy and has been in place since 2018. G4C is a change management initiative that aims at consolidating innovation and customer and market centricity in our corporate culture and consistently implementing them. Several hundred employees worldwide officially consider themselves members of the G4C community and are working on rolling it out in their respective markets. Any of our employees can take part in this and receive further training

via Vorwerk's new intranet network, Coyo, and our online learning platform, InnoLab, irrespective of their field of work or level in the hierarchy.

Dealing with the coronavirus pandemic

Since 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has posed significant challenges to our community at corporate locations and in sales worldwide. In response to the changing conditions, we developed a range of measures in 2020 within a very short space of time, such as online product demonstrations, social media campaigns, and virtual entertainment offerings. These meas-

ures not only ensured ongoing business operations, but also strengthened the team spirit within the community in this difficult situation. As a direct sales company, the Vorwerk Group has been confronted with major challenges from the measures taken to contain the virus. The health and well-being of all "Vorwerkers" is always our top priority. Our employees and self-employed advisors have demonstrated great dedication, creative ideas, and enormous flexibility in rising to meet these challenges with such great success. In doing so, they were able to draw on a wide range of digital programs that Vorwerk has expanded in recent years to complement and support its personalized di-



Salaried employees by employment relationship^{1,2}

Number	2019	2020
Full-time	9,547	9,486
Women	6,159	6,253
Men	3,388	3,233
Part-time	733	801
Women	628	674
Men	105	127

¹ Number of employees at year-end.
²Vorwerk Group excluding JAFRA Cosmetics and Neato Robotics.

rect sales. In China, for example, cooking courses and cooking demonstrations were offered to entire groups on a platform created within WeChat using Vorwerk Design. The reductions in hours of work that were necessary at a few locations in April 2020 were quickly lifted again. For workers with young children, the temporary

closure of daycare centers and schools meant that, in many cases, childcare had to be provided at home. Where childcare raised organizational problems, it was possible to fall back on mobile work, or other individual solutions were found.

Number of employees
In total, an average of 590,253 people were working for the Vorwerk Group worldwide in 2020. The number of salaried employees was 12,260, and the number of self-employed advisors was 577,993. As this sustainability report does not yet cover the companies JAFRA Cos-

metics and Neato Robotics, our employee data refers to the 10,287 employees (2019: 10,280) at the other Group companies (see [page 5](#)), of which 6,927 were women (2019: 6,787) and 3,360 were men (2019: 3,493). In addition, these companies have around 83,000 self-employed advisors (see more on [page 50](#) ff.).

Salaried employees by employment contract¹

Number	2019	2020	By gender	2019	2020
Permanent	6.328	6.100	Women	3,040	3,300
By region			Men	587	626
Germany	2,677	2,384	Inactive³	325	261
Europe (excl. Germany)	3,054	3,086	By region		
North America	54	64	Germany	237	144
South America	56	75	Europe (excl. Germany)	88	117
Asia-Pacific	487	491	North America	–	–
By gender			South America	–	–
Women	3,509	3,421	Asia-Pacific	–	–
Men	2,819	2,679	By gender		
Temporary²	3,627	3,926	Women	238	206
By region			Men	87	55
Germany	289	313			
Europe (excl. Germany)	121	137			
North America	–	4			
South America	–	–			
Asia-Pacific	3,217	3,472			

¹ Number of employees at year-end. Vorwerk Group excluding JAFRA Cosmetics and Neato Robotics.

² The high proportion of fixed-term contracts is related to direct sales regulation in China.

³ For example, illness extending beyond the period of continuation of pay, passive phase of early retirement, parental leave/maternity leave, paid leave of absence.

Employment under collective agreements¹

Number	2019	2020
Collective agreement employees	4,479	4,306
Non-collective agreement employees	5,801	5,981

¹ Number of employees at year-end.

Employee turnover¹

In percent	2019	2020
Percentage of employees who have left the company	16	15

¹ Annual average of permanent employees.

New worlds of work

Agility, flexibility, and digitalization are increasingly informing the way we work at Vorwerk.

Our goal is to create a more effective and efficient organizational structure that will ensure the implementation of our strategy and best serve our Vorwerk community. The focus is on more transparent and more frequent information sharing, closer collaboration between different functional areas, and better use of the knowledge and perspectives of all stakeholders. Initiatives to boost agility, flexibility, and digitalization have already been underway for several years in many areas of the company – both in production and in administration and sales.

Overall, this will help us move closer to our customers' needs so we can develop and implement product and service innovations in a targeted and speedy manner.

What we mean exactly by the term agile is communicated within the company not only via the intranet and social media, but also in a very classical way through a poster campaign in our corridors and factory halls. Five image motifs – the “Agile Target Pictures” – hone in on the heart of the message:

Inspire

aims at the enthusiasm we share for the product – with the customers and with the product developers when it comes to deriving fresh ideas.

Be responsible

addresses the project teams. Thanks to our flat hierarchies, they are positioned in such a way as to have a free hand in all project-relevant questions, tasks, and decisions.

Understand

means the goal of identifying and assessing customer needs.

Improve

emphasizes the importance of learning from feedback and adapting the product to the needs of customers.

Do

advocates moving forward together as a team at a high rate of learning when developing new products, without procrastinating and without unnecessarily long rounds of deliberation.

Forms of work are changing

In recent years, many workplaces and forms of work have changed at Vorwerk. As a result, team-based work and flexibility in the design of working hours and office environments are increasingly shaping the character of our new working environments. In addition to flexible work time models, employees in Germany have access to working time accounts, which offer the possibility of working more in certain phases of life and less in others. Moreover, working time accounts can also be used to retire earlier or to take sabbaticals.

In Wuppertal, the site changes mainly affect the new building in the Laaken district, which houses the engine plant, the Innovation Center, and parts of the business administration, among other things. These changes focus on work islands in open-concept areas for teamwork as well as offices that can be used flexibly for specific periods of time or for ad-hoc teams.

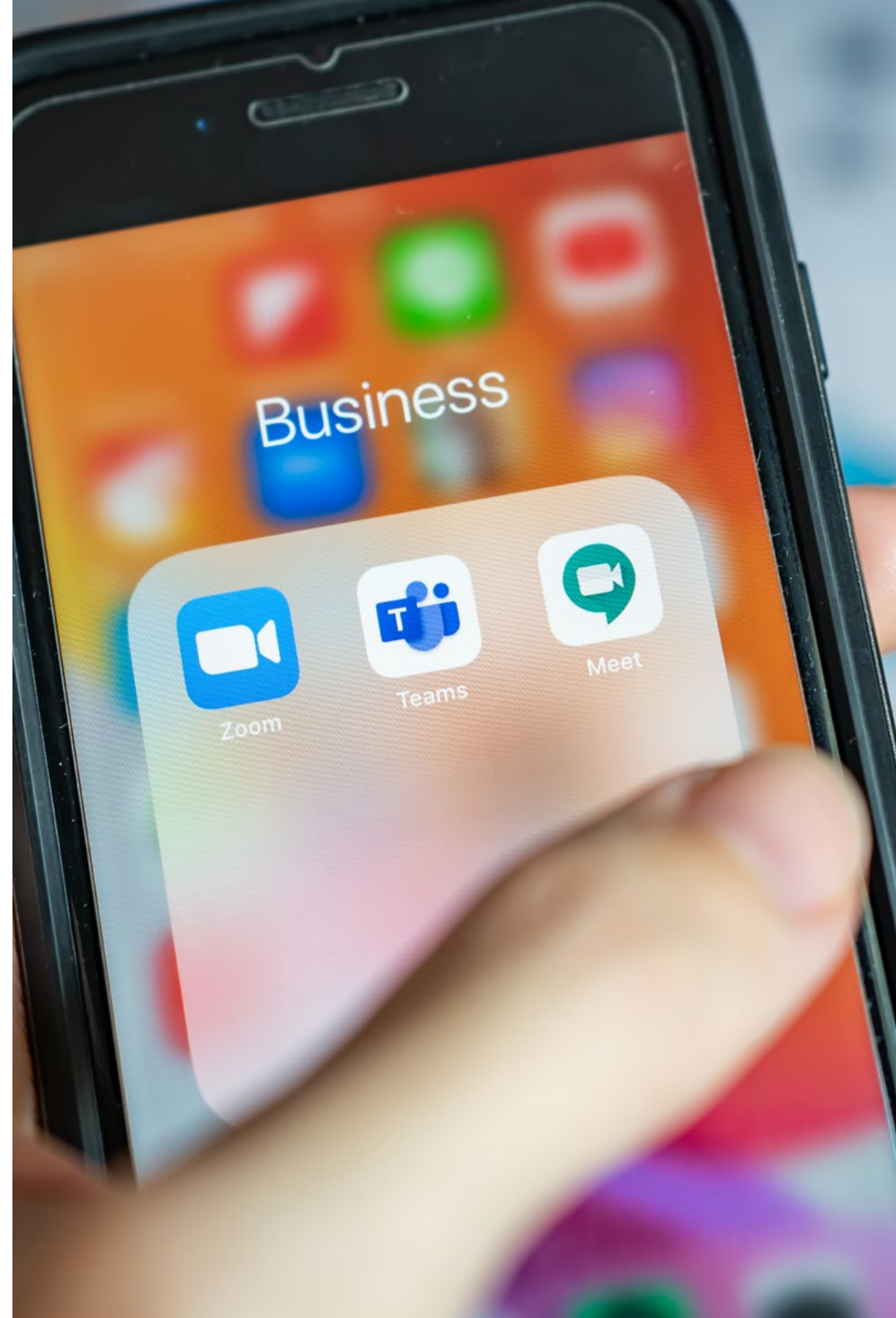
The existing corporate works agreement “Mobile Working and Teleworking” introduced in 2018

was also very well received prior to the coronavirus crisis. At akf group, for example, almost all their employees have been using mobile work options since the beginning of the pandemic.

Digital solutions

Digital forms of collaboration have been steadily growing for a number of years but have been further boosted by the coronavirus pandemic. With the launch and rollout of the social intranet platform Coyo, Vorwerk employees worldwide now have new ways and means of sharing important information, exchanging information interactively, and networking across national borders.

In combination with the cloud solution Microsoft 365, workflows are becoming even more productive, efficient, and secure. MS Teams in particular has been installed internationally, and, with its interactive tools such as video conferencing, chat, and file sharing, it facilitates cross-border collaboration at project level, regardless of the end device used.



Family and career combined

As a family-owned company, Vorwerk has already been committed to the compatibility of family, workplace, and career for many years. As part of our new corporate strategy, the topic has been elevated to the status of a strategic sustainability goal.

For more and more employees as well as for job applicants, the family-friendliness of an employer is a key factor for satisfaction and loyalty. Depending on the location, different social benefits

and programs for a healthy company climate and family atmosphere apply at Vorwerk. Since 2007, for example, employees at the Wuppertal companies have been able to use a “parent-child office.” A childcare subsidy for children who are not of school age complements the benefits we offer.

In 2020, 136 employees from eight countries took advantage of the Group’s already well-established parental leave option, 99 of them women and 37 men. A total of 84 employees (42 women and 42 men) returned from parental leave during the reporting period.

136

employees were on parental leave in 2020.

Goal: Reconciling family, workplace, and career

As we are a family-owned company, the compatibility of family, workplace, and career is a matter close to our hearts. We have set ourselves the goal of creating a family-friendly work environment that meets the individual needs of all our employees.

We are therefore particularly proud that Vorwerk China was awarded the “Top Employer” certification seal at the beginning of 2021. The internationally renowned “Top Employer Institute” honors companies with outstanding practices in human resources management, for example in the areas of professional development, health promotion, or further education.

At our site in Germany – and successively at other sites and in other countries – we will be assessed by the Compatibility Progress Index (Fortschrittsindex Vereinbarkeit) from 2021. This certification assessment by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs examines the extent to which the corporate culture is geared toward the compatibility of family, workplace, and career on the basis of twelve key indicators. The Compatibility Progress Index makes Vorwerk’s sustainability target measurable. Apart from external certification, it is also important for us to obtain internal feedback from colleagues on the subject of family friendliness. For this reason, we will conduct a survey at the end of 2021 to ascertain the extent to which certain programs such as mobile working, the childcare subsidy, and the parent-child office are important to employees and how they personally use them. Based on the results of this, we will then develop additional goals and measures.



Attractive social benefits

Apart from fostering the compatibility of family and career, Vorwerk offers its employees a wide range of social benefits. For instance, the death benefit fund, which was founded by the German Vorwerk works councils back in 1953, provides its members with financial support in the event of death based on the principle of solidarity. However, our company pension scheme (dating from the 1970s), company health insurance, and company direct insurance for occupational disability with special conditions for employees at all

German sites are also popular benefits. Additional employer-provided health insurance financed by Vorwerk was newly included in the benefits in 2020.

In addition, there are other regional offers such as discounted monthly tickets for local public transportation and a dry-cleaning service, and in Germany, depending on the location, there are subsidies for the canteen, for kindergartens, and for childcare during school vacations as well as for various preventive health measures (see [page 49](#)).



Diversity as a competitive advantage

Vorwerk considers itself an international company. We have employees from almost every part of the world. We greatly value their diverse backgrounds.

All employees at Vorwerk have the same opportunities for a professional career – regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, religion, or world view. Their recruitment and advancement within the company is based solely on qualifications and potential. We regard the exchange of different approaches and strategies that are made possible by these different personal and cultural backgrounds as one of the key success factors for the company. This explicitly includes our self-employed advisors. Diversity and equal opportunities are not only part of our corporate culture but are also based on binding external and internal ground rules. This means that Vorwerk is clearly committed

to the Antidiscrimination Act of the European Union and the General Equal Treatment Act in Germany. To profit even further from the diversity of the people working for us, we have set a “Global Mindset” as part of our Vorwerk competence model, which defines the basic qualifi-

67%

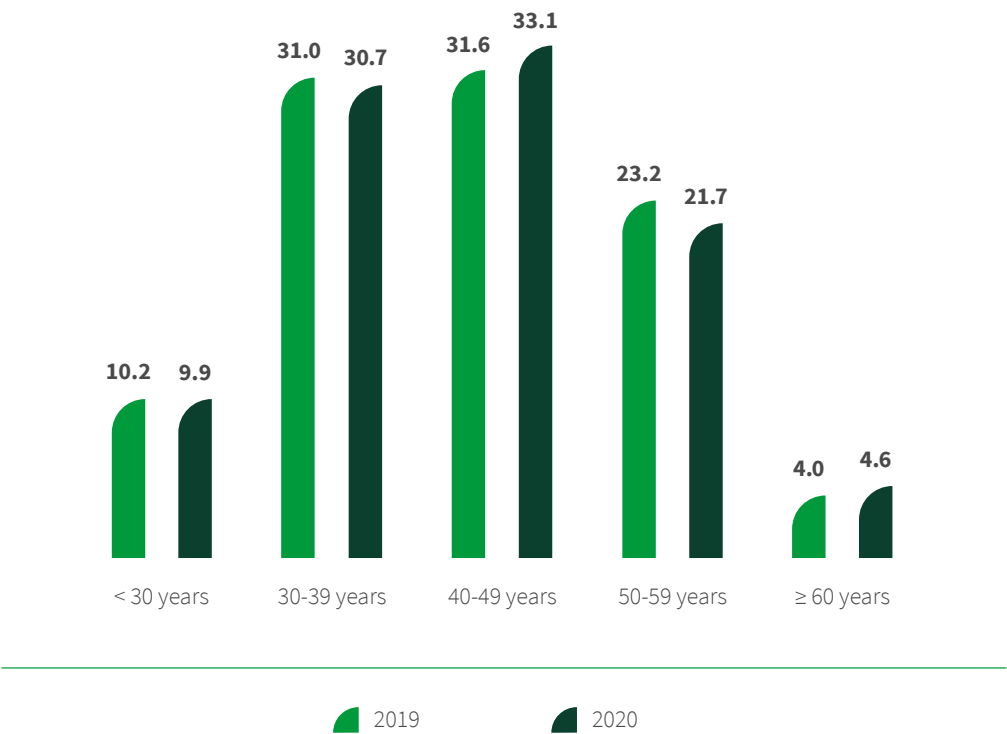
is the proportion of women at Vorwerk

Proportion of women¹

In percent	2019	2020
Total percentage of women	66.0	67.3
in governing bodies	9.1	0
in senior management	22.8	22.7
in management	45.1	45.7

¹Excluding JAFRA Cosmetics and Neato Robotics. Number of employees at year-end.

Age distribution of the workforce¹



¹Excluding JAFRA Cosmetics and Neato Robotics. Number of employees at year-end.

cations for working at Vorwerk. It is anchored in our recruiting processes and is an important topic in continuing education.

Growth in proportion of women
Equal opportunities are also an important success factor in gender relations. This already

starts with remuneration. Our employees are remunerated irrespective of gender, for example on the basis of internationally recognized job evaluation methods that only evaluate roles and tasks. In addition, country- and industry-specific framework agreements on wage and collective agreements apply. In Ger-

many, for example, these are the collective agreements of the retail trade and the metal and electrical industries. The proportion of women in the Vorwerk companies covered in this report was approximately 67 percent in 2020. In the year under review, the Executive Board consisted of one man, and all eight

members of the Supervisory Board were male. Women accounted for 22.7 percent of senior management and 45.7 percent of management. In our talent management process, around 44 percent of the employees supported are women. The average age at Vorwerk has not changed significantly in recent years.

Campaign against xenophobia



In 2019, Vorwerk shareholder Dr. Timm Mittelsten Scheid brought together fifty family-owned companies for the campaign “Made in Germany – made by diversity.” In a major advertising and billboard campaign in 15 cities, the business owners took a firm stand against xenophobia and for more tolerance.

Education activities under difficult conditions

A key aspect of our strategic human resources work at Vorwerk is our training and further education, which ranges from basic qualification programs to leadership development.

Vorwerk operates in a dynamic market environment to which we respond by offering ongoing professional development at the most diverse levels. Current industry challenges, demographic change, and a skills shortage as well as technical developments against the backdrop of digitalization, are shaping the character of HR work.

Since 2020, there have been the added challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, which have impacted the formats of our education and training activities. As vocational schools were temporarily closed, trainees and apprentices were provided with learning content and digital devices for self-directed learning at home. It was fortunate for us that the devices had already been purchased before the pandemic began as part of our actively pursued digitalization strategy.

Vocational training opens up opportunities

At Vorwerk, classical dual-sector vocational training as practiced and established in Germany offers young people an ideal introduction to the world of work and a solid foundation for a successful career. This enables us to attract, promote, and retain talented young people at an early stage in their careers.

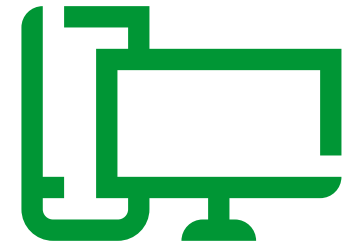
Since 2017, we have been supporting the vocational training of initially one and later two young people in Wuppertal who had fled from Syria. In 2021, the first of them successfully passed their examinations at the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Bergische Industrie- und Handelskammer – IHK). Since 2017, in partnership with the local inclusion agency and the organization

Lebenshilfe, we have also been supporting a young man with a disability who successfully passed his examination in 2021 – an unprecedented event at the IHK. In addition, for many years we have been selecting young people from difficult educational backgrounds for the machine and plant operator training course. In this way, we are providing them with a new opportunity to gain a professional foothold.

Our apprentices are always among the best in year in their final examinations at the IHK. In 2020, this included one national best, one state best, and six IHK bests.

In total, 103 apprentices (40 women and 63 men) were employed at Vorwerk in Europe at the end of 2020, 64 of them (14 women and 50 men) in

Germany and the remaining 39 in France, Italy, Spain, Austria, and Switzerland. In addition, there were 84 trainees and interns.



Professional development in online formats

To maintain continuing education under coronavirus conditions, some new formats were developed – for example, the „Learning Bites“ on our social intranet, Coyo. Employees can choose their own topics and periods of learning. The content is presented in an entertaining way and sometimes includes videos and podcasts. Among other things, it deals with questions such as how to work together most efficiently in virtual teams or how to build up personal resilience in stressful times.

Vorwerk International in Switzerland organized the Speed Creation Days with the aim of identifying and training experts on high-demand topics and making their knowledge available to all as effectively as possible. The result was a concrete, intranet-based idea for networking and knowledge exchange as well as the proposal for a quarterly target and feedback cycle between experts, mentors, and their superiors.

Before the pandemic hit, the first Global Learning Day for the talent management program was held in November 2019. Around one hundred potential managers from the Vorwerk Group came together to work on topics such as facilitation, content, and technical solutions. At the same time, almost 90 other employees came together at five locations in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Spain, and China via video conferencing channels.

Global and local leadership development

Our professional training and leadership development at Vorwerk all takes place within the Global Academy, which was introduced in 2018. This ranges from trainee programs to specialist training courses to leadership development programs. By the end of 2020, more than 200 managers had been trained in corporate leadership programs. In addition, we offered local leadership programs for lower management levels in the various companies. Our global training courses on leadership skills at all relevant levels of hierarchy serve to establish a common understanding of leadership in the company. In 2021, the programs will be revised and adapted to Strategy 2025.

Local leadership programs are also designed and implemented by the international subsidiaries themselves to enable them to respond to local requirements in the best possible way.

Our leadership development includes a strong feedback culture. It provides for regular feedback sessions or skills assessments for our management groups. Due to Vorwerk's decentralized structure, these feedback processes are handled differently depending on the country and business unit. Office employees at Vorwerk also undergo a feedback interview in combination with a performance appraisal in accordance with the relevant collective agreements.



Healthy and safe

Health protection and occupational safety are important goals at Vorwerk. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, health management was faced with particular challenges in 2020.

Through targeted health promotion, we aim to maintain the physical and mental working capacity and work motivation of our employees over the long term. To this end, over recent years in Germany we have created a framework for occupational health management that is becoming more and more firmly anchored in the mindset of our employees.

In organizational terms, our health management is the responsibility of a number of people and committees, including a central occupational safety committee that meets regularly at Vorwerk SE & Co. KG, an occupational safety officer, a company doctor, and a company medical service with an additional presence on the intranet. In the production area, Vorwerk Engineering has a formal corporate health management system based on a works agreement, which covers 29 percent of all employees in production worldwide. In the

case of office workplaces, the focus includes possible health risks such as the risks of a non-ergonomic workplace, as well as mental health risks. It also deals with structured operational integration management (OIM) for those returning to work after a long-term illness. For this purpose, there are relevant works agreements in individual companies that outline the OIM procedure (e.g. at akf and Engineering).

Since January 2021, we have been offering additional employer-provided health insurance to employees in various German companies. It is granted to all employees who have been with the company for more than two years, with no waiting period and no requirement for a health check. The insurance premiums are paid by Vorwerk. The offer supplements insurance policies that have existed in the company for some time such as direct insurance for occupational disability and group

Occupational accidents¹

(occupational accidents per 1,000 employees)	2019	2020
Wuppertal	11	11
Cloyes-sur-le-Loir	10	23
Schanghai	0	0

¹ Vorwerk Engineering only.

accident insurance. Regardless of the location, we naturally act within the framework of national laws and regulations when it comes to occupational safety. Despite a range of preventive measures and training, however, occupational and commuting accidents

cannot always be avoided. In 2020, for example, there were eleven occupational accidents per 1,000 employees at the Vorwerk Engineering production site in Wuppertal. There were no fatal occupational accidents at the Vorwerk Group in either of the two years under review.

Focus on prevention

Preventive occupational safety measures and a diverse health care program are firmly established at Vorwerk. In addition, there are a number of voluntary social and health benefits such as our partnership with a fitness studio and a self-employed physiotherapist in Wuppertal.

The company health management system includes health services such as the company medical service, massages and physiotherapy treatments, eye examinations, ergonomic advice in the workplace, and flu vaccinations as well as a company social counselling service. Our support for our employees on their way to a healthier lifestyle ranges from providing information to offering nonsmoking courses and local health initiatives.

We also engage in training sessions to work toward preventing accidents and protecting health. We provide instruction for employees, including managers, on general occupational health and safety, and we train evacuation helpers, first aiders, fire safety helpers, and safety officers.

The challenges of the coronavirus pandemic

The global coronavirus pandemic, which broke out in spring 2020, has posed a special challenge for health management at Vorwerk. A team for Infection Prevention Control (IPC) has become active at the largest site in Wuppertal. As a task force, it is responsible for site security, coordinating all coronavirus protection measures on site, including the offices, and making recommendations for other sites. Its members include representatives of the occupational safety committee, the technical services department, and company health management such as the company doctor, the human resources department, the works council, and representatives from the business units.

The IPC team provides ongoing communication on coronavirus safety issues that affect our workplaces and updates it with the latest information. Our intranet, Coyo, contains an array of practical tips on how to deal with the pandemic – from wearing masks correctly to disinfecting workplaces and door handles to tips on individual risk assessment.



Self-employment as an advisor

The Vorwerk Group has been known for decades for the direct sale of its products – Kobold, Thermomix, and Temial.

There were around 83,000 self-employed advisors working for the brands covered in this report at the end of 2020. They sell the products of these business units primarily at the customers' homes. Vorwerk enables them to carry out their activities with little risk and few time constraints. In principle, they are not subject to any quantitative sales targets and are not required to store or personally purchase any products for the purpose of resale.

Vorwerk continues to focus consistently on three core elements: the active community of advisors, customers, and employees; direct sales with sup-

porting channels; and innovative products and services. Particular attention is being given to the further expansion of digital offerings to complement and support Vorwerk's people-based direct sales.

Remuneration and support

In the course of this process, we also expanded the remuneration models for advisors. We have created the technical and organizational prerequisites for the new remuneration models with our "VORward" IT strategy. The digital advisor portal VORyou, developed as part of VORward, supports our advisors in successfully carrying out their work. All the necessary content – from product information to customer data – is available in one place. The ordering process can be carried out and tracked entirely in digital form using the tool. VORyou is gradually being rolled out internationally. The digital order-processing system integrated in VORyou was operational in France, Spain, and Portugal by the end of 2020; Poland followed in 2021.

We also support the people working in direct sales with a wide range of qualification measures. The introductory training is followed by training modules with different focal points such as time management and how to open discussions. Some of these are already on offer via an e-learning platform. This is already in use in Germany, France, Spain, and Chinese Taiwan, and since October 2021 in Poland as well. The system allows training to take place even without participants being personally present at the district office. This enables our advisors to reduce the distances they travel and consequently CO₂ emissions.

Satisfaction surveys for self-employed advisors

There are a variety of reasons for becoming self-employed in direct sales. The flexibility of free time allocation, being "one's own boss" with low risk and low investment, inspiring products, and the opportunity to come in contact with other people are seen as appealing by many self-employed advisors. Nevertheless, it does occur that the collaboration ends up being terminated.

We try to better understand the individual reasons for the termination of a relationship with a self-employed advisor to identify trends and counteract them if necessary. The most recent survey took place in the Kobold business unit in the period from late November 2019 to January 2020 in Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, and the Czech Republic. Responses were received from 954 active self-employed advisors and 234 former advisors who had left at their own request. According to the survey, personal success, time commitment, and their personal future are among the factors with the greatest influence on the satisfaction of newcomers to the direct sales profession. The quality of the products, the free allocation of time, and the contact with other people are particularly appreciated. Minuses are broader and range from criticism of individual team leaders to the income system to the flow of information to headquarters. The findings of the survey help the individual companies to develop and implement appropriate retention measures for advisors.

1,200

consultants took part in the Vorwerk satisfaction survey.

Social Commitment

What does a good home mean for us? Home – most people have one somewhere. But a home is more than just a place. It represents the sense of well-being that comes after basic needs are met. This could be a special meal or the good feeling of a clean environment. This is what Vorwerk products stand for. But for many people this home does not exist. We support them through our social commitment, so that more people can have a place where they feel safe and sound.

That is what a good home means for us.

Like a family

Our support for the SOS Children's Villages has been creating homes for children without families for years.

Digital

Through the "digitale Besuchsbrücke" the owner family made it possible for virtual visits to residential aged care homes to take place during the coronavirus pandemic.

International

Vorwerk companies are engaged in local nonprofit community projects at their locations worldwide.

A home for all

Vorwerk is committed to reducing social disadvantage. That is why we have been supporting the SOS Children's Villages for many years and advocate for nonprofit community activities at our locations.

As a family-run company, Vorwerk has a special connection to family and home. This is reflected in our products, all of which find their place in a home, though not necessarily exclusively in families. It is therefore only natural that our social commitment should also focus primarily on families and the home. Whether locally where our business sites are located or in cooperation with international organizations such as SOS Children's Villages, our commitment is intended to encourage people and enable many of them to experience a better home.

Support for SOS Children's Villages

We have been supporting the international network of **SOS Children's Villages worldwide** for many years. The SOS Children's Villages are home for many young people who, for a variety

of reasons, do not have a family home of their own.

Through the Vorwerk Family Fund, we collect money worldwide for SOS Children's Villages. Employees, self-employed advisors, the Executive Board, and the owner family have demonstrated their strong commitment by donating a total of 2.6 million euros to the fund so far. Among other things, we have used it to support

2.6

million euros have been collected so far in the "Vorwerk Family Fund".

the construction of several children's homes for SOS Children's Villages in India and Costa Rica, and to set up and finance an entire facility in Vietnam.

In the central Vietnamese province of Bin Dinh, we enabled the construction of the SOS Children's Village Quy Nhon, which was completed in 2011, and since then have been largely financing its maintenance. At the end of 2020, 120 children and young people – 64 girls and 56 boys – were living in one of the 14 family houses in Quy Nhon and were attending either primary or secondary school near the village. Some children were still going to kindergarten in the grounds of the village, which is also attended every day by about 240 children from the surrounding area. In 2018, we cofinanced a house for 32 young people aged 14 and over on the site to better meet their



Donations 2018–2020

In thousands of euros	2018	2019	2020
Vorwerk SE & Co. KG	603.7	4,207.3 ¹	727.5
Thermomix® & Kobold	193.5	49.6	190.8
Vorwerk Engineering	44	33.9	19.4
akf group	14.6	10.2	15.0
Total	859.4	4,301.1	952.7

¹ One-off higher amount in 2019 due to in-kind donations.

needs. The children are cared for by fourteen SOS mothers, four SOS aunts (family assistants), and five SOS educators. In addition, there are two employees in administration and six service and maintenance employees.

Practical help in times of COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has caused hardship for many people. Retirement and aged care nursing homes were particularly hard hit, as physical visits were often no longer possible and the technical infrastructure for digital contact was lacking. As a result, residents of such facilities were sometimes completely cut off from their relatives for weeks at a time.

The family council of the owner family therefore decided to coordinate a fundraising campaign among the family members. Together with the community welfare department of the city of Wuppertal, the idea of a virtual visit scheme called “digitale Besuchsbrücke” was brought to life and coordinated with the retirement and aged care homes and the hospitals in Wupper-

tal. All 20 shareholders of the Vorwerk Group participated, resulting in a total sum in euros to the order of six figures flowing to 20 facilities. This money was used to purchase tablet computers and set up Wi-Fi connections to enable people to contact their relatives.

A five-digit sum from the family’s donation fund also went to the Wuppertal food bank. The non-profit organization was in desperate need of a new cold store for the storage of donated food.

Local commitment in Germany

Another focus of our nonprofit engagement is on supporting initiatives in the communities surrounding our sites in over 60 countries. Many Vorwerk companies are committed either financially or in terms of personnel to charitable goals. In 2020, a number of the Group’s subsidiaries once again participated in nonprofit events in Germany and abroad.

One focus of our commitment is traditionally on Wuppertal and the surrounding area, where Vorwerk has its headquarters. In 2020, more

than 40 associations and institutions were able to enjoy financial support. The spectrum ranged from the Vorwerk Park Foundation to the Junior Uni, the local children’s and youth theater, the theater company Wuppertal Schauspiel, and nonprofits for integration and inclusion such as “Porta”, “Die Färberei”, and “Leben in Vielfalt”.

Since Christmas parties and dinners were cancelled this year due to the pandemic, the money budgeted for them was diverted to donations. Three donation checks of 10,000 euros each went to the children’s charity Kindertale e.V., the children’s hospice Bergisches Kinder- und Jugendhospiz Burgholz, and the food bank Wuppertaler Tafel to cover their running costs. The financial services provider akf group also supported the hospice in Burgholz with a donation of 10,000 euros in 2019. In 2020, the sums were split between two donations of 5,000 euros to the environmental organization Ozeankind e.V. and to the training center Mutig & Stark run by the church charity Ankerplatz-So-

zialwerk der Christus Gemeinde e. V. in Wuppertal. Every year, akf group employees also participate in the Wuppertal initiative “Zeit der Sternschnuppen” (Time of shooting stars) and collect Christmas presents for needy children and young people.

Promoting education in the Wuppertal area

Vorwerk is financing the first five years (2018–2023) of the endowed professorship for “Technologies and Management of Digital Transformation” at the [University of Wuppertal](#). The total cost of 1.5 million euros over these five years will serve research in the field of digital transformation.

In addition, Vorwerk contributes 50,000 euros annually toward supporting the Junior Uni Wuppertal, a unique teaching and research institution in Germany for young people between the ages of four and 20. Throughout the year, lecturers from business, science, and education impart practical knowledge in a variety of fields.

Local commitment worldwide

The Vorwerk companies outside of Germany also showed their strong commitment once again, sometimes using innovative models. At Vorwerk in France, for example, the amount of the donations was coupled to the sales targets of the self-employed advisors. Whenever a goal was met, the company donated to a nonprofit organization. In the past year, 44,600 euros was collected and donated to 79 organizations.

Vorwerk China donated around 63,000 euros to fight the coronavirus pandemic. The Polish branch also donated to a hospital in Wroclaw for the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Some Vorwerk companies also make donations in kind instead of just donating money to nonprofit organizations. Vorwerk USA, for example, donated a number of Thermomix® TM6 applianc-

es to organizations that were victims of the wildfires in California. Branches in France, Poland, and Chinese Taiwan also donated Thermomix® appliances.

Kobold appliances were also donated, for example in France to a home for the elderly, a hospital, and a homelessness support organization, and in Poland to an organization that supports chronically ill children.

Employees at the akf branch in Spain donated funds to the small Catholic church Parroquia de San Christóbal near Madrid in 2020. The church supports around 250 families, many of whom fled to Spain from Venezuela. The parish asked for food donations, and about 90 kilograms of basic food items such as milk, rice, sugar, and coffee were donated.



GRI Content Index



This report was compiled in compliance with the GRI Standards: “Core” option. It corresponds to the Standards (2016) of the Global Reporting Initiative and the revised Standards on Water and Effluents (303, 2018), Waste (306, 2020), and Occupational Health and Safety (403, 2018).

This Sustainability Report 2020 was made available to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) for the performance of the Materiality Disclosures Service. The GRI Materiality Disclosure Service was performed based on the German version of this Sustainability Report 2020. The correct positioning of the “Materiality Disclosures” (GRI 102-40 to 102-49) in the report was confirmed by the GRI Services Team.

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
GRI 101	Foundation		
GRI 102	General Disclosures		
	Organizational Profile		
102-1	Name of the organization	64	
102-2	Activities, brands, products, and services	5–6	
102-3	Location of headquarters	6, 64	
102-4	Location of operations	64	
102-5	Ownership and legal form	64	
102-6	Markets served	5–6	
102-7	Scale of the organization	7	
102-8	Information on employees and other workers	7, 38	
102-9	Supply chain	25	
102-10	Significant changes to the organization and its supply chain	6, 64	
102-11	Precautionary Principle or approach	13–14	
102-12	External initiatives	20, 24	

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
102-13	Membership of associations	64	
	Strategy		
102-14	Statement from senior decision maker	3	
102-15	Key impacts, risks, and opportunities	AR 2020, 31–35	
	Ethics and integrity		
102-16	Values, principles, standards, and norms of behavior	8	
	Governance		
102-18	Governance structure	8	
	Stakeholder engagement		
102-40	List of stakeholder groups	12	
102-41	Collective bargaining agreements	39, 45	
102-42	Identifying and selecting stakeholders	12	
102-43	Approach to stakeholder engagement	12	
102-44	Key topics and concerns raised	11, 23, 50	
	Reporting practice		
102-45	Entities included in the consolidated financial statements	6, 64	
102-46	Defining report content and topic Boundaries	11, Sustainability Report 2018, 16–17	
102-47	List of material topics	11	
102-48	Restatements of information	64	
102-49	Changes in reporting	64	

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
102-50	Reporting period	64	The last sustainability report was published in December 2019.
102-51	Date of most recent report		
102-52	Reporting cycle	64	
102-53	Contact point for questions regarding the report	65	
102-54	Claims of reporting in accordance with the GRI Standards	55, 64	
102-55	GRI content index	55–63	
102-56	External assurance		No external audit was performed.
200	Economic		
GRI 201	Economic Performance		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	9–10	
201-1	Direct economic value generated and distributed	AR 2020, 15, 38– 41	
201-3	Defined benefit plan obligations and other retirement plans	AR 2020, 28, 39– 40, 46	
GRI 203	Indirect Economic Impacts		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	52–54	
203-1	Infrastructure investments and services supported	52–54	
GRI 205	Anti-corruption		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	13	
205-3	Confirmed incidents of corruption and actions taken		None.
GRI 206	Anticompetitive Behavior		

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	13	
206-1	Legal actions for anti-competitive behavior, antitrust, and monopoly practices		None.
300	Environmental Disclosures		
GRI 301	Materials		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	20–21	
301-1	Materials used by weight or volume	21	
301-2	Recycled input materials used	20	
301-3	Reclaimed products and their packaging materials	19, 32	
GRI 302	Energy		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	27–28	
302-1	Energy consumption within the organization	29	
302-3	Energy intensity	28	
302-4	Reduction of energy consumption	28–29	
302-5	Reductions in energy requirements of products and services	21, 28	
GRI 303	Water and Effluents		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	33	
303-1	Interactions with water as a shared resource	33	
303-2	Management of water discharge-related impacts	33	
303-3	Water withdrawal	33	
303-4	Water discharge	33	

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
GRI 304	Biodiversity		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	35	
304-3	Habitats protected or restored	35	
GRI 305	Emissions		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	30–31	
305-1	Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions	30	
305-2	Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions	30	
305-4	GHG emissions intensity	30	
305-5	Reduction of GHG emissions	30	
GRI 306	Waste		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	32	
306-1	Waste generation and significant waste-related impacts	32	
306-2	Management of significant waste-related impacts		
306-3	Waste generated	32	
306-4	Waste diverted from disposal	32	
306-5	Waste directed to disposal	32	
GRI 307	Environmental Compliance		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	9, 13, 26–27	
307-1	Non-compliance with environmental laws and regulations		None.
GRI 308	Supplier Environmental Assessment		

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	24–25	
308-1	New suppliers that were screened using environmental criteria	24–25	
308-2	Negative environmental impacts in the supply chain and actions taken	24–25	
400	Social Disclosures		
GRI 401	Employment		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	37, 40–41	
401-1	New employee hires and employee turnover	38–39	Employee turnover by gender, age group and region, as well as details of new hires, will be published in the next report.
401-3	Parental leave	42	
GRI 403	Occupational Health and Safety		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	48–49	
403-1	Occupational health and safety management system	48–49	
403-2	Hazard identification, risk assessment, and incident investigation	48–49	
403-3	Occupational health services	48–49	
403-4	Worker participation, consultation, and communication on occupational health and safety	48–49	
403-5	Worker training on occupational health and safety	48–49	
403-6	Promotion of worker health	48–49	
403-7	Prevention and mitigation of occupational health and safety impacts directly linked by business relationships	24 – 25, 48–49	
403-8	Workers covered by an occupational health and safety management system	48	

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
403-9	Work-related injuries	48–49	
GRI 404	Training and Education		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	46	
404-1	Average hours of training per year per employee		No figures have been collected to date. Quantitative indicators such as training hours or costs per employee are not used for control purposes, as both off-the-job professional development measures (e.g. training, seminars, and courses) and primarily on-the-job initiatives (e.g. project work, job enrichment, shadowing, mentoring, and coaching) are carried out.
404-2	Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition	47	
404-3	Percentage of employees receiving regular performance and career development reviews		Data collection not planned, cf. GRI 404-1.
GRI 405	Diversity and Equal Opportunity		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	44–45	
405-1	Diversity of governance bodies and employees	44	
405-2	Ratio of basic salary and remuneration of women to men	45	
GRI 406	Nondiscrimination		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	44	
406-1	Incidents of discrimination and corrective actions taken		No cases of discrimination were reported in the year under review.

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
GRI 407	Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	24	
407-1	Operations and suppliers in which the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining may be at risk		A risk assessment of the Group's own sites is planned for 2022.
GRI 408	Child Labor		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	24–25	
408-1	Operations and suppliers at significant risk for incidents of child labor		A risk assessment of the Group's own sites is planned for 2022.
GRI 409	Forced or Compulsory Labor		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	24–25	
409-1	Operations and suppliers at significant risk for incidents of forced or compulsory labor		A risk assessment of the Group's own sites is planned for 2022.
GRI 412	Human Rights Assessment		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	24–25	
412-1	Operations that have been subject to human rights reviews or impact assessments		A risk assessment of the Group's own sites is planned for 2022.
GRI 414	Supplier Social Assessment		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	24–25	
414-1	New suppliers that were screened using social criteria	24–25	
414-2	Negative social impacts in the supply chain and actions taken	25	
GRI 416	Customer Health and Safety		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	22	

GRI Disclosures	Short Description	Page	Omissions, Notes
416-1	Assessment of the health and safety impacts of product and service categories	22	
416-2	Incidents of noncompliance concerning the health and safety impacts of products and services		None.
GRI 418	Customer Privacy		
GRI 103	Management Approach (including 103-1, 103-2, 103-3)	9, 11, 13–14	
418-1	Substantiated complaints concerning breaches of customer privacy and losses of customer data		None.

AR = Annual Report

About this report

In its second Sustainability Report, the Vorwerk Group describes its economic, environmental, and social performance in the 2019 and 2020 fiscal years. The reporting period corresponds to the calendar years (January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2020); in addition, it includes isolated current developments from the first half of 2021. In future, the report will be published annually, with the next report expected to appear in September 2022. The editorial deadline was August 31, 2021.

The report covers Vorwerk SE & Co. KG as the holding company headquartered in Wuppertal, Germany, with Vorwerk Direct Selling Ventures GmbH, Vorwerk Services GmbH, Vorwerk Services Pte. Ltd., and Vorwerk & Co. Interholding GmbH, as well as the companies of the Thermomix, Kobold, Temial, Vorwerk Engineering, and akf group business units, including their entire production, administration, and sales sites in Europe (Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, the Czech Republic, Turkey), America (Canada, Mexico, USA), and Asia (China, Chinese Taiwan). The business units JAFRA Cosmetics and Neato Robotics are not covered in this report, nor is the Vorwerk flooring business unit, which we divested in the course of 2020. Due to the management buyout of this business unit, key figu-

res for 2018 were also changed retroactively in some tables: environmental data on the carpet business was excluded from this report. Where computational uncertainties arose during this process, the data for 2018 was omitted.

Our report employs the internationally recognized Sustainability Reporting Standards of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), or „GRI Standards“ for short, as updated over time. This report was compiled in compliance with the Core option of the GRI Standards. The sustainability topics that are material for our business operations were already determined on the basis of a systematic materiality analysis conducted for the first report. The GRI Content Index provides an overview of the standards and specifications used. The data collection took place in the form of annual systematic surveys of all the contributing member companies. There was no external audit.

Memberships

Vorwerk and its subsidiaries are members of numerous associations and organizations, some of which are relevant to sustainability. The following list provides a selection of these, focusing particularly on associations that operate Germany-wide or internationally.

- APPLiA – Home Appliance Europe (E)
- BDD – German Direct-Selling Association (G)
- BDL – Federal Association of German Leasing Companies (A)
- BEVH – German E-Commerce and Distance Selling Trade Association (G)
- BFACH – German Association of Credit Banks (A)
- BVBC – German Association of Balance Sheet Accountants and Controllers (G)
- BVL – Federal Logistics Association (G)
- DGFP – German Association for Human Resource Management (V)
- DIE FAMILIENUNTERNEHMER e.V. (V) – association representing the interests of German family businesses (V)
- DSE – Direct Selling Europe (V)
- GfK-Nürnberg – Society for Consumer Research (based in Nuremberg) (G)
- Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft im BDI – Association of Arts and Culture of the German Economy at the Federation of German Industries (V)
- Netzwerk Intelligente Mobilität – Network for Intelligent Mobility (A)
- OAV – German Asia-Pacific Business Association (V)
- Rat für Formgebung – German Design Council (V)
- Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft – Association for the Promotion of Science and Humanities in Germany (V)
- VCI – German Chemical Industry Association (E)
- VDE – Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies (E)
- VMF – Association of brand-independent Mobility and Fleet Management Companies (A)
- ZVEI – German Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association (E)

A = akf group; G = Vorwerk Germany; E = Vorwerk Engineering; V = Vorwerk SE & Co. KG

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