

CEO STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABILITY



“In what has been a year like no other, we found the right balance between short-term crisis management and long-term thought and action in 2020.”
Christian Buhl, CEO

GEBERIT WITH STRONG FOUNDATIONS AND A ROBUST CORPORATE CULTURE

2020 will go down in the history of the company as the year in which we dealt very well with an extraordinary crisis. This crisis has not weakened us up to now. Quite the opposite in fact, it has actually made us stronger in terms of competitiveness. Geberit is built on strong foundations – financially, strategically, culturally and in terms of its personnel. When the COVID-19 crisis hit in spring 2020, we therefore decided very early on not to restructure, to secure jobs and not to introduce short-time work where possible. Instead, we focused on continuing to invest and using the lockdown period consciously for tasks that are often neglected in everyday business. It was important to find the right balance between short-term crisis management and long-term thought and action. As a result, important long-term investments continued to be made in product and production innovations, and also in employee education and further training. We were also able to achieve our social commitments in full in this extraordinary year.

ADDED EFFICIENCY AND RESILIENCE THANKS TO DIGITALISATION

We put the constraints enforced due to the pandemic to good use and made huge steps in the field of digitalisation. A large part of the company was then able to start working from home temporarily within a relatively short time. Moreover, we also used the time for training our employees and strengthening our skills. Digital training tools for our employees were developed and rolled out within a very short space of time. At the same time, we focused even more on communicating with our customers using digital tools. We now have to ensure that we continue to reap the benefits of working digitally in future, as increased efficiency and resilience combined with a simultaneous reduction in resource consumption in mobility are very much in line with the principles of sustainability.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY AND CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION IN CLIMATE CHANGE

The fifth stakeholder panel took place as planned and focused on the opportunities and risks associated with climate change. The need for consistent and appropriate action was demonstrated here. Back in 2016, Geberit adopted the guidelines set out by the Science Based Targets Initiative in order to define a long-term CO₂ reduction pathway and to reduce our absolute CO₂ emissions to below 240,000 tonnes by 2021 as an interim goal. Geberit achieved this goal ahead of schedule back in 2018, with emissions of 206,553 tonnes in 2020. This corresponds to a sales-weighted reduction of 32.6% since 2015. Geberit will specify its goals for the next phase of the climate strategy in 2021. In doing so, we can also build on the successes seen in the development of new products. The eco-design approach has been consistently applied for over ten years and results in savings in materials used, the increased use of recycled materials and reduced water and energy consumption when using our products.

A FOCUS ON LONG-TERM CHANGE IN THE SANITARY INDUSTRY

Geberit wants to take on a leading role in the change towards a more sustainable sanitary industry. The eco-design approach – which covers the entire product life cycle – plays a central role here. The goal is for products to be manufactured locally, where possible, using durable, sustainable raw materials from carefully selected, predominantly regional suppliers. As a result, transport routes can also be kept as short as possible. The developed products are optimised both in terms of the quantity of materials used and in resource and energy consumption during the usage phase. Furthermore, the service life of products is lengthened as far as possible and good reparability ensured thanks to a comprehensive range of spare parts with long-term availability. By following this life-cycle approach, we can achieve our overall goal of increased added value with the lowest possible consumption of resources.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND SUPPORT FOR THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT

Through our operations, we are making a contribution to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, focussing on four of the 17 goals and on the sixth goal “Clean Water and Sanitation” in particular (see → **SDG Reporting**). Geberit has been a member of the UN Global Compact since 2008 and is engaged in the area of environmental protection, responsible labour practices, human rights and the prevention of corruption (see → **Communication on Progress UNGC**) both within the company itself and in its supply chain. We provide information on our sustainability goals and performances in a transparent manner and in accordance with the GRI Standards’ “Comprehensive” reporting option as defined by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). A new element is the content index in line with the guidelines of the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (see → **SASB Content Index**).

Christian Buhl, CEO