

CEO statement on sustainability



“We have been setting standards in the area of sustainability for over 20 years – and will continue to do so in the future. In 2015, we therefore began systematically extending our tried-and-tested and ambitious sustainability strategy to the acquired Sanitec Group.”

Christian Buhl, CEO

The term sustainability encompasses a wide range of topics – even in public perception. An indisputable aspect of this is the related long-term perspective. For companies, it's about their future viability in an increasingly complex world. Our strategy is geared towards sustainability and is an important compass for our development. This is particularly the case when looking at the challenges associated with the integration of the Sanitec Group. The goal here is to extend Geberit's proven standards for production, product development and management systems as well as its high ethical standards to almost twice the number of employees and production plants. To achieve this, we require know-how, commitment from all employees and time. I am proud of the great deal of progress that has already been made in 2015 with regard to the integration – and that our plan is being systematically implemented.

Lean manufacturing for 35 sites

With the 18 new production plants from Sanitec, the Geberit Group has also acquired new processes and know-how. Our aim is to establish the principle of business excellence and continuous improvements at the new plants right from the outset. A central building block in this regard is the Geberit Production System (GPS 2.0), which comprises the main elements of "lean manufacturing" and can be universally applied to all Geberit plants. Because of the processes involved, the manufacture of sanitary ceramics – a new addition at Geberit – is resource- and energy-intensive. This results in an almost fivefold energy consumption in the Geberit Group and therefore in a significant rise in environmental impact and CO₂ emissions. At the same time, the potential to organise resource and energy consumption more efficiently is also increasing. As a result, Geberit is sticking to its ambitious goals of improving eco-efficiency by 5% per year and reducing relative CO₂ emissions by 5% per year. This can only be achieved through optimised processes, investments in energy-efficient production, intensive exchanges on best practice and an integrated management system. By the end of 2018, all new plants are to satisfy the requirements of the standards ISO 9001 (quality), ISO 14001 (environmental management) and OHSAS 18001 (occupational health and safety).

Responsibility for over 12,000 employees

Following the completion of the acquisition of the Sanitec Group in February 2015, the planning of the integration work took centre stage. Initially, the focus was on defining the organisational structure and naming the key personnel within the Geberit Group, including the managing directors in the local sales companies. The goals for 2015 at an organisational level – such as the integration in the sales area – were achieved. We want to offer our over 12,000 employees worldwide outstanding working conditions and a high level of training. The health and safety of employees continues to have the highest priority and is guided by concrete long-term objectives. We will continue to realise our corporate social responsibility within the scope of global social projects relating to the topic of water and sanitary facilities, as well as in cooperation with partners.

Water conservation continues to make a major contribution

Water scarcity, which was classified as a top risk by the World Economic Forum (WEF), shows that water management is a key issue for sustainable development. The biggest environmental contribution by Geberit products still lies in the conservation of water. Nine product groups – or over 500 products – already carry the water efficiency label "WELL", accounting for over 17% of Group sales.

Sustainable system solutions – also in front of the wall

The construction sector is dominated globally by more and more sustainability standards and labels. The rapidly growing number of green building reference projects involving Geberit products attest to the great importance of this issue. Investors, project developers, owners and tenants are looking for system providers with holistic know-how regarding green building that can contribute to the respective desired standards being fulfilled in a targeted manner. This is opening up a future market with major potential in which Geberit is present with water-saving, energy-saving, low-noise and durable products – now in front as well as behind the wall. In 2015, the development of green building expertise within the Geberit Group was advanced in a targeted manner. In the long term, product catalogues and online information will be supplemented with the relevant data on green building.

Statement of continued support for the UN Global Compact

Geberit has been a member of the UN Global Compact since October 2008 as a sustainability leader in the area of environmental protection, responsible labour practices, human rights and the prevention of corruption. We provide customers, employees, investors and other stakeholders with information on our sustainability goals and performances in a transparent manner. Since 2007, our sustainability reporting has been based on the implementation of the GRI guidelines in their most comprehensive form. The Communication on Progress UN Global Compact (COP) on 2015 can be found at → www.geberit.com > Company > Sustainability > UN Global Compact.

Christian Buhl, CEO