

## **Sustainability report**

(Separate non-financial group report pursuant to § 315b HGB (German Commercial Code))

**of A.S. Création Tapeten AG**

**for commercial year 2022**

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## General information

A.S. Création, by preparing the separate non-financial group report, follows the legal requirements of § 315b HGB in conjunction with §§ 289c, 289d and 289e HGB. In addition, parts of the German Sustainability Code were used as a guide (Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitskodex, DNK). The topics were selected on the basis of how material they are for the understanding of the business trend, the business result and the position of A.S. Création (business relevance) as well as their impact on the key stakeholders (impact relevance). In the opinion of A.S. Création, the material impact of the Group's business activities on the natural environment and the stakeholders arises from the two manufacturing companies A.S. Création Tapeten AG and OOO Profistil. Therefore, at this point in time, the key figures are only given for these two companies. Group-wide data collection will be implemented gradually in the coming years. All qualitative statements in this report refer to the Group unless otherwise stated.

The aspects defined in § 289c HGB are presented in the respective chapters of this sustainability report:

Aspects according to §289c HGB	Sustainability Report 2022	Topics
Business model (§289c (1) HGB)	Chapter 1.	Business model
Risks (§289c (3) HGB)	Chapter 2.1.	Key areas of action and risk assessment
Environmental concerns (§289c (2) No. 1 HGB)	Chapter 2.3.	Reduction of CO <sub>2</sub> -emissions
	Chapter 3.2.1.	Circular economy
	Chapter 3.2.2.	Water management
	Chapter 3.2.3.	Energy management
Employee issues (§289c (2) No. 2 HGB)	Chapter 3.2.4.	Carbon footprint
	Chapter 3.3.	Occupational safety
	Chapter 3.3.2.	Education and training
Social issues (§289c (2) No. 3 HGB)	Chapter 3.4.4.	Business ethics
	Chapter 3.1.	Product safety
Respect for human rights (§289c (2) No. 4 HGB)	Chapter 3.4.1.	Compliance
Combating corruption and bribery (§289c (2) No. 5 HGB)	Chapter 3.4.1.	Compliance

## 1. Business model

A.S. Création Group, headed by A.S. Création Tapeten AG, consists of the two divisions Wallpaper and Furnishing Fabrics. The Wallpaper Division produces and distributes wallpapers and borders worldwide and is the larger of the two segments, accounting for 91% of Group sales in 2022. About 73% of the wallpapers are produced in Germany by the parent company A.S. Création Tapeten AG in Wiehl Bomig. The remaining 27% of the total production volume is manufactured by the Belarusian Group company OOO Profistil.

The other operating companies belonging to the Wallpaper Division are pure distribution and trading companies without their own production facilities. These are based in England, the Netherlands, France and Russia.

The Furnishing Fabrics Division distributes curtains and furnishing fabrics as well as products from the sun protection sector, such as pleated blinds, roller blinds and vertical blinds, and is based in Germany.

A.S. Création's direct customers are predominantly the various types of retailers, e.g. wholesalers, retailers, discounters, DIY stores and (online) mail order companies.

A.S. Création's suppliers are predominantly from the European Union (EU). This supplier strategy aims at procurement security and legal reliability, also with regard to European labour and social standards.

## 2. The sustainability strategy of A.S. Création

The field of sustainability (so-called Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR) encompasses many different aspects. In order to develop a sustainability strategy for a company and to implement it successfully, it is therefore essential to identify the sustainability aspects that are essential for the company (and thus the essential areas of action), to define measures and, if necessary, target values and to align the company organisation with these areas of action. To ensure this, a Sustainability Officer has been appointed with effect from 1 January 2021, reporting to the Chairman of the Board of Directors. Also with effect from 1 January 2021, a sustainability component was newly introduced into the system of remuneration to the Board of Directors. The sustainability component is based on improvements to be achieved in the key figures of energy consumption per tonne of finished product, waste generation per tonne of finished product and absenteeism due to occupational accidents.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1. Key areas of action and risk assessment

A systematic analysis of the business activities along the value chain of A.S. Création has defined the key action areas for an overarching sustainability strategy. For this definition, A.S. Création has taken external frameworks such as the German Sustainability Code (Deutscher Nachhaltigkeitskodex, DNK) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of

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<sup>1</sup> The details of the remuneration system for the Board of Directors can be found in the remuneration report pursuant to § 162 of the German Companies Act (Aktiengesetz, AktG). This can be accessed at <https://www.as-creation.com/unternehmen/investor-relations/corporate-governance>.

the United Nations as a basis. The selection was guided by the approach in which areas A.S. Création as a company can bring about significant changes. The following areas of action have been identified:

## 1. Product safety

Since wallpapers are used indoors, the product should not only convey a positive living feeling for the consumer, but must also be harmless to health. Therefore, product safety is one of the most important sustainability aspects for A.S. Création. For this reason, A.S. Création is constantly working on the further improvement of product quality and invests in the research and development of innovative new recipes.

## 2. Use of resources and emissions relevant to the climate

As a manufacturing company, A.S. Création consumes natural resources. Raw materials for the production of wallpapers, energy to operate the plants and water for washing and cooling the operating technology. Furthermore, waste is generated in the production process in particular. This puts a strain on the earth's limited resources and the greenhouse gases produced also put a strain on the ecosystem. Here, A.S. Création aims to save valuable resources, reduce energy consumption and replace fossil raw materials by acting efficiently.

## 3. Working conditions and promotion of young employees

A.S. Création's products are fashionable products that are subject to colour and design trends that differ nationally. In order to survive in a competitive market that is determined by constantly changing trends, you need a team that combines technical expertise as well as creativity, inventiveness and the ability to anticipate. As a result, it is not only of great importance for A.S. Création to create an open organisational culture free from prejudice that fosters the aspects mentioned above. Rather, the human resources policy must also be geared towards inspiring and attracting committed junior staff to the company so that the company remains sensitive and open to new developments in the future. Therefore, ensuring health, equal opportunities as well as training and further education and thus the satisfaction of the employees is a high priority in A.S. Création's sustainability strategy.

#### 4. Compliance and business ethics

The statutory and legal regulations form the framework within which a company operates. Non-compliance with these regulations can lead to both high economic losses and major reputational damage for the company. As an internationally active and listed public limited company (Aktiengesellschaft, AG), A.S. Création Tapeten AG is subject to a large number of regulations, the number and complexity of which are constantly increasing. Therefore, from A.S. Création's point of view, ensuring that its conduct complies with the law and the directives is an essential aspect of its own sustainability strategy. As the decisions and actions of A.S. Création's employees not only have an impact within the company but may also affect people and companies along the supply chain, A.S. Création aims to act in a mindful and far-sighted manner in its business dealings in order to protect people and nature.

#### 5. Economic success

One of the essential prerequisites for the continued existence of a company is, of course, economic success. Only very good net assets, financial position and results of operations make it possible to permanently finance the investments and expenses that are necessary to ensure future viability in the sense of the sustainable existence of a company. Therefore, ecology and economy must go hand in hand. Without sustainable economic success, the lasting implementation of improvements in the CSR area will not be possible. A.S. Création is convinced that ecologically responsible action and economic success are not mutually exclusive, but will be mutually dependent in the medium term. Therefore, we at A.S. Création consider it our responsibility to anchor the issues of profitability and sustainability as two sides of the same coin both in our corporate strategy and in our internal operating processes. We want to create awareness within the company through communication and action.

A risk assessment in accordance with § 315c of the German Commercial Code (HGB) in conjunction with § 289c (3) of the German Commercial Code (HGB) was carried out for the material sustainability aspects listed. In this context, it was examined whether material risks arise from the business activities of A.S. Création or in connection with the business relationships, products and services of A.S. Création that are very likely to have a serious negative impact on the sustainability aspects material to A.S. Création. No reportable risks were identified.

## 2.2. "GREEN STEPS" as a sustainability guiding principle for A.S. Création

A core task of 2022 was to give A.S. Création's sustainability activities an identity. A mission statement was to be created that symbolises the path taken towards a continuous, step-by-step improvement of the company's sustainability performance. With "GREEN STEPS - Our path to a greener future" we have formulated this mission statement for A.S. Création. GREEN STEPS stands for the ambitious mission to transform A.S. Création into a sustainable company in the areas defined as essential.



The name of the campaign is a conscious choice. In the opinion of A.S. Création, sustainability management is not a project but a continuous process. Every goal set, every decision made and every measure taken symbolically represents a "green" step on the path of A.S. Création's sustainability transformation.

This path will lead the company into new territory and confront it with difficult decisions and problems. After all, not all challenges that A.S. Création is currently facing have ready-made solutions. Mastering challenges, however, is deeply rooted in the DNA of the A.S. Création team. Therefore, the GREEN STEPS mission statement is linked to the vision that A.S. Création will be a pioneer in sustainable wallpaper production in the wallpaper industry.

The GREEN STEPS logo is also a signpost and communication medium. The integrated QR code enables interested members of the public to keep abreast of the latest developments in sustainability at A.S. Création. For this purpose, an entire section on A.S. Création's newly designed homepage has been dedicated to the topic: <https://www.as-creation.com/nachhaltigkeit>. It now provides information in a compact and descriptive form about all the important topics that can also be found in this sustainability report.

## 2.3. Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 31% by 2030 as an essential part of the sustainability strategy

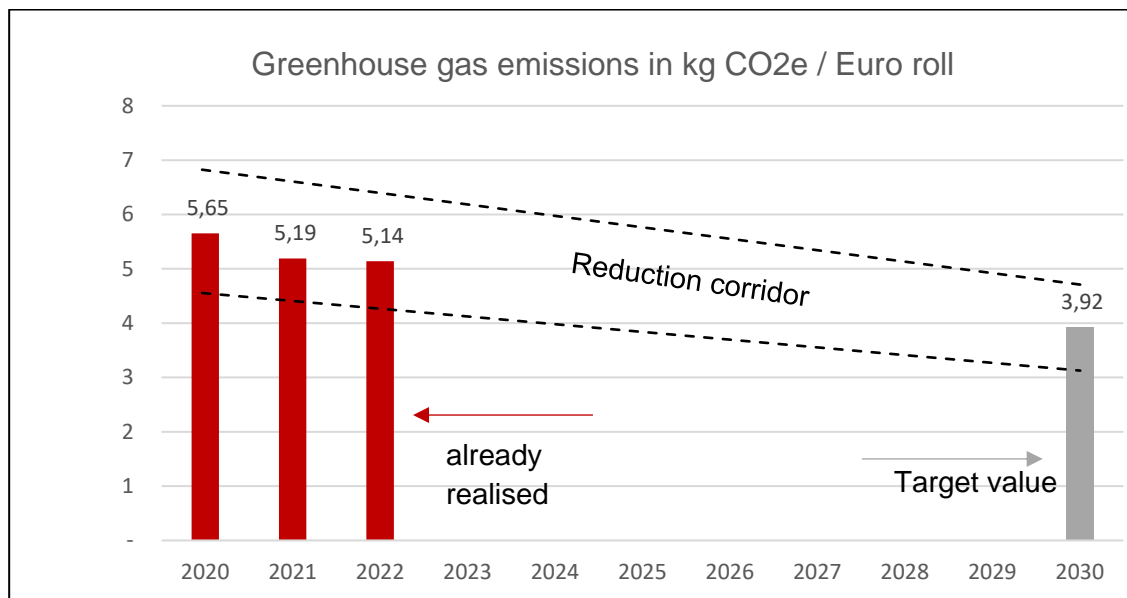
Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. In its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations highlights the special responsibility of private sector companies in the fight against climate change in Goal No. 13 ("Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts"). A.S. Création is aware of this responsibility and is accordingly pushing extensive measures to reduce climate-relevant emissions in order to make a contribution to complying with the Paris Climate Agreement and limiting global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees.

By preparing the first carbon footprint of A.S. Création Tapeten AG for the year 2020, A.S. Création has laid the foundation for identifying the main levers that can lead to a significant reduction in emissions. Since indirect, product-related emissions (so-called Scope 3) account for the majority of A.S. Création Tapeten AG's total emissions (about 90%), the most important goal is to reduce the climate impact of the wallpapers themselves.



Building on the results of the 2020 carbon footprint, A.S. Création has defined a reduction target until 2030, including corresponding interim targets within the reduction path, and set out an initial action plan (in line with GREEN STEPS). For the production site in Germany, A.S. Création Tapeten AG has set itself the target of reducing total greenhouse gas emissions, i.e. Scope 1 to Scope 3, by 30.6% from 5.65 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll of wallpaper in 2020 to 3.92 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll of wallpaper in 2030.

A comparison of the calculated target with the guidelines of the "Corporate Net-Zero Standard" of the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) shows that A.S. Création Tapeten AG is mathematically within the corridor recommended by SBTi for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C. However, the calculated path has not yet been verified by the Science Based Targets Initiative and thus A.S. Création does not yet participate in the SBTi programme.



By 2022, greenhouse gas emissions could already be reduced by 9.1% to 5.14 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll of wallpaper compared to 2020. A.S. Création Tapeten AG is thus moving along the planned reduction path. Details on the climate-relevant emissions, the reduction targets and the improvements achieved are presented in Chapter 3.2.4.

## 2.4. External evaluation of sustainability activities through EcoVadis rating

In order to obtain a continuous, independent assessment of its own sustainability performance, A.S. Création Tapeten AG started to have a corresponding assessment carried out by EcoVadis, an internationally renowned provider of sustainability ratings for companies, in 2021. This assessment provides a detailed insight into environmental, social and ethical risks in more than 200 purchasing categories and more than 160 countries. In the context of the first assessment in 2021, A.S. Création received 49 out of 100 possible total points. This means that the so-called "Bronze Status" in the EcoVadis assessment framework has been achieved.



Building on the outcome of this first assessment, measures were taken in 2022 to implement the potential improvements identified. The effectiveness of these measures is reflected in the fact that A.S. Création has already received 54 out of 100 possible total points in 2022. Compared to the more than 100,000 companies that have undergone an EcoVadis rating, A.S. Création ranks in the 63rd percentile (2021: 53rd percentile), scoring higher than 63% of the companies rated. This means that A.S. Création has already improved by ten percentiles in its first year. The improvements were achieved in particular in the areas of environment and ethics, where A.S. Création clearly outperforms comparable companies in the same sector.

A.S. Création's objective is to further improve its rating and to achieve at least 59 out of 100 points in the EcoVadis rating by 2024, thereby reaching "Silver Status".

## 3. Status quo of sustainability activities in the main areas of action

Chapter 2.1 outlined the five key action areas of A.S. Création's sustainability strategy. In the following, the first four areas of action are specified and their status quo is presented. Item 5 "Economic success" is addressed comprehensively in the annual business report and is therefore not addressed again in this sustainability report.

### 3.1. Action area: product safety

As wallpapers are used indoors, the wallpapers produced by A.S. Création should not only convey a positive living feeling to the consumer, but they must also be harmless from a health point of view. In order to achieve this goal, A.S. Création gives high priority to certifications, inspections and measurements.

#### 3.1.1. Input materials used

At A.S. Création, the safety of all raw materials and chemicals used is therefore of paramount importance. We comply with the legal regulations for indoor products and even go beyond them in many areas. The consistent observance of and compliance with these norms and standards

is regularly checked by internationally accredited testing institutes. A.S. Création thereby offers its customers a safe and healthy product that can be used for wall decoration in sensitive living areas.

During 2022, product safety in this respect was improved once again by changing the plasticiser used to a phthalate-free variant after extensive testing. This changeover was verified by an accredited laboratory. The changeover was not carried out on a specific date, but successively. By the end of 2022, all remaining stocks of raw materials containing phthalates had been used up. Thus, all wallpapers produced by A.S. Création Tapeten AG since 01/01/2023 may bear the logo "Phthalate-free". Even if the plasticiser used previously could be used unchanged from a legal point of view, A.S. Création considers the changeover a step on the way to becoming a sustainable company.



In 2023, further projects in the area of feedstock improvement are on the agenda. The direction of the improvement depends on the raw material under consideration. It primarily moves in the three dimensions: (i) improving the health of the products within residences, (ii) reducing the environmental footprint and (iii) improving product quality. Work is currently underway to replace one of the two blowing agents used with an environmentally friendly, organically based blowing agent. Another project is the gradual substitution of the filler used with a recycled grade of equal quality, which leads to a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>.

### 3.1.2. Certifications

The production of all wallpapers manufactured by A.S. Création is based on the corresponding valid EN or DIN standards. For example, all wallpapers produced by A.S. Création bear a qualified CE mark in accordance with EN 15102. This serves to document that the wallpapers of A.S. Création demonstrably meet the criteria defined by the European Union (EU). This also includes the fire protection criteria according to EN 13501-1. Especially in the Belarusian production facility, the so-called "GOST" mark is also an important requirement, which defines the criteria for wallpapers in the Russian economic area.

In order to provide its customers with a level of safety that goes beyond the legal requirements, A.S. Création is committed to meeting the strict technical, health and ecological requirements of the Gütegemeinschaft Tapete e. V., which are documented in RAL-GZ-479<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the product-related indoor air emissions (so-called VOC) of all A.S. Création wallpapers meet the requirements of the German AgBB<sup>3</sup> regulations as well as the lowest emission class "A+" according to the corresponding French regulations.

Moreover, all wallpapers produced by A.S. Création in Germany in 2022 are certified with the FSC seal, which guarantees the use of wood and paper products from responsibly managed

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<sup>2</sup> The Quality Association for Wallpaper (Gütegemeinschaft Tapete e. V.) has drawn up quality and testing regulations for wall coverings which, in addition to technical quality requirements, include further requirements and tests regarding the health and ecological safety of wall coverings. (Source: [https://www.tapeten.de/media/tapete\\_ral-gz\\_479\\_ausgabe\\_06.14\\_01\\_1.pdf](https://www.tapeten.de/media/tapete_ral-gz_479_ausgabe_06.14_01_1.pdf))

<sup>3</sup> Committee for the Health Evaluation of Building Products

forests. With its work, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) contributes to the maintenance of the forest ecosystem and thus also protects animal and plant species threatened with extinction. A.S. Création also uses corresponding paper products for its production in Belarus. However, as of 8 March 2022, the international FSC label may no longer be used for products from Russian or Belarusian production, regardless of equivalent quality.

To ensure that these high quality standards are met on a permanent basis, A.S. Création's quality management team monitors compliance with the relevant standards, norms and specifications. Accordingly, the quality management system in accordance with ISO 9001:2015 implemented both at the production site in Germany and at the production site in Belarus is of material importance for A.S. Création. In order to keep a constant eye on the current legal situation and to be able to react pro-actively to innovations, the quality management team has established a corresponding screening process in cooperation with the compliance officer.

### **3.1.3. Research and development**

Wallpaper is a fashionable product that is subject to continuous trend changes. Accordingly, a large part of the product development process at A.S. Création is devoted to developing new designs and new surface structures and, in this sense, is mainly a creative process.

In addition, A.S. Création engages in a wide range of research and development activities, which are coordinated by the company's own laboratory. In addition to developing new formulations for the paints and plastisols used, new input materials available on the market are tested for their suitability for wallpaper production. Furthermore, cooperations are entered into with external partners with the aim of developing new input materials. One example of these cooperations is the development of an alternative input material to PVC that can be processed in A.S. Création's existing production processes, which has already started in 2021. The result is a PVC-free vinyl wallpaper whose coating is not based on organic solvents and plasticisers. This can further reduce VOC emissions and the environmental impact from the wallpaper. Corresponding wallpaper collections based on this innovative formula will be presented in 2023.

A.S. Création has expanded its research and development (so-called R&D) capacities in 2022 by strengthening the R&D team in order to be able to focus even more intensively on the development of sustainable wallpapers in the coming years. The agenda for R&D activities in 2023 includes testing alternative manufacturing processes for wallpapers, an increased focus on internal process optimisation, collaborative research with suppliers and improved knowledge sharing within the Group.

### **3.1.4. "d'eco" as a seal of quality for particularly sustainable wallpapers from A.S. Création**

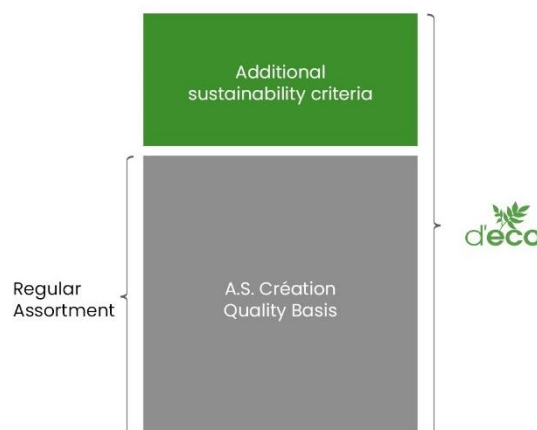
All wallpapers produced by A.S. Création in Germany meet a very high quality standard on which our customers can rely. We call this standard "A.S. Création Quality Basis". This quality basis defines that each product:

- meets the RAL quality standard for wallpapers,
- contains exclusively FSC-certified printing substrates,
- achieves the lowest indoor air emission class A+ and
- is free from plasticisers containing phthalates.

In recent years, the importance of sustainability criteria in the assessment of products has increased significantly. This also applies to wallpapers. Therefore, expanding the proportion of sustainable wallpapers in the overall product range is an important component of A.S. Création's sustainability strategy. To this end, the "d'eco" quality label was developed in 2022, which distinguishes certain wallpapers from the rest of the range by meeting defined sustainability criteria. The d'eco seal is a seal specific to A.S. Création and will be clearly visible on the inlays of the qualified wallpapers in the future.



The d'eco seal provides customers with an easy way to identify A.S. Création wallpapers that meet specific sustainability criteria in addition to the above-mentioned high standard quality criteria that apply to the entire range. The concept of the d'eco seal is as follows:



The additional sustainability criteria for the d'eco seal are defined according to the current state of the art. Currently, wallpapers from A.S. Création bearing the d'eco seal are characterised by the following three additional criteria:

1. The wallpapers are PVC-free,
2. they contain only water-based printing inks and
3. no organic solvents are used in production.

### 3.2. Action area: Use of resources and emissions relevant to the climate

As a manufacturing company, raw material management is fundamentally important. A.S. Création needs very good raw materials to produce visually impressive, high-quality, durable wallpapers that are safe for customers.

The sustainability strategy of A.S. Création is pursuing two thrusts with regard to reducing the environmental impact of the raw materials it uses. On the one hand, the amount of raw materials consumed is to be reduced by increasing material efficiency. This includes, for example, reducing the reject rate in production. On the other hand, the quality of the raw materials used is to be improved with regard to their environmental impact.

A.S. Création has anchored a continuous improvement process in the company's organisation, which aims to increase occupational safety, improve product quality and realise cost savings through efficiency gains. At the production facility in Germany, the reject rate in 2022 was maintained at the previous year's level, although there were strong fluctuations in capacity utilisation as a result of the Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine, which had a negative impact on the reject rate. At the production facility in Belarus, the reject rate increased slightly compared to the previous year.

### **3.2.1. Waste management and circular economy**

In the day-to-day running of a manufacturing company, the generation of waste is inevitable. One source of waste in wallpaper production is, for example, the so-called start-up rolls. This is the waste that occurs until the press is adjusted so that the various inks are precisely matched and, when combined, produce the desired design in the desired colour. Border offcuts also account for a significant proportion of waste. As the printing systems cannot print right to the edge of the paper or nonwoven fabric, unprinted areas remain at the borders. These are cut off after printing so that the finished wallpaper strips can be hung next to each other. These two waste fractions together with wallpapers to be disposed of, e.g. due to quality defects, form the so-called "pure wallpaper waste".

In addition, the production of wallpapers generates waste in the form of solid and liquid residues, for example, which are produced during the cleaning of the printing tools. Finally, cardboard packaging and typical production waste, such as filter materials and municipal waste, also contribute to the total waste volume. Hazardous waste plays a minor role in the production of wallpaper. At A.S. Création Tapeten AG, for example, the share of waste declared as hazardous under the Waste Catalogue Ordinance (Abfallverzeichnis-Verordnung, AVV) will amount to only 0.99% of the total waste generated in 2022. These are absorbent and filter materials that are contaminated with oils.

With regard to the sustainability strategy, waste management pursues two main goals. On the one hand, to reduce the volume of waste and, on the other hand, to recycle as much of the unavoidable waste as possible. In this way, A.S. Création contributes to the promotion of the circular economy within the meaning of the German Circular Economy Act (Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz) and to the achievement of Goal No. 4 "Transition to a circular economy" of the EU climate taxonomy.

The waste intensity in relation to the total weight of wallpapers produced improved slightly at A.S. Création in 2022. Against the backdrop of the fluctuating utilisation of the production facilities in 2022 already described, this development is to be seen as positive. Due to an

improved database, the calculation of this key figure for the Belarus production site could be aligned with the key figure calculation for the Germany production site in 2022. As a result, the value of this key figure for the Belarus production site for 2022 has changed significantly and cannot be meaningfully compared with the previous year.

<b>Waste intensity</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Change 2021/2022</b>
	Kg per ton of finished product	Kg per ton of finished product	
Production site Germany	305.90	292.82	-4.3 %
Production site Belarus	131.87	319.36	Changed database

For A.S. Création, one indicator of the promotion of the circular economy is the proportion of "pure wallpaper waste" that is reused. In this context, A.S. Création is researching the best solutions for recycling this waste fraction. This recovery corresponds to recycling in the sense of the waste hierarchy of paragraph 6 of the Circular Economy Act (Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz, KrWG).

In 2022, the cooperation with waste management companies for the further use of pure wallpaper waste was expanded, and additional ways of recycling were found. For example, sound insulation products are made from this waste fraction by shredding and pressing the pure wallpaper waste. Another material stream flows into the paper industry after processing as an auxiliary material. As a result of these measures, A.S. Création Tapeten AG has succeeded in increasing the proportion of pure wallpaper waste that is recycled from 60.2% in the previous year to 91.3% in 2022.

In order to transform the pure wallpaper waste into a genuine recycled product in the long term, a research project was launched in spring 2021 in cooperation with a local university. Here, students on the "Renewable Energies" Master's programme are researching technologies for recycling wallpaper waste. This project was continued in 2022 and expanded to include various dimensions, such as the consideration of a possible pyrolysis gas recovery from the wallpaper waste. The findings from these projects will be reviewed for internal implementation in 2023.

In addition, research projects were launched with industry partners in the field of analysis and recycling of PVC waste streams. The time horizon here is expected to extend until 2025.

### 3.2.2. Water management

The water used at A.S. Création Tapeten AG is primarily used for production purposes. Of the total water consumption of 16,479 m<sup>3</sup> in 2022, 76.2% was used for cooling towers, 3.2% for cleaning printing tools, 0.7% for ink mixing and 19.8% for sanitary facilities and 0.1% for other uses.

The key figures in the water sector developed as follows in 2022:

Water intensity	2021	2022	Change 2021/2022
	m <sup>3</sup> per ton of finished product	m <sup>3</sup> per ton of finished product	
Production site Germany	0.98	1.14	17.1 %
Production site Belarus	0.49	0.53	9.2 %

The installation of new cooling towers at the production site in Germany planned for 2022 was not implemented. This will now be realised in 2023 as part of the reorganisation of the production site. As a result, the planned reduction in water intensity has not yet occurred in 2022. Rather, the temporary continued operation of the old cooling towers has led to a deterioration in water intensity.

The lower water intensity at the Belarusian plant is due to the fact that no water-based cooling systems are used there, but rather classic refrigeration systems that are operated with refrigerants. The increase in water intensity in 2022 is within the normal range of variation.

### 3.2.3. Energy management

The primary energy sources at both the production facility in Germany and the production facility in Belarus are natural gas and electricity. Natural gas is used to operate the thermal exhaust air purification system and simultaneously generate the required process heat. The largest consumers of the electricity used are the production facilities and compressed air and refrigeration generation.

With regard to energy sources, a holistic energy concept is applied which ensures efficient energy use. For example, A.S. Création Tapeten AG uses thermal exhaust air purification systems with integrated energy carrier conversion systems. This means that the energy from the thermal exhaust air purification systems can be used, for example, to dry the inks in the printing process. This is done via efficiently designed heat exchangers. This simultaneously saves energy, reduces emissions and minimises the remaining waste heat potential.

In the context of A.S. Création Tapeten AG's energy management system, which is certified according to ISO 50001:2018, this energy concept is further developed by continuously recording and analysing energy consumption values. In order to monitor progress in energy optimisation, energy reports are prepared quarterly with regard to the German production site. In addition to a detailed analysis of key figures with a special focus on energy intensity and emissions, these also include an evaluation of the measures implemented in the past business year. Implementation and progress (effectiveness checks) are controlled and monitored by the Head of Energy Management. Furthermore, the energy reports describe concrete action and investment plans for the next business year and provide an overview of strategic energy goals related to compliance with the energy programme.



The production facility in Belarus also has an energy coupling concept to increase energy efficiency at the site. Even if no certified energy management system is implemented at the production site in Belarus, an energy officer is employed who is responsible for monitoring or controlling consumption data and reporting it to the local authorities. The energy officer regularly exchanges information with A.S. Création Tapeten AG on energy-related topics.

The energy key figures have developed as follows in 2022:

<b>Energy intensity</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Change 2021/2022</b>
	kWh per ton of finished product	kWh per ton of finished product	
Production site Germany	2,631.2	2,805.6	6.6 %
Production site Belarus	4,118.9	4,627.0	12.3 %

The energy intensity at the production site in Germany has deteriorated by 6.6% in 2022 compared to 2021. The main reason for this is the lower production volume and fluctuating utilisation of capacity in the crisis year 2022 as a result of the poor consumer climate. The energy system at A.S. Création Tapeten AG, however, is designed for a larger output volume with the production capacities being utilised as evenly as possible and requires a certain base load of energy to provide the required temperature level of the process heat.

In addition, there has been a further ramp-up of water-based ink systems, which require a higher energy input to dry the inks and thus have a negative impact on the key figures. A compromise was made here with regard to energy consumption in favour of the development of healthy wallpapers for the consumer.

According to A.S. Création, the war in Ukraine will put a permanent strain on the economic relations between the European Union and Russia. As a result, the Board of Directors expects a sustained lower production volume for the production facility in Germany than in the past. Therefore, the reorganisation of the production facility was started in the second half of 2022, which should, among other things, lead to a noticeable improvement in energy intensity compared to 2022. This improvement will occur in the course of 2023, so that the full effect will be visible in the key figures of the production facility in Germany for 2024.

In Belarus, a less complex energy coupling system is used. Here, the heat generated from thermal exhaust air purification is used to heat the production and administration buildings through the use of heat exchangers. However, there is no heat transfer medium in use that can convert the waste heat into process heat. The ink is therefore dried by direct heating with a gas burner, which explains the higher energy intensity.

The increase in the ratio in Belarus can be explained by a reduction in run sizes, as since 2022 it has been possible to produce more technically complex wallpaper samples, which, however, have smaller individual batch sizes. This leads to a higher reject rate and lower energy efficiency compared to long runs.

The production facility in Belarus also does not have a separate heating unit as it is designed for continuous operation. The heating power for the production halls and offices is to be generated permanently from the surplus heat of the thermal exhaust air purification (so-called TNV). However, to avoid frost damage to the buildings during temporary production shutdowns in 2022, continued operation of the TNV became necessary, causing an increase in gas intensity.

As countermeasures, the management at the site is planning to optimise the operating modes and operating times of the plants and to reduce the reject rate.

### **3.2.4. Climate-relevant emissions and reduction targets**

In the summer of 2021, the first carbon footprint of A.S. Création Tapeten AG was prepared for the year 2020 in cooperation with Climate Partner GmbH. In the course of 2022, the complex process of data collection and evaluation was improved to such an extent that the carbon footprint for 2022 could already be prepared at the beginning of 2023 and included in this Sustainability Report for 2022. This year-by-year consideration of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which was not yet possible in the sustainability report for the fiscal year 2021, will be the standard for A.S. Création's sustainability reporting in the future.

The carbon footprint of the year 2020 formed the basis for identifying the main areas for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and deriving corresponding reduction targets for A.S. Création. The carbon footprints of the subsequent years document the development of A.S. Création's total emissions and review the effectiveness of the measures taken to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### Development of total emissions

Based on the calculated carbon footprints, the development of the total emissions of A.S. Création Tapeten AG is as follows.

	2020	2021	2022	
	tons CO <sub>2</sub> e	tons CO <sub>2</sub> e	tons CO <sub>2</sub> e	Distribution
Scope 1 (heat, refrigeration, vehicle fleet)	8,939	8,641	6,974	10.5 %
Scope 2 (electricity)	3,246	0	0	0.0 %
Scope 3 (purchased goods, logistics, waste disposal, etc.)	101,568	83,026	59,312	89.5 %
<b>Total emissions</b> <i>(of which site-related emissions)</i>	<b>113,753</b> <i>(16,615)</i>	<b>91,667</b> <i>(12,617)</i>	<b>66,286</b> <i>(10,049)</i>	<b>100.0 %</b> <i>13.8 %.</i>
Change in total emissions compared to previous year	n.a.	- 19.4 %	- 27.7 %	

In 2021, total emissions have reduced by 19.4% or by 22,086 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e compared to the 2020 baseline. In the case of manufacturing companies, production volume has a significant influence on the level of total emissions, as changes in production volume are reflected almost linearly in the absolute level of emissions. At A.S. Création Tapeten AG, the production volume in 2021 was 12.2% below the previous year's level. In addition, the effect of the conversion of the electricity purchased to green electricity, which was completed in 2021, can be seen. This electricity comes from hydropower plants and is certified according to the criteria of TÜV SÜD under class EE00. The entire share of electricity in energy consumption has been CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral since the beginning of 2021, which means a sustainable saving of more than 3,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year. In addition, slight improvements in the emission factors of raw materials used reduced the overall emissions.

In 2022, total emissions have reduced by 27.7 % or by 25,381 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e compared to 2021. The majority of the reductions resulted from the further reduction of the output volume by 26.9 %. The measures introduced in 2022 to achieve the reduction targets are still at an early (development) stage and have therefore not yet made a significant contribution to reducing overall emissions in 2022. Decarbonisation effects had an impact on the upstream and downstream industry, which are reflected in A.S. Création's carbon footprint via adjusted emission factors.

In addition to the absolute emission values, evaluations of the main emission sources were also carried out. Due to the production and consumable materials used, Scope 3 emissions typically account for the largest share of total emissions for production companies. This picture is also evident at A.S. Création Tapeten AG, where Scope 3 emissions account for about 90% of total emissions. Accordingly, this area represents the greatest lever for improving the carbon footprint.

	2020	2021	2022	
	tons CO <sub>2</sub> e	tons CO <sub>2</sub> e	tons CO <sub>2</sub> e	Proportion of total emissions
Purchased goods and services	74,197	57,005	40,794	61.5 %
Disposal of sold products at end of life <sup>4</sup>	19,640	17,174	12,189	18.4 %
Upstream chain of energy-related emissions from Scope 1 & 2 <sup>5</sup>	3,321	2,064	1,708	2.6 %
Outbound logistics	2,371	4,031	2,743	4.1 %
Cumulative remaining items (employee travel, business trips, operational waste, upstream transport)	2,039	2,752	1,878	2.8 %
<b>Scope 3 - Emissions</b>	<b>101,568</b>	<b>83,026</b>	<b>59,312</b>	<b>89.5 %</b>

Shifts could be observed in 2021 compared to 2020 in the area of outbound logistics, the share of total emissions of which increased from 2.1% in 2020 to 4.4% in 2021. This development is due to an increase in air freight emissions. These were at a very low level in 2020, the first year of the Covid pandemic, due to flight bans. The level reached in 2021 with a share of approx. 4 % of total emissions proved to be constant in 2022, confirming the special effect of 2020. Furthermore, the upstream chain emissions in the electricity sector have almost halved due to the purchase of green electricity.

## CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets

Determining emissions alone is not enough to contribute to the Paris Climate Agreement and thus limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5°C. For this purpose, it is necessary to create a reduction strategy from the carbon footprint in order to define reduction measures and to implement them consistently. For this reason, a corresponding reduction strategy was defined for A.S. Création Tapeten AG.

By calculating the company's first carbon footprint for the year 2020, A.S. Création has laid the foundation for identifying the key levers that can lead to a significant reduction in emissions. This first carbon footprint thus forms the point of comparison against which all planned reduction targets and emission reductions actually achieved are measured and is therefore also referred to as the 'baseline balance'. Derived from the results of the baseline assessment, the aim was

<sup>4</sup> This value is set hypothetically, as every wallpaper sold is also disposed of at some point. The typical disposal route for the product today (residual waste) is assumed, as well as for the cardboard packaging (paper waste) and the packaging film (plastic waste).

<sup>5</sup> The production and delivery of the purchased energy sources electricity and gas also generates emissions (so-called upstream emissions). This value takes this circumstance into account.

to calculate the reduction potential of the company's climate-relevant emissions as accurately as possible. A 10-year period from the starting year 2020 to the target year 2030 was defined as the time horizon for this analysis. This means that the maximum period issued by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) is used for "Near Term Goals".

In determining the reduction potentials, each individual emission category of the baseline balance was examined separately. In the analysis of the respective categories, three phases were run through in succession, reflecting the quality of the available data in descending order of priority. This ensures the highest possible validity of the identified reduction potentials.

1. Internal data sources:

Survey of internal departmental experts on planned measures and calculations already made on possible reduction potentials. Further calculations partially derived on the basis of this information.

2. Primary data of the suppliers

Enquiries with the direct suppliers and service providers of A.S. Création Tapeten AG regarding planned emission reductions in the area of purchased raw materials for wallpaper production.

3. Publicly available secondary data

Analysis of freely available publications, industry journals or reports in the area of the respective emission categories for indications of projected emission reductions.

Insofar as the sources described above could not produce a sufficient result, a flat reduction value of -10% by 2030 compared to 2020 was applied for the category under consideration. This value is composed of an analysis of publications on reduction forecasts by the EU, the German federal government and business associations. These forecasts are primarily based on improvements in the energy industry.

In addition to the determined percentage reduction potentials in the individual emission areas, an efficiency increase in the production of A.S. Création was included. Specifically, a decreasing reject rate is assumed by the target year 2030, which is to be achieved through the implemented Continuous Improvement Process (CIP). This reduces the amount of operational waste and, at the same time, the amount of raw materials used.

Based on the baseline balance, the expected CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in the carbon footprint for 2030 are calculated, taking into account the reduction potentials described. As the level of total emissions is very much dependent on the company's production performance, the absolute level of total emissions is not a suitable target figure, nor is it an indicator of improvements achieved. Accordingly, A.S. Création has chosen the total CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions (i.e. Scope 1 to Scope 3) per wallpaper roll produced as the reference value for its own reduction targets, with the number of wallpaper rolls produced being standardised to the so-called "Euro roll size" (10.05 m length and 0.53 m width).

The amount of greenhouse gas equivalents emitted in the base year 2020 in the amount of 113,753 to CO<sub>2</sub>e leads to a ratio of 5.65 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll of wallpaper in relation to the

production volume in 2020. The calculated target value for the year 2030 is 3.92 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll of wallpaper or, assuming the same production volume as in 2020, 78,909 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

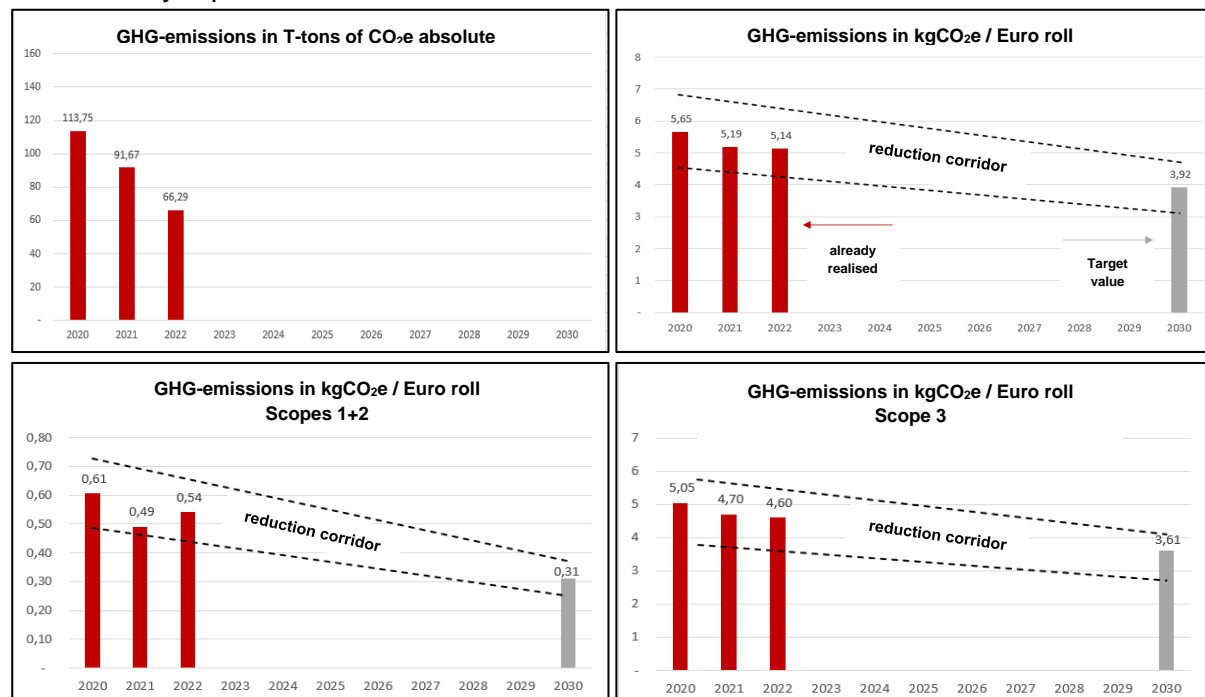
Assuming the same production volume in 2030 as in 2022 (instead of that in 2020), total emissions would be 49,018 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030 if the target value is achieved, which would correspond to a reduction of 56.9% compared to the emissions in 2020. However, only 30.6 percentage points of this would be due to actual improvements, while 26.3 percentage points would be due to reduced emissions as a result of lower production volumes. This example illustrates the usefulness of a relative target related to production output.

**Therefore, a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions (Scope 1 to Scope 3) by 30.6% from 5.65 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per euro roll in 2020 to 3.92 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030 is targeted.**

The reduction target defined for A.S. Création Tapeten AG is made up as follows:

	Actual 2020 kg CO <sub>2</sub> e per Euro roll	Target 2030 kg CO <sub>2</sub> e per Euro roll	Reduction 2020 - 2030
Scope 1 & 2	0.61	0.31	- 48.8 %
Scope 3	5.04	3.61	- 28.4 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.65</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>- 30.6 %</b>

As a continuous linear reduction cannot be assumed, A.S. Création sets a reduction corridor of ±20% within which the annual results may move. The following graphs will be continuously updated in the coming years to document the achievement of targets or any deviations from targets. Furthermore, the implemented measures will continue to be explained in future sustainability reports.



Already in 2021, a reduction in emissions of 0.46 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll or 8.1% to 5.19 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll can be seen. Of this, 0.22 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll alone is attributable to the switch to green electricity. In 2022, the value of the indicator was improved by only 0.05 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll to 5.14 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll, which corresponds to a percentage reduction of 1.0%.

Due to the increased energy intensity in 2022 (see chapter 3.2.3), the emissions in Scope 1 & 2 have worsened by 0.05 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll or by 10.5%. In contrast, a reduction of 0.10 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per Euro roll or 2.2% was achieved in Scope 3 in 2022 due to slightly improved emission factors, which more than compensates for the losses from Scope 1 & 2 due to the larger share of Scope 3 emissions in the carbon footprint.

### **3.3. Action area: Working conditions and promotion of young employees**

It is fundamental for the sustainable success of A.S. Création that the right employees work for the company. This means that A.S. Création has a team that combines professional expertise as well as creativity, inventiveness and foresight and is committed to the success of the company. Therefore, it is of great importance to create an open and unprejudiced organisational culture that favours the above-mentioned aspects and to orientate human resources policy towards inspiring and attracting a sufficient number of junior staff to the company.

#### **3.3.1. Occupational safety and protection of health**

A safe working environment that takes into account the health concerns of employees promotes their motivation and commitment. At A.S. Création Tapeten AG, occupational safety is the responsibility of the Occupational Safety Committee, which is chaired by the Occupational Safety Officer and complemented by representatives of the Human Resources Department, the specialist departments and the Works Council as well as by the Chief Production Officer and Chief Logistics Officer. All topics relevant to occupational safety and health are discussed in this committee. This includes risk assessments, acute problem cases, training and audit concepts as well as general improvement measures.

Furthermore, mandatory examinations are carried out on a regular basis for employees with an increased risk potential, such as hearing protection tests for production employees. In addition, regular examinations are offered, such as an eye examination for employees with VDU workstations, the use of which is voluntary.

The promotion of health at the workplace is being continuously developed at A.S. Création. In the white-collar sector, stand-sit workplaces are set up as needed as an active preventive measure against back injuries. In 2023, further workplace inspections are also planned in the production area to implement ergonomic measures for workplaces with high physical demands. A.S. Création thus follows its principle of going beyond the minimum legal requirements in terms of ergonomics too.

At A.S. Création Tapeten AG, the following two key figures are used for the area of occupational safety:

- the internationally used Lost Time Injury Frequency (LTIF) indicator, which shows the number of lost time accidents per 1 million working hours (definition: total number of occupational accidents with lost time x 1,000,000 / total hours worked)
- the share of absenteeism due to occupational accidents in total hours worked, which reflects the number of serious occupational accidents.

These key figures improved as follows at A.S. Création Tapeten AG in 2022:

	2021	2022	Change
Lost Time Injury Frequency	35.17*	25.65	- 27.1 %
Proportion of absenteeism due to occupational accidents	0.521 %	0.284 %	- 0.237 percentage points

\*incorrect information in previous year's report corrected

Further measures in the fields of health promotion and occupational safety are planned for 2023. In particular, a company health management system is currently being established. Within this framework, employees can take advantage of various offers such as specially made shoe inserts for safety shoes or discussions for returning to work following illness. In addition, new risk assessments for mental stress in the workplace will be carried out in 2023.

As part of the newly created health management system, a health day is to be organised annually to inform staff about new offers and to create a basic awareness of the topic of health protection.

### 3.3.2. Education and training

In 2022, 67.9% (previous year: 69.0%) of the employees of the A.S. Création Group were employed in Germany. Therefore, the consequences of the demographic change in Germany, in particular the rising average age and the increasing competition for good junior staff, will pose particular challenges for A.S. Création. Accordingly, the commitment to education and training is hugely relevant for the sustainable development of A.S. Création.

This includes internal training above all. Trainees not only have a high level of identification with the company and the products, but as the "mouthpiece" of the younger generation they can contribute their own ideas and concepts and thus keep both A.S. Création and the wallpaper product "young". This applies in particular to the area of sustainability.

A.S. Création offers training in fourteen different occupational fields in the commercial and industrial sectors every year. In 2022, a training branch for "machine and plant operator - specialisation in paints and mixing", created in direct cooperation with the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Industrie- und Handelskammer), has been added. In this way, A.S. Création Tapeten AG provides training for the company's specialised needs and ensures that qualified young people are recruited from its own ranks.



In order to continue to be perceived as an interesting, reliable employer and attractive training company, A.S. Création must be present, transparent and tangible for young people. In this context, the following measures, among others, will be implemented:

Constant contact is established with pupils in the region through regular participation in apprentice fairs and close cooperation with schools. By offering work experience and internships, interested people have the chance to gain insights into the different apprenticeship positions at A.S. Création. The possibility of a dual study programme after completion of the apprenticeship increases the attractiveness of an apprenticeship at A.S. Création.

The website "Trainee Blog - By trainees for trainees"<sup>6</sup> was launched as a trainee-only project to provide interested parties from outside the company as well as the trainees themselves with a comprehensive insight into the different apprenticeships, internships and activities as well as events related to A.S. Création. Here, trainees create new articles on their own initiative with authentic insights into daily life at A.S. Création from the trainees' point of view.

In order to meet the goal of securing the next generation of employees, the training rate should be at least 7 % per year. Last year, the training rate of 7.9 % was again above the issued target value (previous year: 6.8 %).

### 3.3.3. Equal opportunities

A.S. Création is committed to gender equality and promotes the reconciliation of work and family life. For instance, A.S. Création offers numerous part-time models for employees returning from parental leave, which are individually adapted to their personal circumstances. A.S. Création is convinced that this approach has a positive impact on the employees and the company by facilitating the return to work despite private challenges and at the same time retaining qualified and motivated employees for the company.

With regard to gender equality, the development of the proportion of women in the total workforce as well as the proportion of women in the first and second management level below the Board of Directors is analysed at A.S. Création Tapeten AG. A.S. Création Tapeten AG has set itself the target of increasing the proportion of women in the first management level to 10% and in the second management level to 30% by 31 December 2026. These key figures improved as follows at A.S. Création Tapeten AG in 2022:

	31/12/2021	31/12/2022	Change
Proportion of women in the workforce	24.0 %	24.5 %	+ 0.5 percentage points
Proportion of women in the 2nd management level	20.0 %	22.2 %	+ 2.2 percentage points
Proportion of women in the 1st management level	7.1 %	14.3 %	+ 7.2 percentage points

<sup>6</sup> azubiblog.as-creation.de

Another aspect of equal opportunities is to provide the best possible support for employees with physical disabilities. At A.S. Création Tapeten AG, this is ensured by the Disabled Persons' Representative Council, which promotes the integration of severely disabled persons into the company in close coordination with Human Resources.

### **3.4. Action area: Compliance and business ethics**

Compliance with laws, rules and internal regulations is part of the self-image of employees at A.S. Création Tapeten AG. The Head of Legal and Compliance and the Information Security Officer report directly to the Board of Directors and control the establishment and further development of the compliance structure in the A.S. Création Group.

#### **3.4.1. Compliance**

For A.S. Création, the focus in the area of compliance is on the following topics:

- Fulfilment of the legal requirements at the production sites, especially in the areas of occupational and production safety as well as energy and environmental requirements, is a basic prerequisite for sustainable production. For the production site in Germany, the list of applicable laws and regulations is updated every six months in cooperation with an external specialist company (so-called legal cadastre). Monitoring compliance with the regulations recorded in the legal register is the responsibility of the Head of Legal and Compliance in cooperation with the Head of Operations, the specialist officers and heads of department.
- Dealing with business partners with a focus on (i) antitrust and competition law, (ii) anti-corruption and (iii) other fair dealings.
- Compliance with legal requirements in trade, with a focus on (i) the Money Laundering Act (Geldwäschegesetz) and (ii) the requirements of foreign trade law regarding the screening of business partners for trade restrictions.
- Sensitising employees to (i) the handling of company information, i.e. safeguarding business and trade secrets, (ii) the handling of company information relevant to the stock exchange, and (iii) conduct in the event of a conflict of interest.

In 2022, no violations related to these compliance topics became known.

A special focus in the field of compliance in 2022 was on preparing for the Supply Chain Sourcing Obligations Act (Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz, LkSG). Extensive measures have already been taken here. Due to the defined size criteria (more than 3,000 employees), A.S. Création is not directly obliged to implement the requirements laid down in the law. However, it can be assumed that the company will be indirectly held accountable by its large customers, who are already directly affected, to provide information on the criteria defined in the LkSG. Therefore, in 2023, a system will be established to collect and monitor ESG risks in the supply chain. A focus is placed here on the observance of fundamental human rights. Special software is to be used for this. The establishment of this system is controlled by the Compliance

Officer. Operational management, however, is the responsibility of the purchasing department in the later stages, whereby technical input from the sustainability officer is also to be incorporated. By establishing this system, A.S. Création expects to achieve further synergy effects in the field of sustainability management through an improved exchange of ESG information in the supply chain, such as CO<sub>2</sub> data or information on certifications of suppliers and service providers.

### **3.4.2. Responsible information management**

The topics of IT security and data protection have become increasingly important in recent years and are now among the core issues in internal risk management. This area is the responsibility of the Information Security Officer, who reports directly to the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Controlling Officer.

A.S. Création's Information Security Policy contains the principles of IT security and instructions for action in the areas of information security and data protection. For the continuous training of the employees in these two areas, an e-learning platform was introduced, through which all employees of the A.S. Création Group who work at a PC workstation participate in training courses. These trainings are mandatory and cover security topics such as the correct handling of websites, emails and data carriers and are designed to raise staff awareness of cyber risks and data protection issues.

In addition, the IT structure at A.S. Création is regularly examined for weaknesses in order to keep information security at a high level. In 2022, numerous measures were implemented to further improve IT security. In the area of network security, modernisation measures were carried out on existing systems, the firewall was expanded and improved, and the security standards at all Group companies were further harmonised. In addition, the segmentation of the corporate network was further increased to minimise the risk of attackers being able to cause damage in the overall network. At the device security level, multifactor authentication has been introduced for the most important programmes. In addition, the implementation of a client management system combined with patch management ensures that the software on the staff's end devices is always kept up to date and that any security gaps can be responded to very quickly.

The establishment of an information security management system based on ISO 27001 is planned for the end of 2024. In addition, improvements in the area of data storage and backup concepts are to be implemented.

### **3.4.3. Data Protection**

A Data Protection Officer is responsible for data protection in each Group company. These are coordinated by the Data Protection Officer of A.S. Création Tapeten AG, who is additionally responsible for the further development of data protection across the Group. In 2021, a data protection audit was conducted at A.S. Création Tapeten AG by an external auditor. This

certified that A.S. Création Tapeten AG has a good level of data protection. The findings and recommendations from the audit were implemented at A.S. Création Tapeten AG in 2022.

#### **3.4.4. Business ethics**

In order to implement the EU Directive 2019/1937 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law, a digital whistleblowing system<sup>7</sup> was implemented in the A.S. Création Group at the end of 2021. Employees of A.S. Création and business partners can use this system to report actions by employees of a company of the A.S. Création Group that are contrary to laws, standards or the A.S. Création guidelines. The use of a digital whistleblowing system ensures that the confidentiality of the person making the report and the content of the report is maintained. For this purpose, corresponding training courses were held in 2022 according to the "train-the-trainer principle".

In 2023, an internal code of conduct will be introduced, which defines the values and basic principles by which the company and its employees act and which thus reflects the corporate culture. The code of conduct serves as a guideline in everyday business and helps to make responsible and ethical decisions in critical situations. Appropriate training is planned for the introduction of the code of conduct.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://as-creation.whistleblower-system.de/>

## 4. Report according to EU Taxonomy Regulation

The report on the EU taxonomy under Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment can be found in Annex 2 to this report.

## 5. Outlook

With regard to A.S. Création's sustainability activities, the years 2021 and 2022 were characterised by stocktaking, the identification and definition of the material aspects of sustainability for A.S. Création as well as the elaboration of a sustainability strategy, which has been reflected in the GREEN STEPS mission statement. Even though some improvements have already been achieved during this time, the past two years were a more conceptual phase.

In 2023, the focus of sustainability activities will be on anchoring the GREEN STEPS mission statement among the employees of the A.S. Création Group and thus achieving a common orientation as well as implementing the planned measures and projects. A.S. Création will thus move from the conception phase to a project phase in which sustainability activities will no longer be concentrated with the Sustainability Officer but will be spread throughout the organisation via project teams and under the coordination of the Sustainability Officer. The successful transition to this project phase will be decisive for whether A.S. Création will achieve its own ambitious sustainability targets.

The Board of Directors of A.S. Création is very concerned about the escalating regulatory requirements for sustainability reporting. The reporting obligations that have already been decided and will be implemented in the future will cause effort and tie up capacities that will then not be available for other, value-adding activities in the project phase that is now pending.

On 21 June 2022, the European Council and the European Parliament reached a preliminary political agreement on the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) proposed by the European Commission on 21 April 2021. The CSRD will replace the existing EU Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD). The CSRD expands the group of companies subject to reporting requirements. In addition, regulations on the content of future CSRD reporting were adopted by the European Parliament on 22 November 2022 with the handover of the final drafts of the sector-independent European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) to the European Commission by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG). Even though the disclosure requirements have been significantly reduced compared to the original drafts, the large number and granularity of the information to be reported will mean companies will incur high costs for implementation.

According to a first review of the published standards, this extension of the reporting requirements means significant additional costs for A.S. Création Tapeten AG, as the drastically extended reporting requirements do not only apply to A.S. Création Tapeten AG but to the entire Group, which means that the information has to be collected on a Group-wide basis. Since the first CSRD report has to be published in 2025 for the 2024 financial year, the establishment of a corresponding Group-wide system for collecting the required key figures is a core project in

2023 in the field of sustainability. A.S. Création will likely need to use appropriate consulting services and software systems to set up this system in order to be reasonably prepared for the first reporting period and to meet all disclosure obligations.

In addition to this, there is the announced extension of the reporting obligations in connection with the EU taxonomy through four further delegated acts of law, in connection with the possible EU social taxonomy and with the announced EU supply chain law (CSDD). The German Supply Chain Sourcing Obligations Act (Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz, LkSG), which has already entered into force, has already been reported on in Chapter 3.4.1.

These reporting obligations, which are sometimes excessive and have to be viewed very critically from a cost-benefit perspective, should not, however, obscure the fact that the sustainability transformation that has been initiated represents a great opportunity for A.S. Création. An ambitious and credible sustainability strategy will become a success factor in many areas in the medium to long term: from customer acceptance for the products and for the company, to financing opportunities for investments, to the retention of junior staff. The Board of Directors is convinced that A.S. Création is on the right track with the GREEN STEPS. The new mission statement gives the company a forward-looking identity and sets clear goals.

The consistent implementation of the measures to achieve the sustainability targets in combination with the company's economic recovery will ensure that A.S. Création will continue to have a formative influence on the development of the entire wallpaper industry in the future.

Gummersbach, 10 March 2023

**A.S. Création Tapeten AG**

Board of Directors

Krämer

Herder

Suskas

## Annex 1: Overviews of key figures

### Area: Resource use and climate-relevant emissions (A.S. Création Wallpapers AG)

Key figure	2020	2021	2022
Total waste generation (in tons)	6,312	5,857	4,229
Waste intensity (in kg per ton of finished product)	289.90	305.90	292.82
Total water consumption (in m <sup>3</sup> )	18,903	18,661	16,479
Water intensity (in m <sup>3</sup> per ton of finished product)	0.87	0.98	1.14
Total energy consumption (in GWh)	53.15	50.38	40.52
Energy intensity (in kWh per ton of finished product)	2,441.0	2,631.2	2,805.6
Total greenhouse gas emissions (in tons CO <sub>2</sub> e)	113,753	91,667	66,286
Greenhouse gas intensity (in kg CO <sub>2</sub> e / Euro roll wallpaper)	5.65	5.19	5.14

### Area: Working conditions and promotion of young employees (A.S. Création Wallpapers AG)

Key figure	2020	2021	2022
Lost Time Injury Frequency (LTIF)	20.62*	35.17*	25.65
Proportion of absenteeism due to occupational accidents	0.287 %	0.521 %	0.284 %
Proportion of women in the workforce	23.8 %	24.0 %	24.5 %
Proportion of women in the 2nd management level	20.0 %	20.0 %	22.2 %
Proportion of women in the 1st management level	7.1 %	7.1 %	14.3 %
Training rate	6.5 %	6.8 %	7.9 %

\*incorrect information in previous year's report corrected

## Area: Resource use OOO Profistil (Belarus plant)

Key figure	2020	2021	2022
Total waste generation (in tons)	641	644	1,128*
Waste intensity (total) (in kg per ton of finished product)	169.00	131.87	319.36*
Total water consumption (in m <sup>3</sup> )	2,073	2,378	1,877
Water intensity (in m <sup>3</sup> per ton of finished product)	0.55	0.49	0.53
Total energy consumption (in GWh)	16.00	20.12	16.34
Energy intensity (in kWh per ton of finished product)	4,218.7	4,118.9	4,627.0

\* Changed data basis from 2022. Therefore comparison with 2020 and 2021 not meaningful.



## **Annex 2: Report according to EU Taxonomy Regulation**

Pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment (the so-called Taxonomy Regulation), A.S. Création as a group is obliged to provide information on how and to what extent the activities of the group are linked to economic activities that qualify as environmentally sustainable economic activities under the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

A.S. Création is a non-financial company and must therefore disclose the following:

- the proportion of turnover generated by products or services associated with economic activities that are to be classified as environmentally sustainable, and
- the proportion of capital expenditure (so-called CapEx) and the proportion of operating expenditure (so-called OpEx) related to assets or processes associated with economic activities that can be classified as environmentally sustainable.

The classification as "environmentally sustainable" is based on Article 3 and Article 9 of the EU Taxonomy Regulation. According to Article 3 of the EU Taxonomy Regulation, an economic activity is considered environmentally sustainable if it makes a significant contribution to one of the six environmental objectives of Article 9 and does not significantly compromise any of the other objectives. In addition, minimum standards with regard to occupational safety and the observance of human rights must be met.

The six environmental objectives defined by Article 9 of the EU Taxonomy Regulation are:

1. climate change mitigation
2. climate change adaptation
3. the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources
4. the transition to a circular economy
5. pollution prevention and control
6. the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems

Article 27 in conjunction with Articles 10 and 11 of the EU Taxonomy Regulation stipulate that in 2021 reports had to be submitted exclusively on the first two objectives (climate change mitigation and adaptation). On 19 December 2022, the EU Commission clarified in two draft notifications that the legal act adopted in July 2022 on the inclusion of natural gas and nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy must already be taken into account in the reporting for the 2022 financial year, but that no disclosure is expected for the 2023 financial year for environmental targets 3-6 due to the pending delegated act.

For the 2022 reporting, it therefore continues to apply that disclosures on the taxonomy eligibility and compliance of revenues, CapEx and OpEx for the two goals of "climate change mitigation" and "climate change adaptation" must still be made.

In this regard, the EU Commission has defined in a delegated regulation (2021/2139 of 4 June 2021) under which conditions an economic activity is to be considered as making a significant contribution to climate change mitigation or a significant contribution to climate change adaptation and whether this economic activity avoids significant adverse effects on one of the other environmental objectives. Activities described in the technical screening criteria are referred to as "taxonomy eligible". Activities that additionally fulfil the described technical criteria are "taxonomy aligned".

The financial data relevant for the collection of these performance indicators are derived from the consolidated financial statements according to IFRS. Wherever possible, disclosures and data are derived directly from the consolidated financial statements and, as far as possible, allocated to a business activity. The analysis and evaluation procedure can be divided into two phases:

Building on the previous year's results, the first phase comprised the analysis of the business activities with regard to the two relevant environmental goals and whether they can be classified as taxonomy aligned in the sense of the EU Taxonomy.

The second phase involved assessing which of the activities classified as taxonomy eligible were also taxonomy aligned.

The results of the analysis are presented below.

– Turnover

A.S. Création generated consolidated revenues of € 133,993k in 2022.

The economic activity "Manufacture of wallpaper" according to NACE code 17.24 is not described in the technical evaluation criteria. Nor are there any references to similar or comparable activities in the text of the law. Therefore, the economic activity of A.S. Création is not taxonomy eligible and thus cannot be taxonomy aligned in the sense of the above definition. Accordingly, the share of A.S. Création's sales revenues generated with environmentally sustainable products and services will amount to 0% in the fiscal year 2022 in accordance with the EU Taxonomy Regulation.

– Capital expenditure (CapEx)

Capital expenditure (CapEx) is defined in Annex I No. 1.1.2.1. (1) of Delegated Regulation 2021/2178 "*The denominator shall cover additions to tangible and intangible assets during the financial year considered before depreciation, amortisation and any re-measurements, including those resulting from revaluations and impairments, for the relevant financial year and excluding fair value changes. The denominator shall also cover additions to tangible and intangible assets resulting from business combinations.*" In this context, leases as defined in IFRS 16.53 (h) must also be taken into account. The capital expenditure (CapEx) of A.S. Création within the meaning of this definition amounted to € 3,338k in 2022. Applied

retroactively to the 2021 financial year, this results in a value of €4,091k for 2021, instead of €3,875k as stated in the 2021 Sustainability Report.

Environmentally sustainable capital expenditures (CapEx) in the sense of the EU Taxonomy Regulation are investments in assets that are associated with taxonomy-aligned economic activities or that are part of a plan to expand taxonomy-aligned economic activities. This also includes investments that make target activities low-carbon or reduce greenhouse gas emissions within 18 months.

The taxonomy reports for the 2021 financial year were prepared by the companies under corresponding uncertainty due to a lack of empirical values, reference reports or interpretation aids. In the aftermath of the first reporting period, the EU Commission reacted to this general uncertainty by offering numerous interpretation aids in the form of FAQ documents as well as seminars in 2022. As a result of these new findings, A.S. Création also has a different perspective on the interpretation of the legal text of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2178.

According to the information currently available, only Annex I No. 1.1.2.2. c) sentence 1 of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2178 is applicable to A.S. Création Tapeten AG due to the lack of taxonomy-aligned sales and corresponding CapEx plans pursuant to 1.1.2.2. b). Accordingly, the capital expenditures of A.S. Création are to be examined for the acquisition of production from taxonomy-aligned economic activities from Annex I of the delegated act on EU climate taxonomy listed activities.

For the fiscal year 2022, a total of € 901k or 27.0% of the total capital expenditure (CapEx) of A.S. Création has been classified as taxonomy-eligible within the meaning of the EU Taxonomy Regulation. This expenditure relates exclusively to business activities from points 6.5 and 7.7 of the delegated act in connection with the environmental objective "climate protection". These are the acquisition and leasing of cars, as well as the acquisition and leasing of buildings.

Based on the new information provided by the interpretation aids of the EU Commission published in 2022, a total of € 801k or 19.6% of the total capital expenditure (CapEx) of A.S. Création would have had to be classified as taxonomy-eligible within the meaning of the EU Taxonomy Regulation in the fiscal year 2021 and not € 156k or 4.0% as stated in the Sustainability Report 2021. Therefore, the previous year's figures in the table below have been adjusted accordingly.

According to the current interpretation of the EU Taxonomy Regulation, the burden of proof for conformity currently lies with the respective manufacturers of these products. As there is no evidence of taxonomy compliance from the suppliers for the 2022 financial year, it cannot be conclusively assessed whether or not these are actually taxonomy-aligned investments, which is why € 0 and 0% of the investments made in 2021 and 2022 are considered taxonomy-aligned.

To avoid double counting, economic activities were allocated at the level of individual investments. Currently, all investments are clearly assigned to an activity.

## – Operating expenses (OpEx)

Operating expenditure (OpEx) is defined in Annex I No. 1.1.3.1. of the Delegated Regulation 2021/2178 as “*direct non-capitalised costs that relate to research and development, building renovation measures, short-term lease, maintenance and repair, and any other direct expenditures relating to the day-to-day servicing of assets of property, plant and equipment by the undertaking or third party to whom activities are outsourced that are necessary to ensure the continued and effective functioning of such assets.*”.

Of these, environmentally sustainable business expenses (OpEx) within the meaning of the EU Taxonomy Regulation are expenses for assets or processes that are associated with taxonomy-aligned economic activities or that are part of a plan to expand taxonomy-aligned economic activities. This also includes the purchase of (service) outputs from taxonomy-aligned economic activities and measures that carry out target activities in a low-carbon manner within 18 months or that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It also includes research and development expenses recognised as an expense in the income statement during the financial year in accordance with IAS 38. In addition, lease expenses of a short-term nature were taken into account, which are attributable to leases that do not meet the capitalisation requirements according to IFRS 16. The estimated maintenance and repair costs, building refurbishment measures and other direct expenses for the ongoing maintenance of property, plant and equipment as well as other internal research and development costs were determined and allocated appropriately.

Of the total operating expenses of A.S. Création in the fiscal year 2022, a total of € 2,832k were operating expenses (OpEx) within the meaning of the EU Taxonomy Regulation according to the interpretation explained above. Applied retroactively to the 2021 financial year, this results in a value of €2,847k, instead of €2,985k as stated in the 2021 Sustainability Report.

There is also a changed interpretation as compared to the first reporting year with regards to counting the OpEx key figure. Here, an analysis of the operating expenses in terms of ability and conformity with reference to Article 8 of the EU Taxonomy Regulation in conjunction with the supplement to the Regulation (see point 1.1.3.2.) is foregone. This is due in particular to the fact that no turnover-generating activities that are taxonomy-eligible could be identified. The research and development costs considered also essentially do not include any taxonomy-eligible economic activities. Therefore, only the total value of the OpEx denominator according to the EU taxonomy is shown for the financial year 2022. This interpretation will also be applied retroactively for the 2021 financial year.

In summary, the share of environmentally sustainable economic activities according to the EU Taxonomy Regulation at A.S. Création in the fiscal year 2022 is as follows:

	2021	2022
<b>Revenues</b>		
Total	€ 145,639k	€ 133,993k
(of which taxonomy-eligible)	(€ 0 or 0.0 %)	(€ 0 or 0.0 %)
(of which taxonomy-aligned)	(€ 0 or 0.0 %)	(€ 0 or 0.0 %)
<b>Capital expenditure (CapEx)</b>		
Total	€ 4,091k	€ 3,338k
(of which taxonomy-eligible)	(€ 801k or 19.6 %)	(€ 901k or 27.0 %)
(of which taxonomy-aligned)	(€ 0 or 0.0 %)	(€ 0 or 0.0 %)
<b>Operating expenses (OpEx)</b>		
Total	€ 2,847k	€ 2,832k

The complete reporting forms for the EU Taxonomy Regulation according to Annex II of the Delegated Regulation EU 2021/2178 are as follows:

a) Turnover KPI according to Annex I No. 1.1.1. of the Delegated Regulation 2021/2178

Business activities (1)	Code(s) (2)	Absolute Turnover (3)	Share turnover (4)	Criteria for a substantial Contribution						"DNSH criteria ("No significant harm")						Minimum Safeguards (17)	Taxonomy compliant Turnover share, year N (18)	Taxonomy-compliant share of turnover, N-1 (19)	Category (enabling activities) (20)	Category (Transitional activities)" (21)"
				Climate change mitigation (5)	Adaptation to climate change (6)	Water and marine resources (7)	Circular economy (8)	Environmental pollution (9)	Biodiversity and ecosystems (10)	Climate change mitigation (11)	Adaptation to climate change (12)	Water and marine resources (13)	Circular economy (14)	Environmental pollution (15)	Biodiversity and ecosystems (16)					
<b>A. TAXONOMY ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES</b>				%																
<b>A.1 Ecologically sustainable activities (taxonomy aligned)</b>																				
No activities																				
Turnover of ecologically sustainable activities (taxonomy aligned) (A.1).		0	0%																	
<b>A.2 Taxonomy-eligible but not environmentally sustainable activities (non-taxonomy-aligned activities)</b>																				
No activities																				
Turnover of taxonomy-eligible but not environmentally sustainable activities (non-taxonomy aligned activities) (A.2)		0	0%																	
<b>Total (A.1 + A.2)</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>																	
<b>B. NON-TAXONOMIC ACTIVITIES</b>				Column 7 to 10 not yet applicable in 2022																
Turnover of non-taxonomic activities (B)		133.993	100%																	
<b>TOTAL (A+B)</b>		<b>133.993</b>	<b>100%</b>																	

b) CapEx KPI according to Annex I No. 1.1.2. of the Delegated Regulation 2021/2178

Business activities (1)	Code(s) (2)	Absolute Turnover (3)	Share turnover (4)	Criteria for a substantial Contribution						"DNSH criteria ("No significant harm")						Minimum Safeguards (17)	Taxonomy aligned CapEx-share, year N (18)	Taxonomy aligned capEx share, year N-1 (19)	Category (enabling activities) (20)	Category (Transitional activities)" (21)"
				Climate change mitigation (5)	Adaptation to climate change (6)	Water and marine resources (7)	Circular economy (8)	Environmental pollution (9)	Biodiversity and ecosystems (10)	Climate change mitigation (11)	Adaptation to climate change (12)	Water and marine resources (13)	Circular economy (14)	Environmental pollution (15)	Biodiversity and ecosystems (16)					
	Currency	in €k	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	J/N	%	%	E	T
<b>A. TAXONOMY ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES</b>																				
<b>A.1 Ecologically sustainable activities (taxonomy aligned)</b>																				
6.5 Carriage by motorbikes, passenger cars and light commercial vehicles		0	0%																	T
7.7 Acquisition and ownership of buildings		0	0%																	
<b>CapEx of ecologically sustainable activities (taxonomy aligned) (A.1).</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>																	
<b>A.2 Taxonomy-eligible but not environmentally sustainable activities (non-taxonomy-aligned activities)</b>																				
6.5 Carriage by motorbikes, passenger cars and light commercial vehicles		530	15,9%																	T
7.7 Acquisition and ownership of buildings		371	11,1%																	
<b>CapEx of taxonomy-eligible but not environmentally sustainable activities (non-taxonomy aligned activities) (A.2)</b>		<b>901</b>	<b>27,0%</b>														<b>0%</b>			
<b>Total (A.1 + A.2)</b>		<b>901</b>	<b>27,0%</b>														<b>0%</b>			
<b>B. NON-TAXONOMIC ACTIVITIES</b>																				
Column 7 to 10 not yet applicable in 2022																				
CapEx of non-taxonomic activities (B)		2.438	73,0%																	
<b>TOTAL (A+B)</b>		<b>3.338</b>	<b>100,0%</b>																	

c) OpEx KPI according to Annex I No. 1.1.3. of the Delegated Regulation 2021/2178

Business activities (1)	Code(s) (2)	Absolute Turnover (3)	Share turnover (4)	Criteria for a substantial Contribution						"DNSH criteria ("No significant harm")						Minimum Safeguards (17)	Taxonomy aligned OpEx-share, year N (18)	Taxonomy aligned OpEx share, year N-1 (19)	Category (enabling activities) (20)	Category (Transitional activities)" (21)"
				Climate change mitigation (5)	Adaptation to climate change (6)	Water and marine resources (7)	Circular economy (8)	Environmental pollution (9)	Biodiversity and ecosystems (10)	Climate change mitigation (11)	Adaptation to climate change (12)	Water and marine resources (13)	Circular economy (14)	Environmental pollution (15)	Biodiversity and ecosystems (16)					
	Currency	in €k	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	J/N	%	%	E	T
<b>A. TAXONOMY ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES</b>																				
<b>A.1 Ecologically sustainable activities (taxonomy aligned)</b>																				
Keine Tätigkeiten																				
OpEx of ecologically sustainable activities (taxonomy aligned) (A.1).		0	0%																	
<b>A.2 Taxonomy-eligible but not environmentally sustainable activities (non-taxonomy-aligned activities)</b>																				
OpEx of taxonomy-eligible but not environmentally sustainable activities (non-taxonomy aligned activities) (A.2)		0	0%																	
<b>Total (A.1 + A.2)</b>		0	0%														%		%	
<b>B. NON-TAXONOMIC ACTIVITIES</b>										Column 7 to 10 not yet applicable in 2022										
OpEx of non-taxonomic activities (B)		2.832	100%																	
<b>TOTAL (A+B)</b>		2.832	100%																	
No numerator was calculated. Thus, the value 0 is indicated in the disclosure																				