



TOMORROW TOGETHER

**SUSTAINABILITY REPORT
OF VfL WOLFSBURG 2022**





TOMORROW
TOGETHER

Knowing more for tomorrow

About this report

In the spirit of corporate social responsibility (CSR), VfL Wolfsburg accepts responsibility for the impact of its actions on society and the environment while also progressing with its own sustainable transformation. In pursuing these aims, the club wishes to play a leading role in professional football, both nationally and internationally. Sustainability and CSR reporting is a key instrument for communications about this strategy and addresses the club's most important stakeholders, which include first and foremost its fans, employees, sponsor and partner companies, start-ups and Volkswagen AG. Other club stakeholders include non-governmental organisations and advocacy groups, as well as representatives from politics, science and research.

VfL Wolfsburg has published a comprehensive sustainability report every four years since 2012. The club has also published a short progress report twice in the intervening years, most recently in 2018. This report, the fourth sustainability report to be published, deviates from the above cycle, however: after only a two-year period, and as a more appropriate response to the transformation processes in recent years, VfL is using this report to again provide stakeholders with a comprehensive summary of the key topics that the club is required to address.

As with previous reports, the current publication concentrates on the most important activities pursued by VfL Wolfsburg, while also addressing deficiencies arising during the last two years, and stating the goals and plans for the next reporting period. Content has been primarily selected based on the updated materiality analysis completed in 2022.

For the most part, the reporting period covers the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 seasons, although later developments have been accounted for and planned activities

announced on a case-by-case basis where possible before the editorial deadline. In terms of scope, the report covers VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH in its entirety. The report is published in German and English.

The structure of the present report is oriented towards previous sustainability and progress reports. This structural similarity is intended to create transparency and make it easier for readers to follow the developmental progress made by the club. This is also helped by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards that have been used to structure the accountability sections.

After an introductory section by the Lord Mayor of Wolfsburg and the management team, we first introduce our new 'Tomorrow together' initiative. The following pages then cover our focus topics of regionality and climate protection. The next five sections address the club's core CSR action areas: 'Strategy and Management', 'Employees', 'Environment', 'Society' and 'Fans and Members'. In each case, an introductory page presents the main topics for each section, with their relevance for football then being explained and reference also being made to the specific UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) that VfL is helping to achieve in each of its respective action areas.

Within the individual sections, the report explains VfL's strategy in tackling the core topics, the action that the club has taken and the key indicators (KPIs) that are being used to monitor progress. VfL Wolfsburg collects targeted data on these KPIs to help the club improve the actions it takes as part of its football business. Accordingly, some of these KPIs may differ to the indicators used in a conventional commercial enterprise. An overview summarising the key milestones achieved in the reporting period is provided for each section, as is an outlook, which announces planned activities. In each

case, the underlying information required was obtained from conversations with the employees responsible.

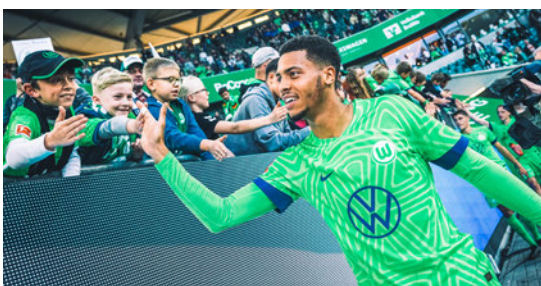
An updated CSR programme lists the targets for the next reporting period as well as the actions planned to achieve these goals, organised by action area/section.

This report has been prepared with reference to the GRI standards and the corresponding passages therefore cite the respective GRI indicators. The report concludes with an overview of information about the GRI indicators covered as well as links to the relevant places in the text of the GRI standards.

Further information and news can be found on the **VfL Wolfsburg website**. For content specifically related to the topic of sustainability, please visit **www.vfl-wolfsburg.de/en/vfl/corporate-responsibility**.

of **10 years** transparent and comprehensive sustainability reporting. In 2012, VfL Wolfsburg became the first football club worldwide to publish a sustainability report according to the standards issued by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) **GRI**

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Living the transformation together

Dennis Weilmann, Lord Mayor of the City of Wolfsburg, talks about the role of VfL in the city and the region

**Dear Citizens of Wolfsburg,
dear Readers,**

As the Lord Mayor of the City of Wolfsburg, I am very happy to once again have the pleasure of reading a sustainability report from VfL Wolfsburg in 2022 that shows what football can do for our city and our communities. VfL is a courageous pioneer that continues to make considerable progress towards the sustainable transformation of business and society. By joining forces with Volkswagen, the club has set itself ambitious targets, created the instruments to achieve them and proven itself to be a reliable partner in many cooperative ventures.

Whether in the stadium or on a screen at home, VfL regularly provides a thrilling spectacle to its thousands of fans. Since its promotion 25 years ago, the VfL men's team has never left first-division football, with historic highlights in this period including the Bundesliga title in 2009 and the DFB-Pokal in 2015. I also remember exciting evenings spent watching UEFA Champions League matches in Madrid, Manchester and many other cities. The women's side also added further successes to their past wins in 2022, bringing home the Women's Bundesliga title and DFB Cup as well as reaching the Champions League semi-finals. These achievements make me very proud. And some of our 'lady wolves', first and foremost captain Alexandra Popp, have also been thrilling us with first-class football and exemplary team spirit during the UEFA Women's Euro 2022, swapping their VfL shirts for those of the German national team.

Away from the pitch, VfL also makes the most of its charismatic appeal to strengthen the feeling of togetherness, solidarity and peaceful co-existence

between people, regardless of their origin, skin colour, religion, sexual orientation, age or personal characteristics.

The fact that we should not take peace and mutual respect for granted has been graphically demonstrated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. European values are also under attack, thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes, and the energy crisis is piling pressure on society and the economy.

In these challenging times, defending our social values has become more important than ever. All of us have a duty to act to protect integration, diversity, the respect for human rights and opportunities for social interaction.

VfL has done so in an exemplary fashion. As a token of solidarity with Ukraine, the stadium was illuminated in the Ukrainian national colours and a campaign for donations was started. Players have also stood up for diversity with rainbow-coloured captain's armbands and special jerseys. The club also actively supports children's and youth projects, with examples including a partnership with regional grassroots teams, the 'Neighbourhood Kick' sports programme for kids and the 'Green/White Classroom', which has been awarded the 'Place of Learning for Democracy' accolade by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture. VfL maintains a zero-tolerance policy on fan violence. The club's engagement with climate protection has seen the launch of a biodiversity programme as well as support for the UN's 'Race to Zero' initiative, which aims to reach net zero emissions by 2025.

In its role as a networker, VfL works tirelessly as a member of numerous partnerships and projects to achieve a sustainable transition for football and society.

In the name of the city council and administration, and every citizen of our city, I would like to extend my warmest thanks to VfL Wolfsburg for the leading part it plays in securing a vibrant and sustainable future for Wolfsburg. I look forward to further successes in the fields of sport, society and the environment, and wish both the team players and everyone else in the club the best of luck for the challenges they have yet to face.

Sincerely



Dennis Weilmann
Lord Mayor
of the city of Wolfsburg



Developing community spirit and personal qualities

Michael Meeske, Managing Director of VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH, talks about the challenges and potential for sustainability within football, and VfL as a pioneer for the sport

Dear Readers,

Our fans are here again – in the stadium and in the city – and the fun has been put back into football. Making sure that things stay this way is a top priority for me and my team at VfL Wolfsburg.

Apart from the pandemic, we have our work cut out for us in many different areas. We need to stand together as a free, open and tolerant society. We need to meet our external and internal challenges head-on, and continue to develop football into a place of learning and experience for diversity, fairness, democracy and strong emotions.

We – and this word is more important to me today than ever before – are looking to the future, and setting our sights on community spirit and strong individuals, because both need one another.

Tomorrow together – and that's both our slogan and the title for this year's report. This report naturally looks back as well as forwards, and so it also covers the events of the last two years. This is important, because this kind of transparency earns your trust. I'd like to take a moment to list the report highlights.

To strengthen both diversity and solidarity, we've expanded our educational programmes with regional partners. The Wolfsburg School for Diversity is now a real success story here. And we've also worked with our fans and the Diversity Working Group to create some new and inclusive stadium merchandise. I'm also really happy to see the fans forming the Diversity Club. The message is that at VfL, we are confident enough to say what moves us. And above all, we're also giving girls and women this kind of self-confidence, both on and off the pitch: in

the US City of Chattanooga, 'StrongHER' now forms the starting-point for an international programme.

At the same time, we've been improving the conditions for building stronger squads and signed deals with partner clubs where our up-and-coming players can gain more match experience. This new approach has seen our under-23 team gaining experience with a second-division Austrian club. For the under-10 to under-12 age groups, we have brought four regional clubs on board to give our young juniors a chance to engage in practical training with the support of coaches from the VfL Football Academy.

The energy crisis is certainly another challenge that we are going to have to face. On the other hand, it shows that we have made the right decisions on climate action. With a well-thought-out carbon reduction strategy and reliable compensation partners, we fully intend to make VfL Wolfsburg a climate-neutral club. The starting pistol has fired for the 'Race to Zero'. The target is net zero by 2025.

We're also positioning ourselves as a green and rainbow-coloured industry leader and a first mover for all things football. As one example, we're currently testing a solution to filter microplastics out of hybrid turf, jerseys and training apparel. We're also setting standards throughout the game with our basic and further training programmes like the Sustainability Management module at VfL Campus. And we're developing the Volkswagen Arena into a window onto a more sustainable world – for spectators who make and care about the difference. So, to sum up, we're developing the force for good in football to make a change for the better.

This is why, with this report, we're also appealing to you, our readers, to play your part in helping us in your own, individual way.

I'm really looking forward to seeing what we can achieve.

Sincerely



Michael Meeske
Managing Director of
VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH





OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE

TOMORROW TOGETHER

Why 'together'?

Because 'together' is more than just a word at VfL Wolfsburg. It's together that we take a stand against puffed-up egos, a sense of entitlement and attempts to divide our society. And our togetherness is also a strong emotion that helps us to look to the future with confidence – for it is a future that we must face together. How else are we going to turn our vision into a reality?

Why this emotive appeal?

Because our future needs more than a lukewarm response.

We can already hear the chant from our fans in the stands: "It's going to be much hotter than lukewarm: even 1.5° is too much for our planet to take!"

This is why we care and why we are accepting our corporate responsibility for the consequences of our actions. In the same place where these impacts can be felt and where we can make a lasting and positive effect – namely in our immediate surroundings. This is why VfL Wolfsburg focuses its efforts on helping people in our region. The club clearly expresses its opinion

on key social issues and is keen to address questions about the future of our planet: authentically, honestly and effectively.

How does this benefit football?

This long-term engagement strengthens the identification of employees, players and fans with the club – the feeling of togetherness. Thanks to focus topics and flagship projects, it also delivers exciting content for sponsors, secures partnerships with start-ups (and others), and contributes business value not only to Volkswagen but also to the economy in and around Wolfsburg. With all of these positive effects, sustainability is also a decisive factor for the sporting future of VfL as a club with its sights set on the title. VfL's 'Tomorrow together' slogan encapsulates all of these related ideas.

What's the main message?

We want to encourage people to come together, because together we can make a change for the better in many of the challenges we face. This report provides examples of how this works: because we listen, find common ground, agree strategic objectives and work side by side with our

peers – for the people around us today and for future generations. 'Tomorrow' can mean many things. In our 2022 CSR Report, it stands for the following:

***Together for our vision –
sustainable development and successful partnerships***

***Together for good jobs –
for equal opportunities, and the recognition of talent and personal qualities***

***Together for the climate –
for the Race to Zero and biodiversity***

***Together for solidarity –
for diversity, inclusion and education partnerships***

***Together for emotional highs –
the best that football has to offer***

So, do we have the data to back it up?

Alongside motivation and encouragement, we also need clear targets and measurable progress towards them. We have to keep this information transparent, to ensure the club earns the long-term trust of the people it is closest to – its stakeholders. This is why VfL Wolfsburg has applied Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards to its reporting activities for the last ten years – the only Bundesliga club to do so. Measured by these GRI standards, the club's sustainability performance can then be compared with its international peers. VfL is demonstrably a pioneer: in many fields of sustainability practice, VfL Wolfsburg has clearly adopted the position of first mover. These standards are summarised by the GRI index in the Appendix.





REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT BY VfL WOLFSBURG

WHERE DO WE STAND?

Our basic position is clear. We stand for more diversity, democracy, participation, and responsibility for the climate and environment – in a nutshell: sustainability. And we stand up for Wolfsburg: the city and region that is our home. Both go hand-in-hand: we see our role as both stimulating and being stimulated by interaction between business, commerce, citizens and the city, with its schools, public spaces and infrastructure. VfL Wolfsburg therefore sees itself as a role model, who can encourage people in the region to get involved, create opportunities for meeting and dialogue, and bring all of the many people in our region together. For itself, the club needs keen fans who cheer for their teams on the pitch and reliable partners who can help to shoulder its workload. Club values are brought to life by the dedicated work of people from all walks of life – and not just inside the stadium but every day in Wolfsburg and its environs.

Setting the pace – and not just on the pitch

Am On 13 September, the 'Together for You' Day in 2022, social topics take centre stage for charity work performed by VfL. And the various members of our teams at VfL also experience the 'Together for You' Day as something very special: it gives them the chance to apply their talents to social issues and experience the impact they have on others in new contexts. Encounters made

outside the sporting bubble expand our horizons, create empathy for others and help us develop new strengths.

“For us, ‘Together for You’ Day is an exciting and important day, because it symbolises what football can achieve outside the stadium and how it can bring people together. We can also use the day to focus media interest on important issues and so make a difference together.”

VfL Managing Director Michael Meeske

For VfL, success in the football business also means achieving the goal of giving people in the community something in return for what they themselves have given the club and doing good wherever help may be needed. After all, football really can play a part in changing the world – but this change needs to happen first in our own neighbourhoods and our region.

Around 180 Green-and-Whites took part in nine social projects in the region on 'Together for You' Day. Supporters Wolfsburg – a VfL fan club – were also represented with one of their own favourite projects. This year, the motto was 'Collecting rubbish around the grounds',

in the company of the Fallersleben-based artist and 'Trash Pirate' Sabrina Wenzelis.

“I think it's good that the club has got both teams and our employees together to work on this project today. We lead very privileged lives as footballers. Some of the things you experience here and in other places definitely make you see your own job differently and realise just how lucky you are.”

VfL Head Coach Niko Kovac

Encouragement for everyone

The experiences gained from voluntary work motivate players and employees at VfL alike to lead by example whenever they can, and to demonstrate the value that charitable activities have for helping to bring and hold our society together. Their efforts transform the day into a green-and-white symbol of greater engagement – and an encouraging sign for fans and many others in the region.

Stadiums as meeting-places

Few places in the region can boast such diverse crowds as are found on match days



HANDS-ON WITH THE CLUB COLOUR

A professional touch with the paint roller: Head coach Niko Kovac lends a helping hand to improving the exterior of the residential and nursing home run by the AWO in Wolfsburg.

at VfL Wolfsburg's Volkswagen Arena or AOK Stadium. Kids with grandparents, same-sex couples and refugees who now call Germany home stand together, cheering on the teams in the green-and-white jerseys, and the ups and downs in their Bundesliga standings. Our club has key responsibilities here – and not just on the pitch.

Diversity Day as a sign of solidarity

VfL Wolfsburg uses special events like Diversity Day to highlight and underline the importance of solidarity in the region and among our fans. The club is a firm believer in the idea that everyone should be able to experience football on equal terms. This is why VfL Wolfsburg ensures access for people with disabilities, like our VIP wheelchair spaces, seats for visually impaired supporters and signing for hearing-impaired fans. It's also important that everyone feels safe in the stadium and feels respected as an individual. One key step in this direction was the official opening of gender-neutral toilets on Diversity Day 2022, alongside our expansion of our family area to ensure a kid-friendly football experience, in response to feedback and participation from our fans. The recently formed Diversity Fan Club also emphasises the commitment to inclusivity at VfL Wolfsburg.

Diversity as a learning experience

With the Wolfsburg School for Diversity, VfL is supporting the teaching of

democratic values and action against discrimination. The club has partnered with 13 schools in Wolfsburg as well as the Wolfsburg Fan Project and other education providers. A wide-ranging programme of workshops offers pupils a chance to learn about the multifaceted topic of diversity. Projects such as 'Meet a Jew' aim to encourage people to develop their own personality and to stand up for a society that is free from discrimination.

Mascha Schmerling (Workshop Coach and Project Coordinator for 'Meet a Jew'): "The Wolfsburg School for Diversity is a fantastic project, where people talk to each other and not about each other. This offers a space where the diversity of Jewish life in Germany can be made visible. The frank discussions we have here also help to challenge clichés and nip prejudice in the bud."

The club's efforts to make community and solidarity a liveable experience extend beyond the classroom, however: many a neighbourhood five-a-side pitch in Wolfsburg has been temporarily turned into a VfL training turf, with VfL coach Mohsen Makoo joining forces with Wolfsburg Youth Services to invite kids and young people for a weekly kickabout together in various city districts.

For the city council and state government alike, these initiatives help to focus public attention – all too often distracted by the ever-present media circus – onto key social issues.

"We need flagship projects like the Neighbourhood Kick. These use VfL's club charisma to get young people from all social milieus playing together and, above all, participating in their community."

Janik Fuge (City of Wolfsburg youth counsellor and Head of Wolfsburg Youth Services)



The joy of a neighbourhood kickabout can be seen on everyone's faces



GIVING CLIMATE ACTION A SPORTING CHANCE

RACE TO ZERO

As in any sport, taking on a challenge requires us to focus all of our abilities on a single objective. Elite athletes show us how it is done, and football is no exception. We're all impressed by the seriousness with which they pursue their goals.

As a team sport, however, football also shows us something else, demonstrating what is today more important than ever before:

a superlative effort by people working together

VfL has understood what is at stake here: nothing less than one of the most diffi-

cult tasks humanity has ever faced in its long history – halting climate change and limiting global heating to 1.5 °C. Achieving this is possible only with the coordinated effort of many people, for whom sport must play the part of motivator and role model.

VfL Wolfsburg has nailed its colours to the mast here. Back in 2019, the club officially pledged its commitment to Sports for Climate Action. In 2021, VfL also became a participant in the UN's Race to Zero, thereby underlining its ambitious target of becoming a climate-neutral and net-zero emissions club by 2025. To meet this

target, the club works closely with innovative companies and start-ups that help VfL achieve success both on the playing field and in climate change mitigation.

As a result, the club not only demonstrates its team spirit on the pitch to a broad public but is also showcasing the latest innovations from its Race to Zero team partners. As on any home game evening, when the LED floodlights turn the pitch a bright and welcoming green.

As this example shows, climate action can actually improve performance if you work as a team to find the right solutions.

“Both of our companies share a long tradition, and the same values and goals. We're committed to our communities and to working systematically to achieve climate-compatible solutions. And we're both pursuing the same strategy: combining expertise, passion and teamwork to achieve first-class results. I am proud of this partnership and I look forward to many more years packed with exciting activities as the Wolves' official lighting partner.”

Joachim Geiger, CSO and CMO, Trilux Group

First mover partners with leading light innovator

VfL was the first Bundesliga club to install energy-saving LED floodlights, which now illuminate the Volkswagen Arena. But this was only the beginning: the club is also using climate-compatible LED lighting systems away from the pitch. To fit this innovative lighting in its changing rooms, player tunnel and VIP area, as well as its head office and underground car park, VfL has worked with lighting manufacturer TRILUX for the last ten years.





“We’re very happy to have taken a further step towards our net zero goal by installing more EV charging points at the VfL Centre. While we obviously still have some way to go, our support for EV drivers shows that we really are committed to becoming a carbon-neutral football club.”

Digging in together on the EV charging infrastructure site at the VfL Centre (left to right): Marc Wille (Managing Director, Cubos GmbH), Markus Schuchardt (Cubos GmbH), VfL Managing Director Michael Meeske, Dennis Burrichter (Key Account Manager, Compleo Charging Solutions AG) and Daniel Leven (Sales Director Germany, Compleo Charging Solutions AG).

VfL Managing Director Michael Meeske

VfL’s business partners are also hoping the partnership will boost their own efforts to become electrifiers for Europe

“We are proud that VfL Wolfsburg chose our EV charging points as a solution for fans and members as the club pursues its path to carbon neutrality. We’re looking to raise our profile across Europe with this combination of technological and sporting excellence.”

Compleo Co-Managing Director Georg Griesemann

Fans get involved

Carbon transparency in merchandising

Travelling by car to a home game produces emissions of 9 kg of CO₂ on average. Emissions are around 2.5 kg for producing and shipping a fan scarf. But the VfL Shop doesn’t just inform its customers about emissions: with just one click at checkout, fans can also directly offset the carbon emissions from their basket.

The service has also been made possible by another strong team player: Yook. This Hamburg-based start-up has developed a self-learning algorithm that intelligently links products, market and emissions data together, so as to automatically calculate and visualise the carbon footprint for a customer order, based on the latest scientific research. Yook’s software is linked directly to the VfL online shop, and provides customers with up-to-date data on the carbon footprint for products as well as other aspects like trips to match venues.

67 t CO₂
offset
10 % fans
offset
CO₂ at checkout

“You have to be aware of things to be able to change them. This is why we are ensuring carbon transparency for more targeted action activities and offering fans the chance to make a contribution with just one click.”

Nico Briskorn, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at VfL





Strategy and management

Together for our vision

**Two, 11, 220+, 30,000, Millions ...
We're growing, together.**

While our starting elevens attract most of the attention, we mustn't forget the 220+ VfL employees nor the 30,000 spectators who pack our stands. Our vision is global togetherness: decarbonised, diverse and in peace. Which is why VfL Wolfsburg is pursuing 'Tomorrow together'.

First and foremost, it's two teams together on one pitch, who show mutual respect while making the other side work hard for a win. With luck and judgement, either team could triumph – but not without the other. So, properly understood, football is both inclusive and sustainable. At its core and in all of its various guises.

Our understanding of this makes VfL Wolfsburg stand out: a responsibility to sustainability shown by management, in our corporate culture and in our willingness to face future challenges as a team.

Here together. More than ever.



Responsibility for more sustainability

VfL Wolfsburg takes a consistent approach to sustainable development – both in football and its local community. This basic principle applies to its relationships with its own employees, to its fans and members, to businesses in the region and to the people who work along its complex, branching supply chains – to name but a few of the club's many stakeholders.

For VfL Wolfsburg, corporate social responsibility (CSR) means taking action on behalf of a more sustainable future and standing up for our vision of a more inclusive togetherness. In this way, CSR sets the stage for lasting success – on the pitch, in our economy and society, and for the environment. Accordingly, the club has adopted the principles of responsible governance and is making the most of its potential to promote positive social development.

development. Apart from the club's operational business and squad training, this also extends to fan support, environmental protection, and the handling of relationships with the many active participants in the region and beyond. Strategic targets are reviewed and refined continuously based on key indicators as well as dialogue with stakeholders and experts.

As a primary objective, VfL Wolfsburg is seeking to maintain its leading role in professional football as a responsible actor at national and international level. To turn this ambitious vision into reality, the club has established a capable, modern structure at all levels within its own organisation, where corporate social responsibility, with its own department

and wide-ranging powers, is enshrined at the level of top management.

CSR at the heart of our organisation

The VfL Wolfsburg Management Team is made up of Jörg Schmadtke, Tim Schumacher and Michael Meeske, whose roles and responsibilities include managing the club's sustainability strategy. The club's managing directors are appointed, monitored, advised and dismissed by a Supervisory Board, consisting of up to 12 members and headed by a committee. The Supervisory Board of VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH is composed of representatives of the sole shareholder, Volkswagen AG, the Lord



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VfL's corporate strategy therefore targets all of the factors that are relevant for sustainable

Mayor of the City of Wolfsburg, Dennis Weilmann, the Club President of VfL Wolfsburg e.V., Prof. Peter Haase, and other leading figures from the social and economic life of the City of Wolfsburg.

Effective 1 July 2022, VfL has expanded the previously three-person Supervisory Board Committee to include two further members. These positions have been filled by the Chairwoman of the Volkswagen AG Group Global Works Council, Daniela Cavallo, and Murat Aksel, Group Purchasing Board Manager, Volkswagen Group. Frank Witter continues in his role as Chairman of the Committee. The two previous members of the Committee also retain their posts, namely Hans Dieter Pötsch, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Volkswagen AG and Bernd Osterloh, the long-serving President of the Volkswagen AG International Group Works Council.

As an internal service provider, VfL established a CSR Department 12 years ago and this has since undergone continuous expansion. Responsibility for the department is assigned to Member of the Management Board Michael Meeske and it employs six full-time members of staff. The members of the interdisciplinary CSR team are each responsible for their own priority topics, and, as internal consultants for sustainability issues, are involved in close and frequent contact with other departments.

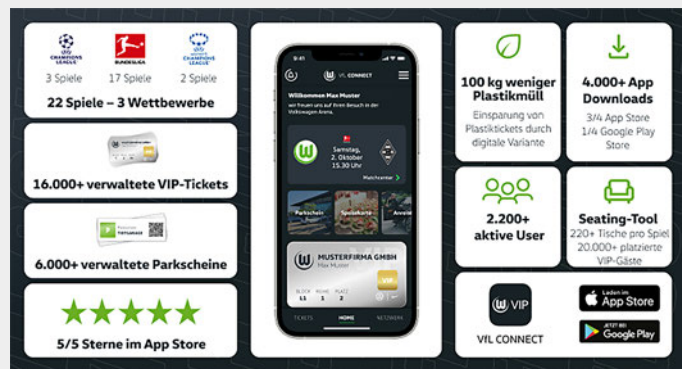
Strategic principles and priority topics

The corporate strategy of VfL Wolfsburg is based on the principles of effectiveness, sustainability and honesty. All of the club's activities are organised around these principles.

Priority topics include the action areas of climate, diversity, youth and regional support. In choosing these areas, VfL was guided by the question of where the club can have the most enduring impact. Each of these action areas forms a pillar of the 'Tomorrow together' initiative, which VfL is using to consolidate its wide-ranging efforts for engagement. The initiative itself is driven by the many and varied opportunities for participation created by VfL Wolfsburg and its partners.

Fair play

The club's close links to Volkswagen Group have often been the subject of public criticism in relation to the idea of financial



Progress in digitalisation across the board

Implementing a sustainable corporate strategy means designing company processes to be effective. For VfL, digital solutions are the answer – and not just for internal company management but also for fan products and services.

In summer 2021, VfL Wolfsburg introduced digital business intelligence dashboards to help it analyse its company data. These dashboards provide systematic monitoring and visualisation of the key indicators relevant for the club's success, and are therefore important steering instruments for both the financial and non-financial aspects of VfL's business.

For day-to-day business, the club also uses the Microsoft Teams collaboration hub. By making working processes more flexible while speeding up the exchange of data among business departments, Teams helps even large teams work together more easily. Teams has also helped VfL to cut company expenditure on travel to project briefings as well as service provider meetings.

Digital signing was also introduced at VfL during the reporting period, and this has significantly reduced the volume of contract documents needing to be printed out and posted. The printed 'Stadium Magazine' product will also be discontinued. In the future, its content will be published in the online Match Centre, in a more efficient, up-to-date and environmentally friendly manner.

Since the 2021/2022 season, admission tickets for selected groups of spectators have been managed digitally with the 'VfL CONNECT' hospitality app. For the 2022/2023 season, VfL has now extended the app to cover anyone wanting to buy an admission ticket. Another new development is the club's partnership with start-up Yook, which means a carbon footprint can now be calculated – and offset – for any order placed in the club's online shop.

fair play (FFP). VfL has therefore declared its commitment to financial fairness and has complied with UEFA's FFP Regulations since their introduction. Although VfL is a wholly owned Group company, the club is keen to emphasise that it is not merely a sponsoring tool for the carmaker but makes an important contribution to employer branding and the overall appeal of the Group's home city.

A culture of ethics and integrity

Alongside the principles of good corporate governance, the charismatic appeal and credibility of VfL Wolfsburg are strongly rooted in its sustainable corporate culture. This not only informs the values put into practice throughout its departments and units but also the club's strategic orientation and structure. The motivation

Successful train-the-trainer programme with Pierre Littbarski, VfL coaches and local participants in South Korea



to deliver quality and performance at the highest level is an integral part of football business while also applying to ethical and social issues, and the conservation of the natural world. To encourage this kind of motivation and provide company employees with a role model in taking responsibilities for one's actions, VfL makes every effort to prioritise the topics of integrity and compliance. As a Volkswagen Group company, the club has adopted many precautions with the aim of preventing rule violations, promoting democratic value, and working hard to further strengthen

stakeholder confidence. This applies not only to VfL's direct sphere of influence but also to its supply chain, especially as regards its merchandising products. The club is also taking steps to build long-lasting relationships in other areas, such as with partners in educational projects or the security agencies who make football a safe and worry-free experience, and engages in stakeholder dialogue on a regular basis.

A regional and international focus

At VfL Wolfsburg, sustainable development is based on many kinds of partnerships, dialogues and processes. Within the region itself, the football club, carmaker and city are a seasoned team that works together to support social, cultural and sporting projects. The club in particular enjoys immense local popularity: as researchers from the University of Bremen discovered in 2020, local citizens see VfL Wolfsburg as the most important symbol of their city. This makes it all the more important to fill this symbolic role with meaning and to anchor the values that VfL embodies in the public consciousness. Accordingly, VfL has published a handbook with key messages for the sport, and also created a training programme on the topic that is specifically aimed at employees and players. These values are also communicated via the intranet, the club website and VfL Wolfsburg's social media channels. Since 2021, a new regional actor has entered onto the scene, who aims to strengthen this value-based feeling of togetherness: the Identity Working Group, formed by leading figures from the club and its fan club, the city, the Group, and the media. Headed by its patron, former Lord Mayor Klaus Mohrs, the 16-strong group liaises with VfL in regular advisory sessions, with members seeking to put the VfL values handbook into practice and further strengthen the club's ties with the community. To date, the working group has come up with many ideas, from an annual music festival to tournaments on public football grounds and a 'New Arrival' ticket for parents with babies. This last idea was quickly implemented, as were a wide range of design proposals for the Arena, fan shops and urban pedestrian zone.

In addition, VfL Wolfsburg has spent many years pursuing its global strategy of being a partner for the sustainable transition of its industry, with the aim of winning support for German football around the world, thrilling fans, and establishing itself as a successful, popular

Brand values



and socially involved football club. One important factor in this work is the strong international prominence of VfL Wolfsburg as a brand. In the reporting period, VfL made inroads here in Brazil, China, Mexico and the USA. The company is also active in Chinese football with the Beijing-based VfL Wolfsburg (Beijing) Football Club Co., Ltd. As one of many examples, the club organised a sponsored event for its Chinese partners, with teams from various companies competing against one another.

In terms of international engagement for youth development, VfL Wolfsburg once again focused on China and the USA during the reporting period. The club also started pilot projects in Japan and South Korea in 2021 and 2022, respectively. These international relationships are regularly renewed at gatherings such as the Volkswagen Group China Event in October 2021. As part of its Sports for Development work, the club also continues to support a project in India, which has taken a playful approach to giving around 1,000 children at five schools in Kachchh, Gujarat the chance to learn core skills like teamwork, communication and self-management.

The global E-sports industry is also increasingly relevant for VfL as a club, with VfL's E-teams participating successfully on the virtual pitch at international conventions.

Awards and nominations

VfL receives regular accolades as a regional and international partner for socially important issues. In 2022, these included:

- 'Place of Learning for Democracy', from the Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture
- Sports Business Award: winner with 'VfL Wolfsburg joins UN Race to Zero'
- 'More than football' award: finalist with Wolfsburg School for Diversity
- Award for Sustainability in Sport: 3rd place in the 'Clubs & Associations' category

Sustainable corporate culture

For administrative staff and players alike, actively pursuing the company's sustainability targets requires a sustainable corporate culture that is (visibly) put into practice. This is where VfL actively applies the idea of the community as family, by promoting the feeling of togetherness among its employees with community-focused activities like the 'Together for

You' Day (for details, see the 'Society' section). In addition, the club is also looking to motivate its employees to engage more strongly with the specific content of sustainability topics that are relevant both now and in the future. In the reporting period, diversity and climate action were often on the agenda at the club's Culture Cafe, for example. After joining the UN 'Sports for Climate Action' initiative in December 2019, VfL has also supported the UN 'Race to Zero' initiative and became an official partner in late 2020. The club's campaign was officially launched on 18 November by company management, with all employees plus environmental researcher Joachim Curtius in attendance (for details, see the 'Environment' section).

The focus was also on community spirit with the second Project1Hour organised by Volkswagen Group: coinciding with Earth Day on 22 April 2021, this involved all employees in the Group stopping work for 60 minutes. Participants at the team workshops held in the run-up to this event then presented the approaches they had discussed, highlighting the many possibilities for using new ideas and models to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

Integrity and compliance

VfL has always taken stakeholder confidence very seriously. This is why the club's strategy is built on integrity, which



“Integrity and compliance are integral parts of our company culture, and help us to learn from our mistakes objectively and transparently.”

Managing Director Tim Schumacher

drives its sustainable development and is always prioritised within VfL's business dealings.

Inappropriate conduct and legal violations can have serious consequences for both VfL and its workforce. Avoiding and countering criminality while raising awareness of high-risk situations therefore constitute key tasks for management at VfL Wolfsburg.

By participating in the group-wide integrity campaign Together4Integrity (T4I), the club creates the environment that is needed to complete these tasks to the full satisfaction of its stakeholders. The campaign works to heighten the understanding of integrity and compliance in the entire workforce, encouraging employees to acknowledge mistakes made while raising their awareness regarding potential challenges. Staff learn to identify conflicts of interest, for example, and resolve them in a responsible manner.

VfL has introduced a compliance management system to ensure that the company not only adheres to its own rules and commitments but also complies with legal requirements and

external standards. All club contracts and agreements are also audited for compliance by the management accounting, finance, legal and tax teams before they are forwarded for approval to company management. The compliance management system is based on the Code of Conduct in its revised 2022 edition, which includes all of the key behavioural guidelines for the entire VfL workforce as well as its partner companies, and also offers guidance on legal and ethical issues. The Code also includes a clear commitment to human rights as well as a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination.

The compliance requirements set out by Volkswagen Group also apply to its subsidiaries. Depending on the action area in question, the rules from the Code of Conduct are further specified by additional guidance. As one example, the company policy on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism establishes clarity for all of VfL's financial transactions. The company whistleblowing policy also offers club employees a system of reliable and anonymous channels for providing information about wrongdoing. This encourages employees to stay alert to potential problems, helps to ensure prompt and objective investigation and, where necessary, sets appropriate sanctions. The whistleblower system was updated in the reporting period, to make sure that the necessary processes are in place. Among other changes, reporting obligations were tightened and an auditing procedure was introduced. The whistleblower system also provides whistleblowers with contact persons such as external legal counsel (ombudspersons) as well as members of the Compliance Department at Volkswagen Group. For detailed information about these reporting channels, please see <https://>

“Tolerating our mistakes means that we can make them but we must not try to cover them up.”

HR Director Tobias Weigt

“First rolled out over a year ago, T4I is now well underway and has since become an important factor for ensuring our club’s long-term success.”

Christopher Wendisch, In-house Counsel and Compliance Officer

www.vfl-wolfsburg.de/en/vfl/club/compliance. Reports can be submitted online or phoned in. All reports are handled with due care and attention by the Group’s Compliance team.

Three years ago, VfL appointed its own Compliance Officer, who offers internal counsel on all questions of compliance while also conducting appropriate training. Participation in these training courses is mandatory for all members of staff, including company management. Employees must complete the training course at least once every two years. The course, which consists of six training units, was held three times during the reporting period. Before this report went to press, 89 percent of the employees mentioned above had successfully completed either their initial training or a refresher course. Additional courses are being prepared for 2023.

During their first HR meeting, new employees are also provided with a copy and an explanation of the Code of

Conduct. Articles on the intranet also provide information to help employees refresh their knowledge and inform them of new developments.

Management transformation is moving ahead

The compliance management work packages (deliverables) defined in March 2019 were successfully implemented by VfL in the reporting period. A Group-wide business partner due diligence tool was also introduced for running background checks on potential business partners. Steps have also been taken to ensure that integrity and compliance are accounted for in all decisions taken by VfL company management. Overall responsibility for this process is assigned to VfL’s In-house Counsel and Compliance Officer Christopher Wendisch.

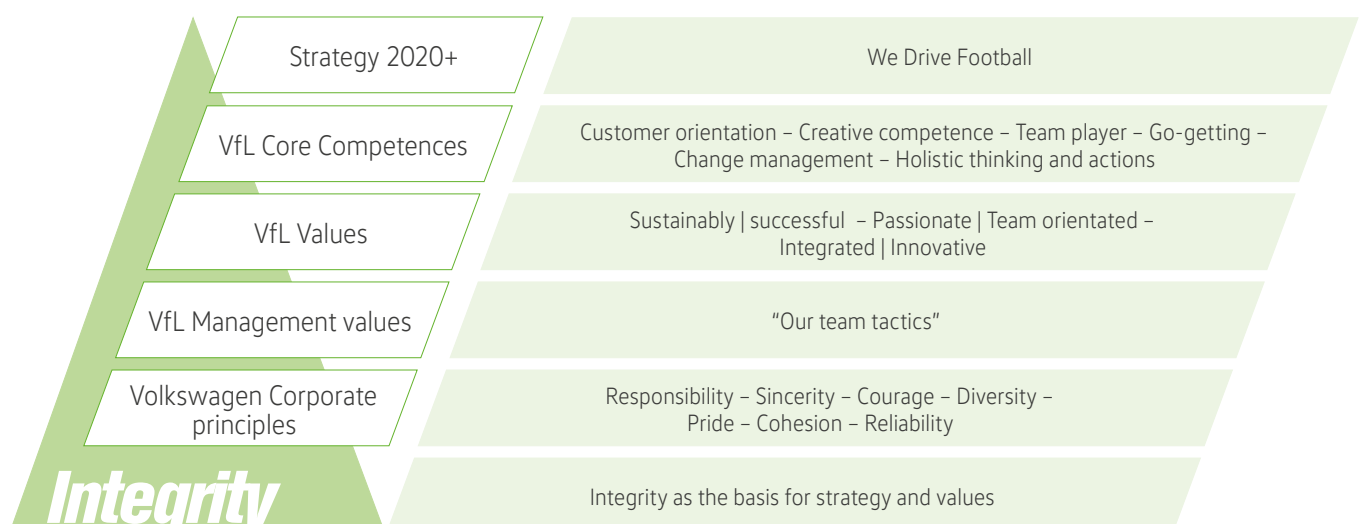
In April and May 2022, VfL organised two compliance workshops, each attended by 35 participants. These workshops formed the starting-point for regular dialogue between management staff and employees

as part of the Together4Integrity campaign. Also planned are ongoing communications activities on the intranet, at regular meetings and as part of the Culture Cafe dialogue format.

As in the previous reporting period, no sanctions were applied during the current reporting period as a result of a failure to comply with standards, laws or procedures on anti-competitive practices. Company management is therefore satisfied that the club’s compliance measures are indeed effective, although it continues to emphasise the need to maintain efforts here to address the ever-changing risk landscape.

Detecting risks and analysing opportunities

At VfL Wolfsburg, risk management pursues the objective of facilitating a culture of tolerating mistakes, in which risks are understood and communicated transparently up the company chain of command. All of the club’s material risks are identified and evaluated, and managed with effective countermeasures whose implementation is



monitored on a systematic basis. Material risks are included in an annual report to company management and analysed to identify their root causes.

VfL company management makes every effort to ensure that business practice complies with applicable laws at all times by setting out the necessary internal rules, policies, processes and measures, and issuing appropriate instructions. Management is also responsible for monitoring compliance and organising regular audits to check the effectiveness of measures. In the case of existential risks affecting VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH, the responsible executive at Volkswagen AG is also informed.

The risk management system at VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH follows the 'Three Lines' approach used by its parent Volkswagen Group. The individual business departments in the organisational units form the first line for the efficient and effective

management of risks. These departments identify and assess risks, and determine the corresponding countermeasures. The Risk Management Department forms the second line of defence and coordinates the risk management process among other duties. The third and last line is formed by Volkswagen Corporate Audit.

Respecting human rights

All business enterprises are obliged to respect, protect and support human rights. With its Code of Conduct, VfL Wolfsburg has enshrined this basic principle within its management processes and monitors implementation closely – both internally and at its business partners. To do so, the club uses the business partner due diligence tool recently installed in the reporting period.

Volkswagen Group has integrated the topic of 'Business and Human Rights' into the Group's existing compliance management system, and thereby fulfils its duty of care for human rights as required by the United Nations. The Centre of Competence for 'Business and Human Rights' advises other business units on human rights issues, on responses to ad hoc cases and with regard to the implementation of legal requirements. This advisory role has been established in the Volkswagen Group since 2020.

360° protection for children

In football, where children and young people are coached by adults and dependent relationships are created, there is a risk of children being subjected to abuse, the misuse of power or even sexualised violence. As a football provider, VfL Wolfsburg sees it as its duty to protect children from these dangers.

At VfL, a two-pronged approach is applied to child protection: first, in the club itself and second, as a strong commitment to preventing the abuse of children, for which the club is held in high regard throughout Germany and beyond. In this work, VfL Wolfsburg applies a holistic model of child protection, which was developed with the participation of all departments and the German Kinderschutzhilfe charity. Development of this model started in July 2020 and was completed in November 2021. Children from VfL's youth teams also participated in this work. In this project, partners sought to ensure an integrated approach to supporting children entrusted to the care of VfL Wolfsburg while offering them the best possible protection. On the one hand,

RESPONSIBALL

The first point of reference
for responsible football clubs



TOP OF THE TABLE: RESPONSIBALL

In 2021, VfL Wolfsburg was awarded the top spot in national rankings for Germany by the RESPONSIBALL charity, for its sustainable corporate culture and achievements. The overall score covered the categories of environment, social/community and governance (ESG). For the Environment category, this was the first time that clubs had been compared individually across Europe, with more than 350 clubs in over 24 countries taking part. VfL was also top of the table in this comparison and placed third in the overall European rankings. RESPONSIBALL has published annual ESG rankings for football clubs since 2011. In addition, the organisation also supports specific initiatives aimed at greater sustainability in sport, collects examples of good practice, and publishes science-based statements on fair play violations and responsible-minded sports business.

employees, parents and children themselves should be made aware of the need for protection. On the other hand, guidelines are being developed that provide clear guidance to all employees who work with children.

In accordance with this model, VfL Wolfsburg has appointed Conny Pohlers and Roland Wolff as its two child protection officers. At the moment, Tobias Abel is deputising for Roland Wolff, who is currently on parental leave. The child protection officers are supported by an interdisciplinary Child Protection Team. While forming this team, care was taken to cover all of the relevant fields of expertise in relation to child protection (such as psychology, pedagogy, HR, etc.).

Another integral part of this model is mandatory basic training as well as an annual refresher course in child protection issues. The basic training course presents facts and figures from research conducted by the Kindernothilfe charity. The child protection model is also introduced by the child protection officers and discussed at length. All employees who work with children – including temporary staff, interns and freelance coaches – must complete this training programme. During the reporting period, training was organised for around 250 employees and 8 junior teams. All of the members of staff from the above-mentioned groups also had to submit an 'extended certificate of good conduct'.

Apart from its work with Kindernothilfe, VfL also cooperates with other stakeholders (VfL e.V., CJD Braunschweig) as well as external partners and experts, so as to promote child protection and further develop its training programme.

Code of Conduct for Child Protection

A special code of conduct has also been developed for employees specifically on the topic of child protection, which all employees who have closer contact with children must pledge to follow and uphold. This organises the rules to follow into three interrelated categories and also envisages a set of graded measures to apply to the violations of rules in each category.

- For example, the rules in the 'blue' category require compliance with the VfL Code of Conduct and compliance rules, as well as maintaining a respectful attitude to working with children at all times.
- Criteria in the 'yellow' category forbid the exploitation of the dependency relationship of kids and adolescents,

and the misuse of the (support) role in question vis-à-vis these young people. Disciplinary action taken, such as excluding young players from training, must be transparent and coordinated with senior management.

- The 'red' category includes rules on conduct aimed at countering a direct threat to the child. Individuals are prohibited from remaining alone with a child in an enclosed space or vehicle, for example. Derogatory behaviour, discrimination, harassment and sexual abuse are also covered by this category.

Exceptional situations are also defined in which physical contact is allowed, however, such as in the case of healthcare provision. By signing this child protection code of conduct, employees are duty-bound to report all violations in any category to the designated authority. Violations in the



“Violence and sexualised abuse are terribly traumatic for children. And more than this, a child can bear the mental scars from these experiences for a lifetime. This means we need to make an even greater effort to put ourselves in the shoes of the young people entrusted to our care. We need to understand how children are exposed to threats and we need to seek out dependable partners so as to systematically prevent abuse situations from even happening in the first place.”

Conny Pohlers, Child Protection Officer at VfL Wolfsburg

‘blue’ category are discussed at the team or line management level, for example. Child protection officers do not necessarily need to be consulted here. After three violations in the ‘blue’ category, the incident is upgraded to ‘yellow’. ‘Yellow’ means that the respective supervisor, child protection officer and company management must all be informed.

If, after investigating a suspected ‘yellow’ or more serious incident, the affected person cannot be rehabilitated, a task force is then formed. This task force is made up of the child protection officers, members of the Child Protection Team, the respective supervisor, the Compliance Officer and Corporate Communications. The Works Council and Head of HR are also informed. They prepare a recommended course of action for company management, who may then opt to apply disciplinary sanctions and may also decide to inform the Volkswagen whistleblowing system.

If a violation in the ‘red’ category is discovered, then the child protection officers are informed immediately. An emergency plan is also activated simultaneously. The case is then passed to the police and the youth welfare authorities for further investigation. The Volkswagen whistleblowing system is informed and VfL also introduces disciplinary sanctions in parallel.

From internal effectiveness to widespread recognition

The Child Protection Team will be regularly assessing the model developed to keep it up-to-date and improve its effectiveness. The team will interview children, coaches, support staff and other groups, and involve them in the optimisation process. As a next step, VfL will be looking to make the best use of its charismatic appeal and raise public awareness about the topic. The club will also work more closely with

amateur athletics associations in the Wolfsburg region, and plans to expand the Volkswagen whistleblower system to include an external contact point for children, parents, VfL employees and anyone working with children.

On the safe side with data protection

The protection of personal data – whether belonging to customers, fans, partner companies, employees or members – is very tightly regulated and VfL takes its responsibilities here very seriously.

Since reorganising its data protection system in 2018, VfL has used new insights gained to further develop its measures and structures. As a result, the club is now able to maintain very high standards for personal data protection and security. VfL has also fine-tuned its technical and organisational measures with the aim of minimising the risk of potential data breaches. The club and Group also remain in constant communication, with each benefitting from insights gained by the other.

VfL also acts early on new developments in data protection, being careful to adjust its measures to stay up-to-date with legislation. Working together with Volkswagen AG, the club analyses the data protection standards that courts now require companies (and football clubs in particular) to uphold. VfL also consults regularly with colleagues in other clubs in the German Bundesliga.

VfL maintains a set of robust processes not only for reporting to the State Data Protection Commissioner for Lower Saxony as the competent supervisory authority but also internally at the club and within the Group. The processes are regularly updated in consultation with Group Data Protection. As a result, proper protection for data subjects and prompt action on the part of VfL in accordance with legal requirements are both assured.



Conny Pohlers, former national team player and striker for VfL Wolfsburg, is also now one of the club's child protection officers.

Zero tolerance for match fixing

Doping and match fixing spoil the fun of competitive sports. Globally, both represent a serious challenge to the integrity of the football industry.

VfL Wolfsburg has taken comprehensive steps to prevent match-fixing practices. All players in all teams at VfL Wolfsburg – including the men's, women's and junior elevens – have corresponding clauses in their employment contracts. These clauses are based on the applicable anti-gambling and anti-match fixing rules issued by the German DFB, as well as the associated duties to provide information. Provisions are also included to cover the DFB's anti-doping policy and the National Anti-Doping Code (NADC). By signing their employment contract, players acknowledge and agree to uphold these rules. VfL employment contracts also prohibit players from owning any shares or interests in other football clubs.

The club also helps its teams to follow these rules at all times, with steps taken in this context including the appointment of a Prevention Officer. The Prevention Officer runs compulsory training courses on the

topics of betting and match fixing for all active players and support staff at the VfL Football Academy, and also brings in external experts to hold talks on anti-doping (for further details, see the 'Employees' section).

Sustainable supply chain design

VfL works with a wide range of external suppliers, whose value chains often extend long distances around the world. The more complex these chains, the greater their susceptibility to unethical and environmentally unfriendly practices. Consumers are finding this increasingly unacceptable, however. As public surveys and those organised by VfL (via the VfL Wolfsburg Fan Lab) on the subject of football as a product and its merchandising have shown, even in football, there is an ever-growing expectation among spectators and the interested public that the products and services offered will be produced under socially and ecologically acceptable conditions.

When it comes to merchandising and kitting out players, a certain amount of effort is required here to fulfil these expectations. One of the reasons is the sheer variety of products offered, which range from clothing and pins

Data protection organisation structure



to key rings, mugs and gift items. As a result of the global supply chains involved, most of these must travel a very long way to their customers.

Even within these many-branching supply chains, however, responsible procurement requires standards to be upheld when it comes to human rights, working conditions and the environment. As part of its holistic approach to sustainability, VfL therefore makes every effort to audit its suppliers for integrity and sustainability, and works with a wide range of partners to develop new ideas and models for utilising environmentally friendly materials.

As a starting-point, VfL has established criteria for more sustainable purchasing decisions for use in its Procurement Department, with advice on compliance provided by the CSR Team. In addition to supplier relationships, partnerships with sponsors and other football industry stakeholders are also assessed in terms of sustainability aspects.

German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act

Policymakers and civil society actors alike are increasingly calling for companies to fulfil their duties of care in relation to human rights. In

many countries, these requirements have now been codified into law. One recent example is the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (LkSG), which was adopted in July 2021. For the Volkswagen Group and its subsidiaries, this legislation mandates an extended responsibility for the upstream portions of their value chains. To meet this responsibility, Volkswagen has revised its procurement policies and its reporting, and created new control instruments.

VfL Wolfsburg implements the applicable policies from its parent company and, in the reporting period, duly created suitable rules and responsibilities for this purpose at company level. VfL has also updated its information regarding the whistleblower system, so as to comply with the provisions of the LkSG: this information now also includes rules on handling reports from the supply chain. In contrast, all risk analyses relating to suppliers are performed by the core Group function itself.

Sustainability rating for supplier companies

Before VfL awards an order in selected goods categories within A-part management (award value EUR 50,000 or more), the Procurement

Department has the respective supplier audited in terms of human rights risks, environmental protection and corruption, and also evaluates the carbon emissions resulting from the execution of the order awarded – such as in Travel Management, for example. This process makes use of the 'Sustainability Rating (S-Rating)' introduced by Volkswagen in July 2019. As a first step, the supplier submits a self-assessment of its own sustainability conduct. These particulars and documents are then audited by a qualified third party, and additional checks are carried out at the supplier in case of doubt. If any transgressions are discovered, or if requirements in relation to the environment, society or corruption are not fulfilled to the required degree, then the provider is excluded from the ensuing award procedure. At the end of 2020, the S-Rating was extended to cover the awarding of orders in B-part management (EUR 10,000 to EUR 50,000).

In Travel Management, for example, the carbon emissions resulting from business travel are also now indicated clearly before bookings for items such as flights are made. This can then be taken into account by the person booking the trip, who accordingly selects the optimum means of transport.

Products from certifiably sustainable materials

The range of more sustainable products offered by VfL continues to grow. As one example, the VfL Wolfsburg range of fan clothing includes many Fairtrade items. The club also sells textile products certified according to the strict Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) or GRS (Global Recycled Standard), and which have received the official 'Green Button' quality mark that is awarded only to ecological and socially responsible clothing. VfL has also signed long-term framework agreements with a number of companies – which include outfitter Nike – for especially green products. As one example, VfL has purchased a more environmentally friendly collection from Nike for the home and away jerseys worn by the men's and women's teams. Football tops for the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 seasons, along with many other Nike products (trousers and training shirts), are made from at least 75 percent recycled PET water bottles.

Sustainable partnerships

VfL Wolfsburg is firmly convinced that major sustainability targets can be achieved only by a concerted effort from a very wide range of stakeholders. Depending on the topic area, VfL therefore works

closely together with relevant internal and external stakeholder groups.

As one example, VfL has been a member of the German Federal Working Group for Environmentally-Aware Management (B.A.U.M) since 2011 and is represented on the B.A.U.M. 'Company Advisory Council' by CSR Head Nico Briskorn. In 2021, the club also became a member of the Berlin-based Foundation Development and Climate Alliance. The club regularly partners with the German Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) and maintains close contacts with state institutions, including the City of Wolfsburg, where Nico Briskorn is a member of the Climate Council. The club has also signed a youth support collaboration agreement with the city. VfL also works closely together with the Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture and the club is also a member of the national Joint Action for Sustainable Development project, which is coordinated by the Council for Sustainable Development (RNE).

VfL Wolfsburg also partners with a growing number of other clubs, and continues to be an active member of national and international association activities on the topic of CSR, such as the European Football for Development Network (EFDN). VfL also represents the first and second Bundesliga divisions in the 'Responsibility' working group run by the DFL Foundation. Nico Briskorn was a member of the DFL's 'Sustainability' working group, which was transformed into a committee by presidential decision in the reporting period and has thereby acquired new powers.

Last but not least, VfL also maintains a wide range of other partnerships with commercial enterprises – whether in relation to environmentally friendly LED lighting with Trilux, for example, or in the field of E-mobility with Compleo. The club also works with a number of start-ups. VfL is working on solutions to tackle microplastics with start-up Guppyfriend, for example, and is also implementing joint CSR projects with sponsors and suppliers. The club continues to expand the proportion of its sponsors from the sustainability spectrum. At project level, VfL cooperates with various institutions, including universities, foundations, associations and unions, as well as many local schools, nursery schools and educational establishments.

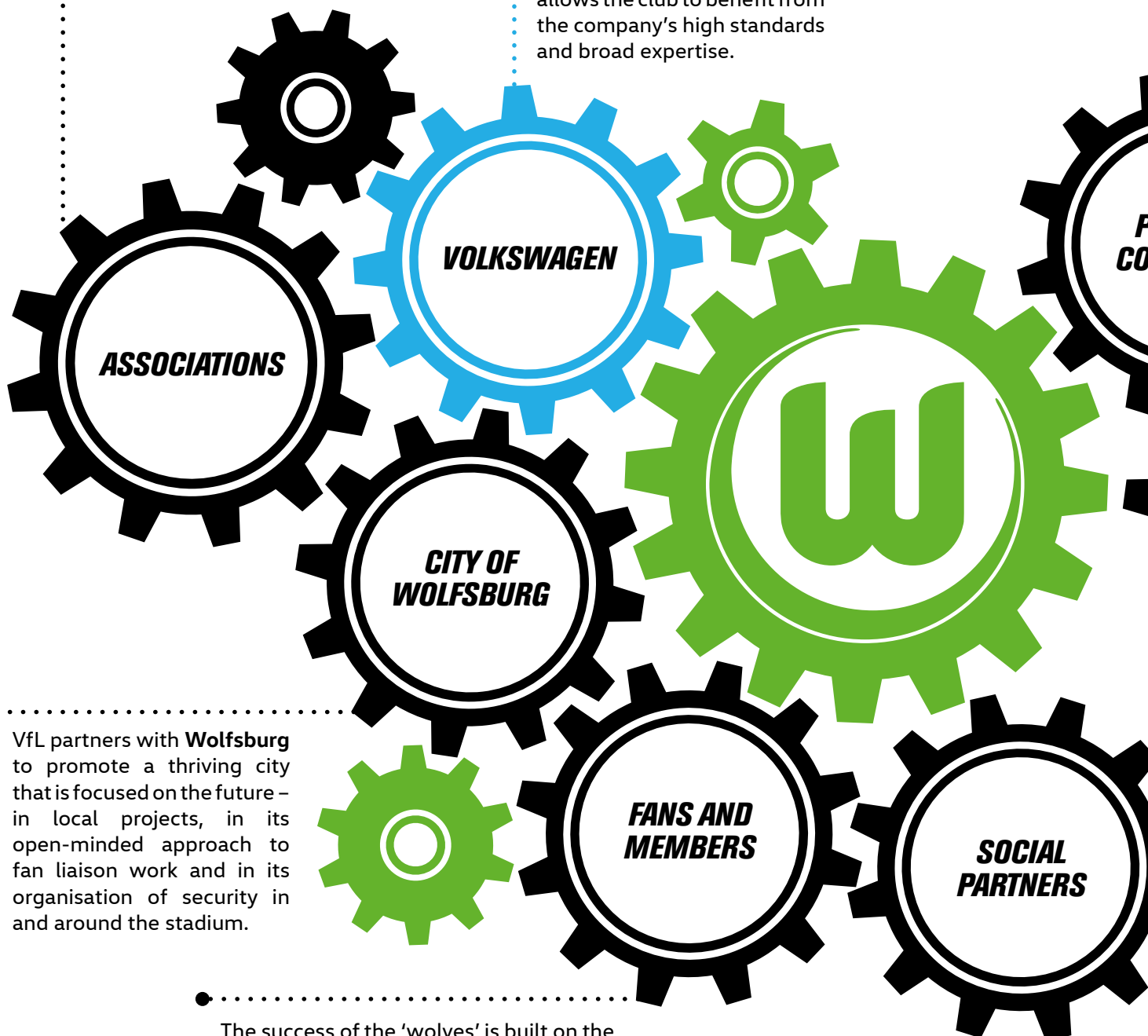
A helping hand for entrepreneurs

Alongside finance, start-ups also need intangible capital to thrive. And a football club like VfL has plenty of this – like its ability to draw a crowd, for example. A well-placed

Dialogue as a recipe for success

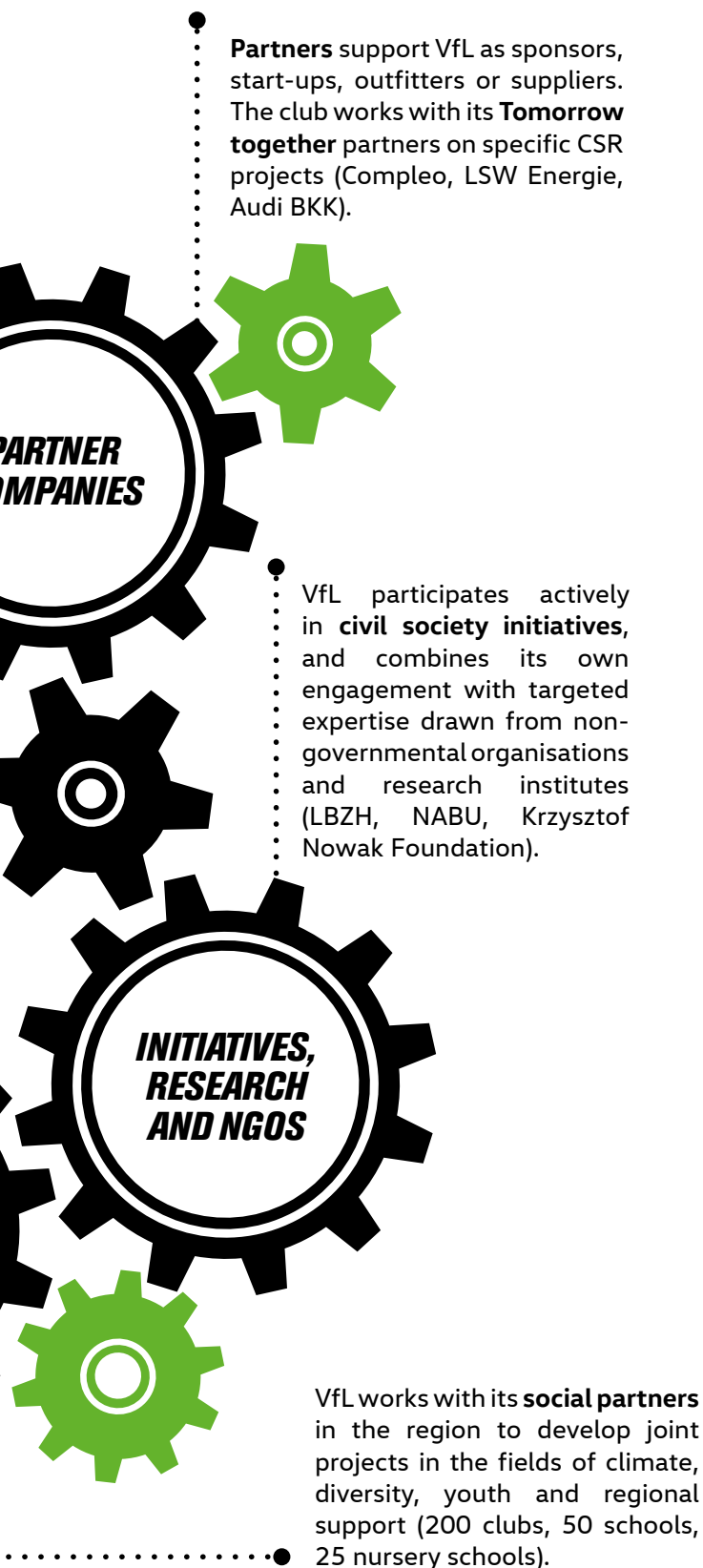
VfL discusses CSR measures and shared issues with **associations** inside and outside the world of football, and also participates in audits and training courses (DFB, DFL, ECA, NFV).

VfL stays in close contact with **Volkswagen** on the topics of business development and employee development. This allows the club to benefit from the company's high standards and broad expertise.



VfL partners with **Wolfsburg** to promote a thriving city that is focused on the future – in local projects, in its open-minded approach to fan liaison work and in its organisation of security in and around the stadium.

The success of the 'wolves' is built on the support of their **fans and members**. This is why VfL encourages self-managed spaces and offers integrative sports programmes (WölfeClub, Fan Council, WölfiClub, volunteers).



perimeter ad for a ground-breaking idea is worth its weight in gold. This is why VfL also finances advertising formats for promising start-ups, letting these businesses then later pay back this funding in the form of virtual company shares (a type of ownership right) or in-kind payments.

The start-up programme at VfL covers the following areas:

- Sustainability & Smart Facilities
- Fan Experience & Entertainment
- Sports Science, Health and & Well-Being
- Start-ups (before or after formation) with VfL-specific solutions

Three start-ups were added to the programme in the reporting period.

At VfL, sporting and business success is achieved only in cooperation with its stakeholders – groups of individuals that may have very different sets of expectations about the club. The above diagram illustrates the interrelationships between these stakeholders. For VfL, ensuring successful teamwork with these stakeholder groups while balancing out their interests is an integral part of the club's business model. Dialogue with and between stakeholders creates understanding on various issues, drives knowledge transfer and also allows all of those involved to identify more strongly with the football club. For VfL itself, frank and transparent dialogue is also important in order to better understand the social, ecological and economic demands placed on the club, as well as what sustainability is taken to mean, both on and off the pitch, and where common progress can be achieved.

At VfL Wolfsburg, this dialogue takes place continuously wherever people work together: on the pitch, at the training centre, during ticket sales and ad placements, and as part of match day preparations. But that's not all: VfL also actively seeks out dialogue partners so as to find answers, promote topics or motivate like-minded peers – towards climate action, for example. The club talks to many of these partners at regional and association level, and regularly hosts dialogue events with a focus on CSR – one of these being the 'Culture Cafe'. This innovative format allows employees to discuss issues and exchange views with one another during working hours. During the reporting period, Culture Cafes were held on the topics of diversity, climate action and start-ups, among others. Each of these meetings was held on the first Tuesday of the month and as an online event, because of the pandemic (for more details, see the 'Employees' section).

Broad-based project participation

The club's fans actively participate in many of VfL's activities. During the reporting period, one



'FROM THE FIELD TO THE FAN SHOP' – FAIR COTTON FOR MERCHANDISE

Indian smallholders are now moving to organic cotton. VfL Wolfsburg, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Brands Fashion company and six other football clubs in the first and second Bundesliga divisions are establishing a supply chain for these farmers.

The outcome of this process is merchandise for the club's fans that is produced sustainably and traded on fair conditions. These products should be available in fan shops from July 2024. Until then, members of the cotton cooperatives participating in the project are receiving training in sustainable cultivation methods, access to improved seed and guaranteed sales quotas for their products. The initiative is also organising sports training courses for children and young people in neighbouring communities, with a particular focus on encouraging self-confidence and assertiveness in girls and young women.

such activity was an analysis of accessible facilities in the stadium, where fans, together with many family groups, worked on the design and expansion of the family areas in the stadium (for details, see the 'Fans and Members' section). The club also commissions regular surveys on a variety of topics from the VfL Wolfsburg Fan Lab. Last but not least, VfL's youth teams also played an important role in the development of the club's child protection model.

Re-evaluation of priority topics

As part of preparing the 2022 Sustainability Report, the CSR Department re-evaluated priority topics at VfL Wolfsburg. To do so, the department investigated the actual impact VfL achieves on key sustainability topics. Part of this work involved analysing whether issues highlighted as priority topics in the 2020 Sustainability Report should still be considered urgent – and whether they need reprioritising.

As a result, the CSR Department has modified the topic categories, so that some of these are now subcategories of others and therefore no longer appear in the list of topics. This topic list has also supplanted the materiality matrix from 2020. By doing so, VfL seeks to underline the fact that all of these are important topics and should not be 'played off' against one another.

Priority topics at VfL Wolfsburg

- Health and safety at work
- Vocational and further training
- Biodiversity
- Corporate citizenship
- Fair working conditions
- Inclusion
- Integrity and compliance
- Climate-compatible mobility
- Climate-compatible business
- Sustainable supply chain
- Sustainable partnerships
- Sustainable corporate culture
- Youth development
- Resource efficiency
- Safety
- Stakeholder dialogue
- Diversity and equal opportunities (external)
- Diversity and equal opportunities (internal)

A new focus

VfL addresses the topic of 'Diversity and equal opportunities' with a holistic approach, according to the seven dimensions of the **Diversity Charter**. At the same time, the club acknowledges that company-internal and company-external diversity each have their own strategic starting-points. To render these different perspectives visible, the topic therefore occurs twice in the above list. Two subtopics that are common to both perspectives are antidiscrimination and antiracism: their significance means that these are strongly prioritised both internally and externally.

Instead of treating 'Inclusion and integration' as a single topic, VfL now focuses clearly on 'Inclusion' as an important, independent topic. 'Integration' is no longer mentioned in 2022, since the term is often interpreted as 'Adaptation' – which is not how VfL wishes to be understood. Instead, the club's objective is rather to help everyone enjoy the footballing experience on equal terms by removing barriers and promoting participation.

Since the corporate activities of VfL Wolfsburg and the mobility formats utilised by fans, employees and media for footballing events

are not yet carbon-neutral, the term 'climate-friendly' has now been replaced by the more meaningful term 'climate-compatible'.

A new structure

The 'Role model function' topic has been downgraded. Instead, this now has the status of a positive characteristic or role that players in particular should adopt in all of their activities.

The topic of 'Education' has been assigned to 'Diversity and equal opportunities' because VfL has strategically reoriented its engagement in the extramural classroom. The current point of focus is civic education

in relation to diversity. For the same reason, the topic of 'Health' also no longer appears on the list of priority topics.

'Participation' has been assigned to the priority topics of 'Stakeholder dialogue', 'Inclusion' and 'Diversity and equal opportunities', and is therefore no longer a separate topic. VfL itself remains a key factor that influences the participation of its employees, fans and other stakeholder groups.

While the topic of 'Ticket access and pricing' also continues to be important, it is already covered by the holistic diversity model and is therefore merged into 'Diversity and equal opportunities (external)'.



DFL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

At the end of May 2022, the DFL's General Assembly decided to include a mandatory sustainability policy in their licensing rules for clubs from the two top German divisions – a decision that was a world first in international professional football. Following a multi-stage implementation process, this policy will enter into force for the 2023/2024 season.

As a member of the 'Sustainability' working group set up by the DFL Steering Committee and the 'Responsibility' club working group established by DFL and the DFL Foundation, Nico Briskorn, Head of CSR at VfL Wolfsburg, took a leading role in developing the specific criteria involved. With the sustain-Club pilot project started in Wolfsburg in 2016, the club helped to pioneer the first-ever sustainability label for professional league football, which ten clubs were already using in their status quo analyses by 2020.

Nico Briskorn on the status of the new standard: "The fact that sustainability criteria will be taken into account when issuing licences to league clubs constitutes a milestone in European football history. As a footballing pioneer, we have been able to offer a constructive combination of expertise and experience for developing industry standards."

MILE- STONES

- ✓ Introduction of a comprehensive child protection model
- ✓ Digitalisation of many company departments
- ✓ Long-term partnership project: 'From the field to the fan shop' – fair cotton for merchandise

OUTLOOK

Increased level of know-how transfer to partners and sponsors by sustainability, climate and diversity experts at VfL Wolfsburg





Employees

Together for good jobs

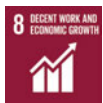
Even stevens

But is that all? On the pitch, we want more than that.

But in the club, this means, above all, walking the talk: fair working conditions, a daily routine free of discrimination and equal opportunities for everyone. This is how we create both the motivation and the right environment for top performance – in sport and in many other areas. And always with fresh ideas – because you never stand still in football.

For our personnel management activities, it means we work to make sure everyone feels at home at VfL. Standing strong.

Here together. More than ever.



Driven by fairness and respect

Everyone at VfL Wolfsburg, whether players, management or our commercial, sporting and medical staff, work together to support and achieve the best level of performance possible. And VfL creates the best conditions for this to happen: our personnel work focuses not only on skills training and occupational safety and health, but also ensures fair working conditions, good prospects and opportunities for development, and plenty of respect for the individual personality of its employees. In this way, the club seeks to measurably improve the satisfaction of its employees with the aim of enabling them to fully embrace their role as ambassadors for a responsible football industry. VfL does not rest on its laurels but seeks to continuously improve on past sustainability achievements, whether for its administrative staff, for its employees at training or match venues, or for its players.

Data from VfL Wolfsburg's personnel structure says a lot about the success and effectiveness of its personnel management

work. Diversity is clearly encouraged, for example, and VfL also provides its workforce with many part-time opportunities that allow them to balance the needs of their professional and personal lives. Staff working in administrative positions are typically offered permanent employment contracts, because VfL seeks to retain well-qualified workers. This also improves job satisfaction. Team players and coaches, however, tend to be on the seasonal contracts typical for the

industry. Also evident is the fact that VfL has promoted women's football for many years, with the facilities provided for its two women's teams offering a good example here. VfL is also keen to encourage its players to engage with CPD programmes and to make the most of opportunities for establishing a second career option. Alongside attractive skills training programmes, the club gives players the chance to pursue occupations outside football on a part-time basis.



VfL employees also participate in the Volunteer Team.

A systematic approach to responsible HR

VfL has introduced a comprehensive set of guidance for its human resources work. Examples include its Code of Conduct, Working Rules and a wide range of works agreements, which cover everything from working conditions to specialised or management roles, as well as payroll groups and the remuneration paid to apprentices. Responsibility for personnel work at VfL Wolfsburg is centred within the club's own HR Department. This department is supported by the Collective Bargaining Division as well as the Works Council, and Health and Occupational Safety departments at Volkswagen AG. To facilitate cooperation between employees in the various departments, VfL Wolfsburg has used SAP Sports One since the 2018/2019 season. This is a professional software suite for managing the men's and women's teams and, since 2022, its youth activities. The tool offers access to a wide range of relevant data from areas such as training, scouting and performance diagnostics. The software is also used by the VfL Football Academy and the Professional Player Department, not only making collaboration between the various trainers and the Support Team more efficient but also enabling more personalised, integrated management for all teams.

Fair working conditions

Fair working conditions form the foundation for success at VfL Wolfsburg by boosting the club's appeal to potential applicants and helping it retain its high potentials. Accordingly, fair working conditions are one of the most important sustainability topics at VfL.

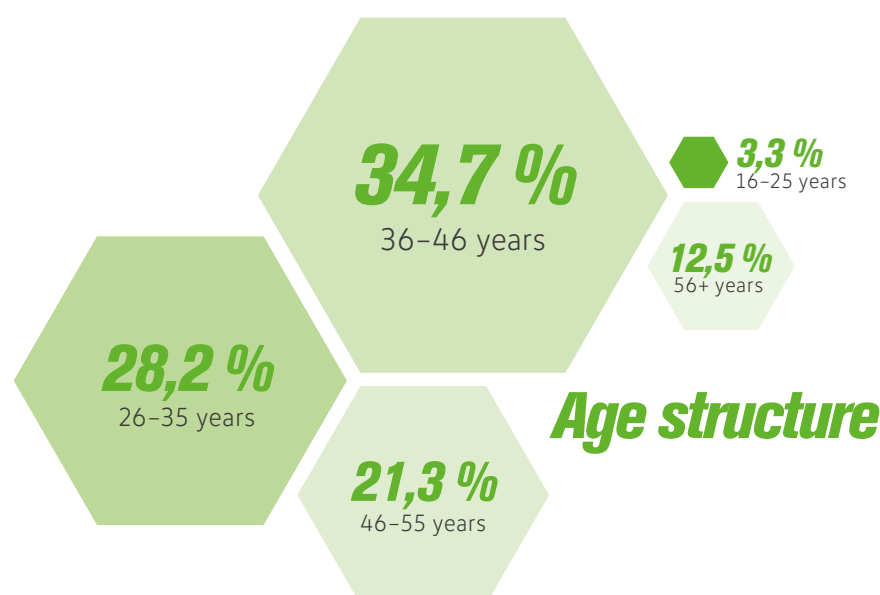
A culture of togetherness

Company culture at VfL is centred on the ideal of a diverse community, supported by a familial feeling of togetherness, both at the club and in its immediate surroundings. The club's culture and its working conditions are ultimately derived from and informed by the VfL values: 'Sustainably successful', 'Passionately team-oriented' and 'Integrated and innovative'.

Transformational ideas from dialogue and participation

As with society itself, football needs dedication to make the transformation towards a more responsible treatment of the planet and its inhabitants. Innovation is essential to make progress in this context. This is why VfL employees are explicitly encouraged to participate in specific processes at VfL Wolfsburg as a footballing company, so as to promote and accelerate change. Support is provided here by dialogue formats like the Culture Cafe.

The Culture Cafe provides club employees with an opportunity to interact, share knowledge and engage in dialogue with one another during working hours. During the reporting period, the Cafe was organised both as an in-person and



Employee structure

	Administrative staff			Coach teams and support			Players		
	2022	2021	2020	2022	2021	2020	2022	2021	2020
Total	221	219	225	114	110	96	149	150	172
Fixed contract	18	*	21	90	*	70	149	150	172
Percent	8.2	*	9.3	78.9	*	72.9	100	*	100
Permanent contract	203	*	204	24	*	26	0	0	0
Percent	91.8	*	90.7	21.1	*	27.1	0	0	0
Male	143	141	145	108	101	87	123	122	148
Percent	64.7	64.3	64.4	92.1	91.8	90.6	82.6	81.3	86
Female	78	78	80	9	9	9	26	28	24
Percent	35.2	35.7	35.6	78.9	9.2	9.4	17.4	18.7	14
Full time	174	170	170	98	92	77	55	58	82
Percent	78.7	77.6	75.6	86	83.6	80.2	36.9	38.7	47.7
Parttime	47	49	55	16	18	19	94	92	90
Percent	21.3	22.4	24.4	14	16.4	19.8	63.1	61.3	52.3

* Details not available because of a system changeover



CAREERS AT VfL: FROM EVENT MANAGEMENT TO CSR MANAGEMENT VIA THE CAMPUS

In March 2022, the CSR Department at VfL Wolfsburg welcomed its latest team member: with new CSR/Diversity Manager Tobias Abel, there are now six full-time members of staff working on the sustainable development of our green club. Abel already knew VfL, thanks to his stint as an Event Management trainee in 2017, which encouraged him to apply for a degree course at VfL Campus. After graduating and gaining professional experience in a number of other positions, he has now found his way back to VfL again. Abel is uniquely qualified for this position, thanks to his early engagement with work on equal opportunities and antidiscrimination, which now makes him the ideal candidate for tackling VfL's new priority topic of 'Diversity'.

Tobias Abel: "VfL brings diversity to life: This combination of theory and practice at VfL Wolfsburg is – unfortunately! – one of a kind in the German football industry. After our many 'rainbow' match days, we now need to get the rest of the Bundesliga up to speed on diversity."

Graduates like Tobias Abel are living proof of the successful Campus model. This is also why the club continues to expand its commitment to VfL Campus – with a focus on sustainability: in October 2021, a 'Sports Sustainability Manager' degree course was added to the VfL Campus curriculum. This accredited CPD course gives students a solid grounding in strategic sustainability management, coupled with practical experience that is gained first hand at VfL Wolfsburg. This fully accredited CPD programme is aimed at current and future management personnel.

an online event. The Cafe was originally thought up by the 'Ideas Factory' project group, which was formed in 2019 with the aim of involving employees in the development of the organisation while improving staff retention and making the most of good ideas suggested by the workforce. This kind of open-minded dialogue is also encouraged in the personal development interview that forms part of annual employee appraisals, and at regular staff meetings.

Fair pay and the work-life balance

VfL Wolfsburg has signed a number of works agreements covering the introduction of pay grades and rules on bonuses, overtime, flexitime and pensions. These pay grades were introduced in 2009 in consultation with the Volkswagen Group Works Council. Supplementary pay components were also agreed, which can be converted into six additional paid holiday days that can then be used for the purpose of childcare or caring for relatives. For staff returning from parental leave, pay grades are organised to ensure that employees do not suffer any financial or substantive disadvantages as a result of their absence from the club.

Since 2017, a works agreement for mobile working has also been in place at VfL Wolfsburg, which really came into its own following the closure of childcare facilities due to the coronavirus pandemic. As part of the pandemic health measures introduced in 2021, mobile working was also mandated for all employees whose work did not depend on them being physically present. Although these measures were only temporary, steps were taken to ensure employees continue to benefit: the updated works agreement from 2022 has therefore made mobile working conditions even more flexible. Approval requires only the submission of an informal application. The works agreement was also extended to include a new rule that extends flexitime to accommodate a larger timeframe and the concept of 'core working hours' has also been abolished. In addition, VfL has also launched a 'MyTimeOut' programme, whereby all employees are entitled to a career break in the form of a sabbatical.

An attractive employer

VfL Wolfsburg measures job satisfaction in its workforce with a Mood Barometer that it has adopted from the Volkswagen Group. In 2021, the Mood Barometer quota rose to 77.7 percent compared with 75.2 percent

in 2020. VfL takes a systematic approach to further improving this figure.

In the 2021/2022 financial year, VfL welcomed 16 new employees, of which 3 were female and 13 male. A total of 15 employees – 2 women and 13 men – left the club in the same period. The staff turnover rate was 6.43 percent. Of the new employees, 11 were aged 45 and under, with 4 aged over 45.

Vocational and further training

Alongside their sporting endeavours, professionals and upcoming players must always keep other career options open. After all: not every talented young player will be able to turn professional, let alone maintain a pro career over many years. A similar situation applies to administrative staff at VfL, who are also entitled to a job with attractive and long-term career prospects. This is why VfL Wolfsburg offers its employees and players a range of vocational and further training programmes, both in-house and in association with external educational establishments.

From the 2018/2019 season onwards, VfL Wolfsburg has been actively applying a modern personnel development model based on the club's core competencies. This model is organised and run by the HR Department and respective management staff. In addition, the club has also established a set of uniform guidelines for management. VfL assesses the effectiveness of the measures thereby introduced with an annual Mood Barometer, which also asks respondents for their opinion on their development

**Mood
Barometer
score:**

77.7%

Since 2017, VfL Wolfsburg has measured job **satisfaction in its work-force** with a Mood Barometer that it has adopted from the Volkswagen Group. In 2021, the club again improved on its previous score, which had been 75.2 percent in 2019. VfL intends to raise satisfaction among its employees even further in the future.



VfL pro player Pia Wolter during her degree at VfL Campus.

opportunities. Among other things, survey results have been used to raise awareness among the executive and management staff of the importance of open, transparent communication with the workforce. VfL has also introduced measures to overcome silo mentality in the workplace and to promote a lessons-learned culture. Most recently, a training course entitled 'Management communication targeting the silo mentality' was held in 2022 as part of T4I activities. (For more information about the T4I programme, please see the 'Strategy and management' section.)

Further education in football: VfL Campus

With VfL Campus, VfL Wolfsburg has partnered with SPORTBUSINESS CAMPUS GmbH to give individuals with college entry qualifications the chance to complete a Sports Management degree. This public-access programme is also an attractive option for employees and players at the club itself. Enrolment in the programme has been possible since the 2015/2016 winter semester. Alongside its two accredited degree programmes – the 'Bachelor of

Management with Concentration in Sports Business' and the 'Master of General Management with Concentration in Football Business' – the Campus also offers further training in football management and in E-sport management for candidates without college entry qualifications.

As a football club, VfL also can offer its students something very special, namely a direct, behind-the-scenes look at professional football business. Pia Wolter, a player in the professional team, is a recent graduate of VfL Campus, having successfully completed her master's in 2022.

CPD courses for professionals and managers

Another continuing professional development course is the Basic Leadership Qualification (BLQ), which VfL offers in close cooperation with Volkswagen Group. During the 2021/2022 season, four employees completed one of these BLQs at Volkswagen. The BLQ programme starts with basic training, followed by a unit covering practical applications and team leadership training, and concludes with the creation of a personal leadership profile. Candidates who successfully complete the final exam receive a 'leadership licence', which is an obligatory precondition for being appointed to a leadership role within the Group.

New members of management are also supported by a mentoring programme. As part of our self-development and personnel development programmes, we

Juniors *Teams at VfL Football Academy*

A juniors **U19**
B juniors **U17**
C juniors **U15**
C- juniors **U14**
D juniors **U13**
(C juniors division)

Juniors *Women's youth development*

U20 *women*
B juniors **U17**
C juniors **U15**
C juniors **U13**
Talent team

also offer new managers external 1-to-1 coaching sessions, which are also open to non-management staff.

Youth development

VfL Wolfsburg has consolidated all of its youth activities for junior teams within the VfL Football Academy. Here, the club bundles together all of its activities for scouting and signing talented players, and uses a nuanced and personalised approach to talent promotion for building up the men's professional squads. The VfL Football Academy must abide by a set of binding criteria that guarantee effective talent promotion: training needs to be systematic and account for the factors of age, stress, rules and competition. Young and upcoming players receive all-round support during their careers. Care is taken to ensure that they can attend school or vocational training in addition to their training and match commitments. On 1 February 2022, Michael Gentner succeeded Pablo Thiam as Director of the Academy.

As a modern football club, VfL Wolfsburg consciously orients its youth development work at the VfL Football Academy towards promoting not just footballing excellence but also the self-development of its players, while also strengthening their self-confidence. To this end, the club has developed its 'Skills for Life' youth programme. This programme covers a range of key everyday topics for its players. Among other things, the 'Skills for Life' team teaches players about finance, nutritional science and how to handle social media. At the same time, the values of community, communication, respect, creativity and mindfulness are also taught. Last but not least, VfL also works closely with schools and parents to ensure its young potentials receive a good education – to ensure quality of life after their footballing careers. This is supported by a programme of extra tuition offered by VfL's educational partner StudyHelp.

A new direction for youth work

In 2021, VfL Wolfsburg restructured its youth work in order to optimise its talent promotion activities and more effectively address the requirements for the professional development of players in the modern football industry. This strategic reorientation is based on three steps of decisive importance taken by the club.

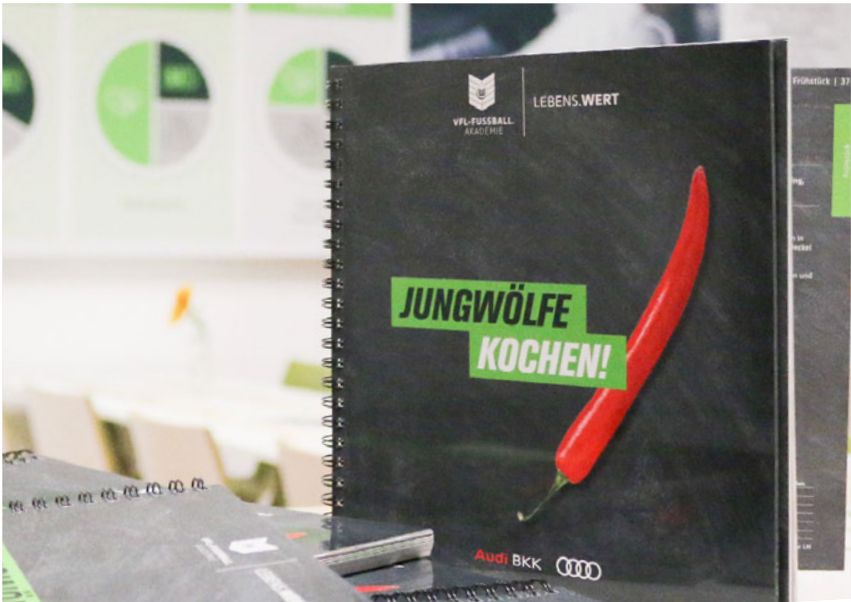
VfL has signed a four-year partnership agreement with SKN St. Pölten that covers

the secondment of young players. This lets talented Academy players gain valuable match experience. For this reason, the VfL's under-23 side was unenrolled from the Academy. For the under-10 to under-13 age groups, partnerships have also now been in place with four regional clubs since summer 2021. These age groups have also been unenrolled from the Academy, and are now being managed by BSC Acosta, VfB Fallersleben, MTV Gifhorn and SSV Vorsfelde. At these clubs, the young potentials will get the chance to play for an extended period in a familiar environment. This approach guarantees an unbroken period of footballing development for these players. Other benefits include shorter travel times, less pressure to perform and more time for self-development. In this way, the club is careful to avoid making premature decisions by skimming off the supposedly best players. The club is also looking to put partnerships with regional clubs on a sounder footing. Each of these clubs is supported by a designated, full-time VfL coach. Since this changeover, the VfL Football Academy has been focusing on its work with the under-13 to under-19 age groups.

The VfL Football Academy is very popular with young players. As a result, VfL has expanded its accommodation capacities at the Academy, as announced in the 2020 CSR Report. During the reporting

The four pillars of the VfL Football Academy





JUNIOR WOLVES IN THE KITCHEN

Under the auspices of the 'Skills for Life' team, together with VfL chef Marvin Mende and nutritional scientist Kristin Freydank from Audi BKK, employees and young players from the VfL Football Academy have authored their own cookbook for the club. Published jointly with Audi BKK, the Academy's first Nutritional Guide and Cookbook appeared in August 2022. The book is now available to all club employees, as well as Academy players and their parents. The cookbook takes a clear and compact approach to covering the most important topics for player-focused nutrition, and provides a wide range of tried-and-tested recipe suggestions for all phases of training and competition.



period, a total of 33 boarding places plus 14 rooms in shared accommodation were available.

Every four years, this accommodation is audited and accredited on behalf of the DFL and the DFB by Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Zertifizierung von Managementsystemen (DQS). In 2020, VfL received an outstanding overall grade.

Apart from the teams of coaches and other employees at the VfL Football Academy, up-and-coming players are also looked after by seven educational specialists and two sports psychologists, who not only help them out with schoolwork but also provide psychological and social counselling.

This team of support staff can also be consulted by young players if they have questions about alternatives to football when planning their later careers. Björn Ferneschild, VfL's Prevention Officer and education expert in the CSR Team, also organises mandatory training courses on the topics of gambling/match-fixing and anti-doping – with the last of these also featuring external experts. At the Wolfsburg School for Diversity, Ferneschild also teaches classes on antiracism for up-and-coming football players.

For the junior women's teams, the services of an external mental performance coach have also been acquired in cooperation with the Eichendorffschule Elite Football School. The club has also created a second physiotherapist position for up-and-coming female players. As of yet, however, the range of support services here is by no means equal to those offered to male junior players. Conditions for further professionalisation in this context are highly dependent on general infrastructural and economic conditions.

Responsibility beyond the world of football

With the VfL Football Academy and development work for the junior women's teams, VfL provides a wide range of options to help players prepare for a second career. Every year, up to six up-and-coming players are offered the option of completing training or a dual-study degree alongside their sporting activities at Volkswagen Group Services and VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH. This



The U17 squad attend a workshop on racism and discrimination with our Prevention Officer.

training programme, which is tailored carefully to the needs of the young footballers, was chosen by six players in the reporting period. During the reporting period, four junior players were currently completing vocational training. One was completing an apprenticeship at VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH, while the other three were engaged in vocational training at Volkswagen Group Services. Two of the footballers completed their training during the reporting period. Both current and former professionals also landed jobs in the administrative division, at VfL's Football School or at partner organisations.



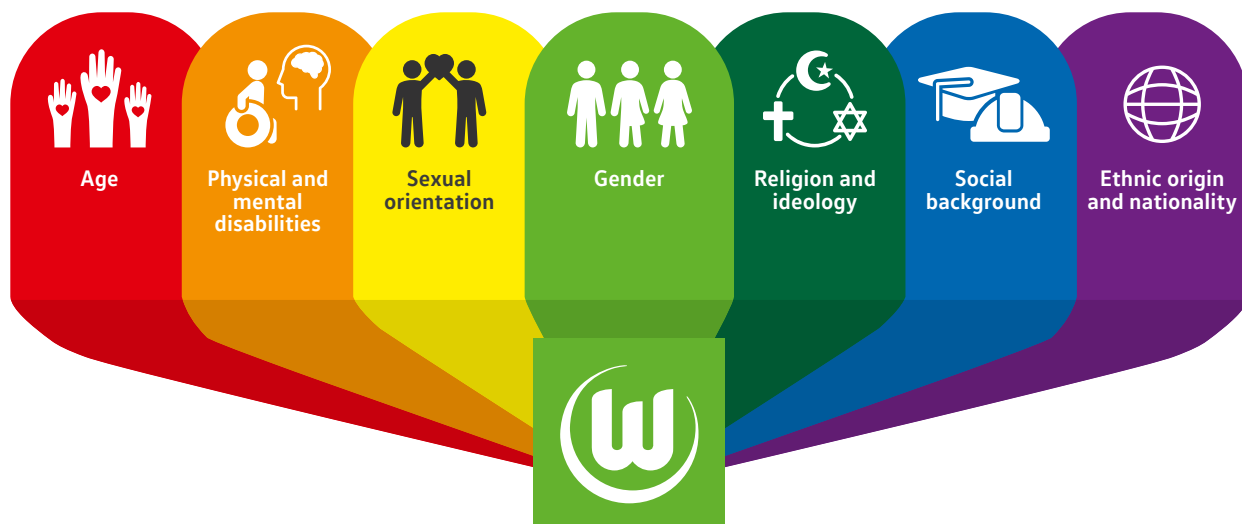
Diversity and equal opportunities

Time and again, professional football demonstrates that ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or skin colour is irrelevant for team performance, and that teams with diverse backgrounds can achieve more than those where everyone is the same. And this is a generally valid experience beyond sport itself. This is why VfL Wolfsburg makes a targeted effort to support diversity in its teams and in its workforce. VfL has set out the rules for a responsible approach to diversity and equal opportunities in its Code of Conduct. Back in 2014, VfL

Wolfsburg signed the Diversity Charter, which means the club is duty-bound to promote diversity and respect in its working practice.

Diversity and equal opportunities in the workforce

The Code of Conduct in place at VfL Wolfsburg requires all employees of the football club to uphold the basic principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment, and to require the very same from the people that they deal with. Modelled on Gardenswartz and Rowe,



and also based on the Diversity Charta, VfL distinguishes a total of seven core dimensions for diversity:

- Age
- Physical and mental ability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender
- Religion and worldview
- Social background
- Ethnic origin and nationality

The CSR Team at VfL Wolfsburg works to improve diversity along all seven of these diversity dimensions as a continuous process. This work involves close consultation with company management, the business departments and the club's Diversity Working Group. This working group consists of nine club employees who have taken the initiative to work together on this topic. At the group's monthly meetings, they contribute diversity-relevant subjects and ideas to the CSR Team, and to the Steering Committee that VfL established in the company in 2021. The Steering Committee helps to ensure that measures devised for promoting diversity are implemented in a systematic, goal-oriented manner.

The club has also set itself the goal of promoting mobile working as well as part-time models, even for people in the later stages of life. The installation of accessible workplaces is also aimed at promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities. VfL is also a member of the Volkswagen's LGBTIQ+ network #WEDRIVEPROUD, which it uses to raise awareness inside and outside the club about people's right to live authentically according to their sexual

orientation without fear of discrimination. In August 2022, VfL also attended the Christopher Street Day in Wolfsburg with a visible presence and networking activities. The company workforce is also welcome to use the multi-faith prayer room at the stadium, which gives employees a space to perform their personal rites.

With training conducted as part of the 'Diversity Wins' workshop and regular awareness activities from the Diversity working group, the club also aims to create a diverse working environment that excludes no-one on account of their social background, skin colour or nationality. VfL also participates in the Group-wide DIVERSITY WINS @VOLKSWAGEN programme with the club's own training series. All members of management with responsibilities for personnel had completed this training by the end of the 2021/2022 season. Although initially aimed only at management staff, the programme was then expanded to the entire workforce in summer 2022. In the future, the club also aims to introduce training for stewards and temporary staff.

- Female employees as a proportion of the entire workforce: 34%
- Proportion of women in management positions: 3%
- People with severe disabilities as a proportion of the entire workforce: 4%

A leading light in women's football

VfL has been committed to the promotion of women's football for many years now. And this engagement has borne fruit. In summer 2022, for example,

the women's first team again won the women's league as well as the DFB Cup in 2021 and 2022. During the reporting period, VfL also introduced a number of other organisational and sporting activities to promote football for girls. One example was the sponsoring of the kids' teams by the professional female players. In the 2021/2022 season, the coaching team also welcomed a new female colleague, who will also be focusing on scouting and match observations. The VfL talent teams also organise recruitment training twice a year. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, these sessions were also held in the reporting period while observing health regulations. With a total of 40 participants, the publicly announced recruitment training for the 2021/2022 season was very well-received. And the successes of youth development work speak for themselves. In the 2021/2022 season, three up-and-coming VfL female players were accepted into the club's first Bundesliga squad. Two of these

have since transferred to other Bundesliga teams. Club management can understand why the players decided to take this step. With the women's squad boasting so many high-quality players, VfL was unable to offer them much in the way of match time. Accordingly, looking ahead to the further development of these new players, the best solution was identified, both for the players and for the club itself.

Occupational safety and health

Keeping the workforce and our players healthy and safe is an essential part of achieving sporting and economic success at VfL Wolfsburg. The strain of competing in sports at an elite level can result in both physical injury and psychological stress. Indeed, one is often caused by the other. Accordingly, VfL considers both factors in the integrated approach that it takes to occupational safety and health management.



VfL fans nail their colours to the mast at the first Wolfsburg CSD: lacing up with rainbow-coloured laces as a sign for a fairer world

Keeping infection under control

During the reporting period, protecting employees, players and fans from the Covid-19 virus played a central part in health and safety activities. Most of these measures were discontinued at the end of May 2022, however, in line with changes to the official regulations. Until then, VfL was subject to strict hygiene practices that were steered and monitored by a working group the club had formed for the purpose. Information was provided about potential threats and applicable safety rules on the VfL intranet, and notices posted up at the club's offices. During the entire reporting period, and even after the hygiene regulations were subsequently lifted, questions about infection control for players were handled by the team physician together with hygiene officers Günter Pfeiler and Heiko Wehe.

all of the relevant medical subject areas for professional players and the Academy's junior teams alike. Alongside a full set of healthcare services for all VfL teams, the Department also handles administrative and insurance-related processes, rehabilitation and treatment options, as well as performance diagnostics, prevention and nutrition. A supplementary set of services provided by medical specialists, physiotherapists and sports psychologists helps to ensure players stay fighting fit over the long term. The network also includes a number of private psychological counselling practices. A mental performance coach is also provided for the junior women's teams. VfL is also focusing in particular on the topic of doping (for more information, see the 'A new direction for youth work' subsection here, as well as the 'Strategy and management' section).

Occupational safety and health in sport

To reduce the risk of injury in competitive sport, VfL Wolfsburg ensures that its players receive all-round support for their healthcare needs. Staff at the club's VfL.Med Department handle

Occupational safety and health for employees

VfL Wolfsburg makes every effort to comply with its legal duties in relation to occupational safety in the workplace, and has taken the necessary organisational precautions by setting



A junior VfL team celebrates after scoring a goal.



VfL teams receive all-round support and benefit from an integrated approach to health management.

up an Occupational Safety Committee and appointing an Occupational Safety Officer. Alongside hazard assessments, regular tours to inspect the safety systems in place are also conducted in all working areas. During the reporting period, the club also purchased various items of ergonomic office equipment, following health and safety advice given by the company physician. The intranet is also used as a tool to raise awareness in the workforce about taking a responsible approach to health risks. Employees can also use the intranet to find out about the various occupational safety topics. During the reporting period, there were four work-related accidents in 2021 and seven in 2022. These statistics include figures from administrative, sporting (excepting players) and temporary staff.

In the interests of ensuring an integrated approach to health, VfL has instructed management staff to be alert to potential signs of psychological illness in their employees and to handle affected individuals with due care and attention. During working hours, all VfL employees can also arrange a free, comprehensive

and highly confidential health check-up, which is offered by Volkswagen Group. With the support of the Volkswagen Healthcare Team, the Occupational Safety Committee at VfL also organises a Health Day, which includes flu vaccinations, every year during the November national game break. Alongside yoga courses, all employees are also offered social coaching. Staff can also request a set of monitor glasses to prevent stress and strain on the eyes.

VfL Wolfsburg also provides basic and refresher training courses in first aid for administrative employees as well as for paramedics and stewards. In relation to fire safety, an E-learning module was introduced during the reporting period as an alternative to the annual classroom-based training events.

MILE-STONES

- ✓ Installation of accessible workplaces for the inclusion of people with disabilities
- ✓ New 'Sports Sustainability Manager' degree course at VfL Campus
- ✓ New direction for youth development work driven by partnerships with SKN St. Pölten and regional clubs

OUTLOOK

Female empowerment with the Diversity Steering Committee





Environment

Together for the climate

1,5° – 360° – 180°

The target, the scope and the challenge

The window of time available to us in which we can keep global heating to a tolerable level is closing fast. We need to take action now and bring everyone on board. Reversing the climate trend requires a team effort.

Our contribution: net zero by 2025. We're reducing, offsetting and investing. In carbon sinks, for example. With professional support, we're also tackling the conservation of biodiversity. The ecosystems that are crucial for life on this planet must be preserved.

These insights drive us on – and we're not letting up.

Here together. More than ever.



Setting a green example

"Green – more than just our colour" is the tagline VfL Wolfsburg is using to put football into the service of a future worth living. Environment is one of the core topics given priority attention at VfL, both in the past and now more than ever before.

VfL has been a first mover here, switching to green electricity and publishing its first carbon footprint in 2011. But the club didn't stop there. After all, with one team in each of the Bundesliga and Women's Bundesliga, VfL Wolfsburg is a role model for many. The club uses this role to encourage people – in the media, in sport and face-to-face – to protect our natural environment. And setting environmental protection standards in its own operations is therefore an absolute must for the club. This kind of engagement is also driven by a very rational set of principles. After all,

acting to protect the environment and resources also offers financial advantages – especially from the perspective of a life cycle assessment.

VfL therefore takes this 360° approach to assuming responsibility for the environment in its stadiums, training centres and administrative buildings as well as in relation to mobility for its teams, employees and fans. The club is also charting a new course in catering and merchandising,

where it is now also increasingly committed to the conservation of biodiversity. Apart from the climate crisis, humanity will also be having to deal with an increasing loss of biodiversity in the future.

Responsibilities, instruments and partnerships

VfL Wolfsburg has taken an effective approach to environmental management. First and foremost here is the club's own Environment Team, whose members include Volkswagen Arena Technical Manager Maik Rummel, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility Nico Briskorn, Karsten Steinweger and Thomas

Kaiser from Facility Management, Energy Officer Benjamin Gerchel and Climate Action Officer Anja Melo. Together with other specialists based at VfL's head office, this team assesses the various areas regularly to identify the potential for improving climate and environmental protection.

VfL manages its environmental protection activities using a set of guidelines that are publicly accessible and binding on all employees, as well as with regular training. The club also makes use of its Environmental Compliance Management System (ECMS), which the club successfully introduced in accordance with its 'Environmental Compliance Management System' company policy (policy 17, also based on Volkswagen Group Policy 17) in February 2021. The system helps to identify and manage environmental risks and opportunities, and therefore works to effectively reduce environmental impacts along the club's value chain. In addition, VfL has also launched a continuous improvement process based on the 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' method. As part of the 'Plan' phase, the club introduced an internal risk assessment during the 2021/2022 season. As a result, VfL Wolfsburg is



MATCH DAY ACTIVITIES FOR CLIMATE ACTION

A particularly challenging area for initiatives that aim to raise awareness about climate change mitigation is mobility – with 60 percent of all carbon emissions caused by fans travelling to and from the game. This is why VfL Wolfsburg has decided to nail its colours to the mast here, with its very own Climate Match Day. So, for its home game against VfB Stuttgart on 1 October in the Volkswagen Arena and the local derby featuring the 'Wolves' versus Bayer 04 Leverkusen the day before in the AOK Stadium, the spotlight was on climate-compatible mobility.

Taking the lead with alternative travel

The main focus was on encouraging all fans to use climate-friendly transport, and to travel to the game by bike, public transport or train. As an incentive, there were 4,000 instant wins up for grabs, including tickets, shop vouchers and stadium tours, as well as a prize competition offering big prizes like VIP tickets for DFB international matches, bicycles, E-bike boxes, vouchers for EV users, balloon trips, match worn jerseys, and meet-and-greets with club players. Many of VfL's partners helped out by providing these prizes.

Match day mile and bike check-up

A match day mile was set up for spectators at Volkswagen Arena, with information and campaign stands inviting visitors to learn more about climate-compatible mobility and energy efficiency. VfL partner Zweirad38 also offered free bike check-ups on the day and VfL's own repair workshop opened its doors to the public at the Fan House.

Goals for climate action goals

The day before, the VfL women's team and their opponents in the Women's Bundesliga had also played a benefit match for the DFB's climate action campaign. For each goal scored by the 'Wolves', the club donated EUR 100 towards climate action projects run by the Sports for Future charity organisation. Each donation was also matched by the DFB itself. VfL's CSR Manager Nico Briskorn contributed his climate expertise to the preparations for the event within the DFB's 'Climate Action and Match Operations' working group. This meant VfL was once again able to take the lead in its industry – as with its proposal to put the 'warming stripes' graphic (which visualises the planet's long-term rise in temperature) on captain's armbands.



United Nations Climate Change

considered an 'ECMS lite', which means a company with a low environmental risk. At the same time, however, VfL does have moderate environmental relevance, because its activities involve considerable environmental impacts in the categories of energy and water consumption, as well as waste. VfL Wolfsburg has also set up a legislation checklist, which the club uses to evaluate compliance with legal requirements, and other environmental and energy management standards.

Partners for climate action

VfL Wolfsburg is a member of the Sports for Climate Action Group and was the very first Bundesliga club to sign the 'Sports for Climate Action Declaration' from the United Nations (UN). In 2021, VfL also joined the UN's 'Race to Zero': as a campaign partner, VfL has agreed to reduce its absolute greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2040 and to publicly disclose progress towards this goal in an annual carbon accounting report. Alongside the direct and indirect emissions produced by the club's business activities (scopes 1 and 2), football-relevant emissions relating to Scope 3, such as from merchandising and employee mobility, are also calculated. VfL has also committed itself to using awareness-raising activities to encourage its stakeholders to join it on its Race to Zero journey.

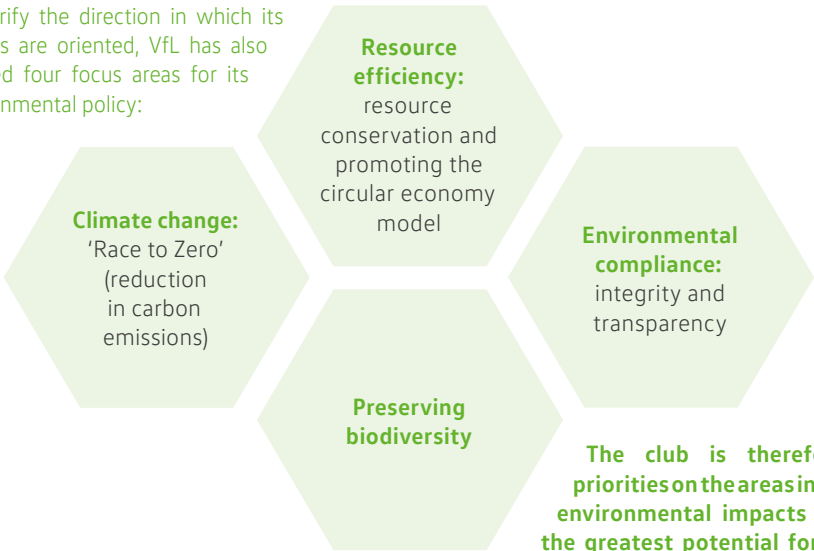
Using resources more efficiently

A lot of water is used in day-to-day operations in the training and sports facilities, and for match day organisation. Plenty of waste is also generated, especially on match days and in the shop. Levels of resource consumption and waste production are also high in the administrative teams. While fans are increasingly aware of the environmental impact caused by major sporting events, reducing water consumption and targeting the waste produced are also important goals for VfL itself as a club. VfL therefore measures and analyses its consumption

In the 2021/2022 season, VfL Wolfsburg also published its own environmental policy, based on the Volkswagen Group environmental guidelines. This consists of the five core principles below:



To clarify the direction in which its actions are oriented, VfL has also defined four focus areas for its environmental policy:



The club is therefore focusing its priorities on the areas involving its biggest environmental impacts and where it has the greatest potential for their mitigation.

levels continuously in order to fine-tune the measures it has introduced here.

Waste management on match days and at head office

During the reporting period, VfL Wolfsburg achieved the most significant improvements in waste management at Volkswagen Arena. In February 2022, collections of the recyclable material containers were switched from monthly to every two weeks. Four new 1,100-litre bins were also provided. Another contribution to the circular economy was achieved by Arena operations with the introduction of reusable cups made from recycled material – and even for hot beverages.

With the aim of improving recycling rates and further reducing volumes of general waste, VfL launched an internal status quo analysis for waste streams generated at all locations and teams in early summer 2022. This analysis will be completed by the end of the 2022/2023 season, and will be used to prepare a strategy for improving the proportion of recycled material and introducing circular economy models in selected areas.

Interim analyses have already resulted in measures for improvement at VfL's head office during 2022. All general waste bins have been removed from the offices, for example, and employees are now requested

to separate their waste properly in the kitchenettes. Information about waste disposal and labelling, plus guidance on waste separation, has also been provided to employees on the intranet.

Less material consumption in administration

Alongside reducing the use of material for paper-based processes like invoicing (see 'Strategy and Management'), VfL also makes use of other measures designed to cut consumption. Represented by Managing Director Michael Meeske, the club has therefore shown its commitment to the 'Initiative for Recycled Paper' as part of the 'CEOs Take a Stand' campaign.

The current printed services tender for the 2022/2023 season reflects this strategy closely: in the RFQ documents, VfL requires companies bidding for print orders to use only recycled paper with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) certificate for their printing contracts. Business cards must also have at least 'FSC® Mix' certification. This same approach to conserving resources means that merchandising catalogues are now only offered in a digital format.

Climate-compatible business

Limiting climate change to a tolerable level is the biggest challenge we face in



Sveindis Jonsdottir is joined by fans and employees on a trash walk around the arena

this decade. And we at VfL Wolfsburg know this too: operating our training and sporting facilities and organising our match days results in the consumption of a lot of energy – such as from turf heating, floodlights and catering. Some of this is still provided – at least physically – from fossil sources and therefore contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. For more than a decade, VfL Wolfsburg

Waste by type and volume

General waste:

71,860 kg at Volkswagen Arena
143,000 l at the Academy

Waste paper:

22,140 kg at Volkswagen Arena
28,600 l at the Academy

Recyclable materials:

38,500 l at Volkswagen Arena
28,600 l at the Academy

Water and wastewater

total for Volkswagen Arena, AOK Stadium, Fan House, VfL-Football.Academy and VfL-Centre 2021/2022: **63,000 m³**
of wick **Grauwasser** from canal for
irrigation 2021/2022: 16,931 m³
Wastewater volume 2021/2022: 18,040 m³

has measured these emissions every two years and has pursued ambitious targets to reduce them, which it updates on a regular basis. With its energy software, CMS and well-qualified team, the club is systematically implementing all of the measures needed to meet these targets. VfL – as the very first Bundesliga club with LED floodlighting – has continued to expand its LED-based lighting in the reporting period, for example.

Energy crisis

The ongoing energy crisis has confirmed the club's foresight in taking early action to cut energy use. VfL Wolfsburg therefore sees these events as a chance to work with the DFL and other clubs to create a more sustainable Bundesliga. Supplementing its previous efforts, VfL has now introduced short-term measures for the next two winter seasons. As one example, the club has done away with the 'revitalising tubs' in player changing rooms used to soothe tired muscles. Turf heating temperatures have been turned down for all pitches and floodlight use has been curtailed on match days. Away from its sporting venues, the club will also be turning off the lights at night. Thanks to the measures that it has now introduced.

Climate strategy: net zero by 2025

Based on a scientifically verified carbon accounting method, VfL Wolfsburg intends to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to zero within the space of three years. At the end of 2025, the club's carbon balance should therefore be 'net zero'. To achieve this, the club is pursuing an annual reduction in emissions target of 6.45 percent, as well as a compensation strategy. The reduction methods that the club has announced as a member of 'Sports for Climate Action', and for which

the club must also submit an annual report, are only able to reduce its carbon footprint by around 55 percent by 2030. The compensation strategy aims to close this gap in accounting terms from 2025 onwards. At the end of the reporting period, the club was putting the finishing touches to this compensation approach.

Alongside the systematic collection of carbon footprint data, this two-pronged strategy is based on a careful evaluation of potential reductions at the club. In 2021, the club's internal experts therefore worked with an external consulting company to analyse emission hotspots at VfL. Key points of focus here included fan and employee mobility, as well as energy use. This evaluation was provided as input to VfL's 2021 CSR Roadmap, which was used in June of the same year to budget a package of measures (for further details, see the CSR programme given in the Annex).

Renewable energy

A cornerstone of any climate strategy is the avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions. For VfL Wolfsburg, this means, firstly, purchasing energy from renewable sources. Although the club has sourced 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources since 2011, sporadic shortages and high prices have also seen VfL focusing increasingly on self-generated power. During the 2022/2023 season, the club started installing its own rooftop photovoltaic systems at the VfL Centre, the planned new strength training room and the AOK Stadium. These systems cover around 10 percent of the club's electricity needs.

Energy efficiency

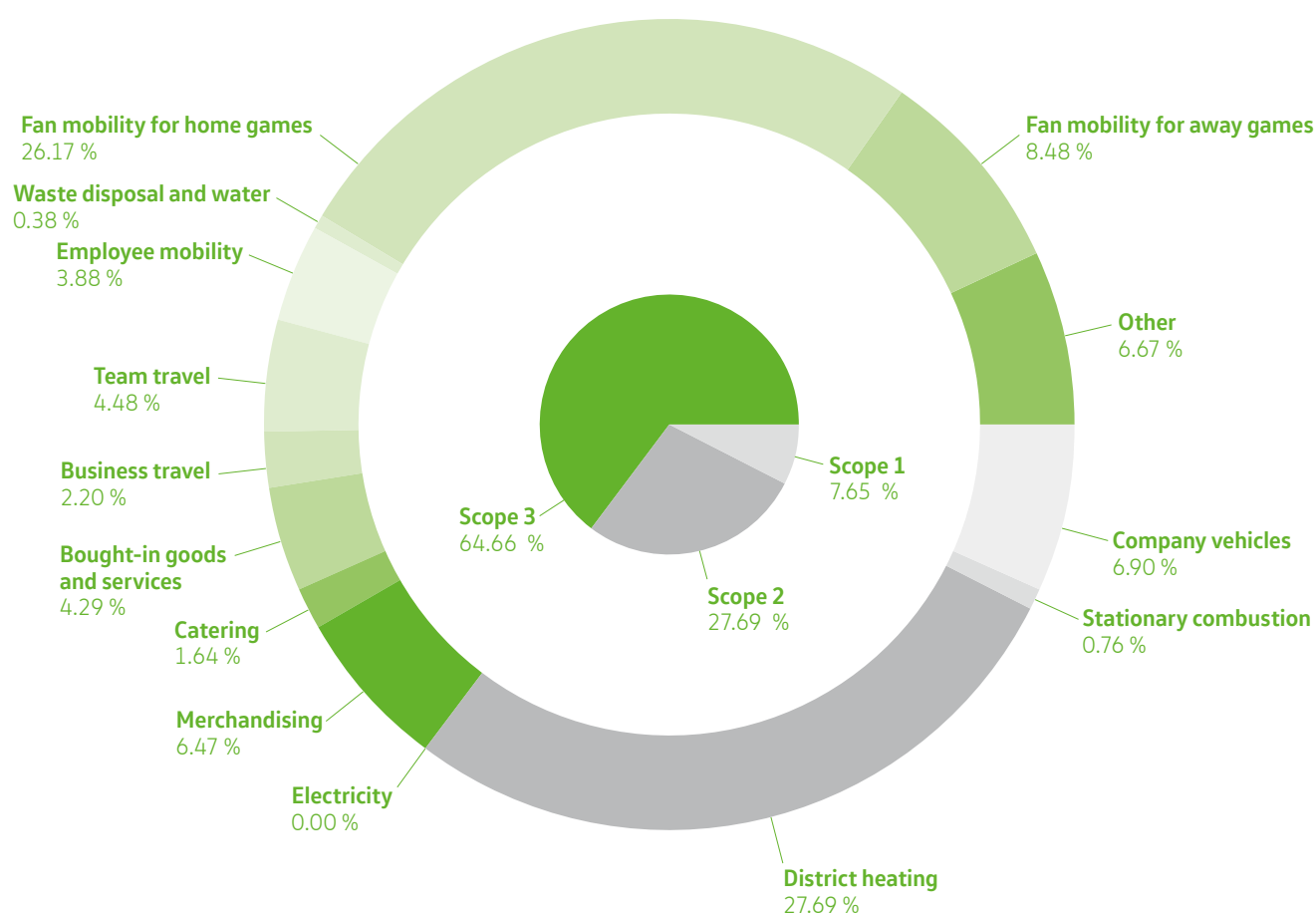
Another important approach to reducing emissions is to make sure energy is used more efficiently. During the 2021/2022 season, new smart meters for measuring heat energy flows were installed, to provide more precise control and targeted optimisation in relation to district heating. Measurement points were also set up, which can be used to collect separate data on energy consumption for static heating and for air-conditioning systems. Another key pathway to reducing consumption is the club's continued progress in migrating its lighting to LED systems. In 2021/2022, this strategy saw another two training pitches equipped with LED floodlighting.



Energy consumption (total for Volkswagen Arena, AOK Stadium, Fan House, VfL-Football.Academy and VfL-Centre 2021/2022)

- **Electricity 2021 = 6,601,701 kwh** (Scope 2)
- **Wärme 2021 = 8,015,314 kwh** (Scope2)
- **Heizöl 2021 = 300,538 kwh** (Scope1)

Carbon footprint 2021/22



Change to accounting boundaries – before/after comparison

	NEW		OLD	
	t CO ₂ e	%	t CO ₂ e	%
Scope 1	898.786	6.83	167.479	1.67
Scope 2	3,607.458	27.42	1,885.018	18.76
Scope 3	8,649.602	65.75	7,996.597	79.58
Gesamt	13,155.845	100.00	10,049.095	100.00

Absolute values 2021/2022:

Total = 10,315.999 t CO₂e

Scope 1 = 812.847 t CO₂e

Scope 2 = 2,940.235 t CO₂e

Scope 3 = 6,562.917 t CO₂e

	NEW		OLD	
	2017/2018	%	2017/2018	%
Company vehicles	773.798	5.88	167.479	1.67
Stationary combustion	124.987	0.95	–	0.00
Electricity	–	0.00	–	0.00
District heating	3,607.458	27.42	1,885.018	18.76
Bought-in goods and services	607.780	4.62	650.128	6.47
Bought-in food and beverages	146.978	1.12	146.978	1.46
Business travel	978.251	7.44	568.750	5.66
Employee mobility	294.549	2.24	294.549	2.93
Waste disposal and water	135.060	1.03	135.060	1.34
Fan mobility for home games	3,834.955	29.15	3,834.955	38.16
Fan mobility for away games	2,210.821	16.80%	2,210.821	22.00
Fuel- and energy-related activities	441.207	3.35	155.355	1.55
Total	13,155.845	100.00	10,049.095	100.00

Baseline recalculated

As part of setting its carbon reduction targets for 2025 and 2030, VfL Wolfsburg has revised its carbon accounting limits and made improvements to the underlying dataset. A much larger volume of primary data is now available. For GHG Scope 1 (according to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol), all other vehicles operated by VfL have now been added to the cars used by head office, for example. Fuels used for on-site energy production have also been included in accounting

figures. More consumers have been identified in relation to district heating, covered by GHG Scope 2. The Scope 3 category now also covers duty travel for administrative staff as well as business trips for the 'under-' teams, including hotel accommodation and all journeys made by coach.

This extension to the scopes has resulted in a new, market-based starting figure for the 2017/2018 baseline period. Instead of 10,049.095 t, this figure is now equal to 13,155.845 t CO₂ equivalent. This adjustment also improves the comparability of figures for the coming years, which will make it easier to identify the extent to which reduction targets can be achieved.

Interim report 2021/2022

At 10,618.815 t CO₂e, the figure for total greenhouse gas emissions at VfL Wolfsburg for the 2021/2022 season was 19.28 percent lower than the starting figure from 2017/2018. In comparing these figures, however, one should remember that fixtures during the second pandemic year 2021/2022 were still heavily disrupted and spectator figures were significantly lower than in a regular season.

This interpretation is borne out by a closer analysis of Scope 2, where CO₂e figures declined by around 18.5% versus the baseline period, falling from 3607.46 t to 2940.24 t. Apart from smaller stadium crowds, VfL also suspects the mild winter played a part here. An opposite trajectory was followed by merchandising and catering, however, where overall figures rose 74.35 percent to 1,315.950 t CO₂e. However, VfL does not ascribe this development to an actual real-world increase but to improved data on product footprints (as provided by the plug-in from its sales partner Yook) and the inclusion of the VIP Area in catering figures. Emission factors themselves have also changed and are higher compared with the 2017/2018 baseline year.

Environmental measures that help the climate

Alongside the efficiency measures mentioned above, the assessment of potential areas for reduction highlighted several other activities that also help to reduce the carbon footprint of the club's own business activities. Examples here



CARBON TRANSPARENCY IN THE ONLINE SHOP AND FOR TICKET SALES

Since January 2022, VfL has been working with start-up Yook to improve carbon transparency at the checkout. Yook's software calculates the individual carbon footprint for every purchase made in the online shop. All of the products purchased are analysed in detail using criteria such as the country of origin, weight or colour. With just one click at checkout, fans can directly offset the carbon emissions displayed for their basket. To compensate for these emissions, VfL Wolfsburg uses a combination of international forest protection and regional reforestation schemes.

At <https://www.impact1.yook.one/vfl-wolfsburg>, Yook provides a summary of the carbon offset by all fans and the participation rate: At the end of April 2022, this figure was around 10 percent, which means that 1 in 10 shoppers have taken part to date.



The new bike shed at the Fan House was officially opened on Climate Action Match Day.

include menu options, the use of hardware and software, and merchandising.

Green catering

To offer alternatives to meat-based products, VfL Wolfsburg has worked with its new caterer Aramark to set up a 'Green Corner' in Building 09. The Corner offers vegan burgers and vegetarian dishes. In the re-tendering process for its catering services, the club was also careful to specify general sustainability criteria. Accordingly, Aramark sources baked goods and cold meats from regional suppliers, thereby avoiding pollution from logistics. Energy and washing-up water have also been saved by offering cola in bottles with attached caps rather than filling the beverage into reusable cups. Where cups are still unavoidable – such as for hot beverages – the reusable cups used are now all made from recycled materials.

Green IT

Thanks to its advanced IT systems, VfL achieves savings in many areas, such

as document dematerialisation, for example, or the use of digital platforms to reduce the need for business trips. Another example involves reducing energy consumption in the workplace by replacing desktop PCs with more efficient laptops. VfL Wolfsburg's own (sustainability) management processes have also been made more efficient and climate-compatible with the use of modern IT systems. The digital visualisation of key performance indicators using BI dashboards has made it unnecessary to print out and mail the reports, as previously. Potential reductions in IT itself have also been fully investigated. Wherever possible and wherever better in terms of climate accounting, faulty equipment has been repaired rather than repurchased. On the other hand, the targeted procurement of new monitors, for example, has also cut electricity use.

Green merchandising

VfL Wolfsburg has further expanded the range of more sustainable products offered



Look out for this symbol in our 'Wolves' shop, which is used to indicate a sustainable product.



ON YOUR BIKE WITH OUR FAN LIAISON OFFICER

Once a year, VfL encourages its employees to take part in the Wolfsburg City Cycle. Fan Liaison Officer Michael Schrader has really made a name for himself here over the last few years: 2022 marked the third year in succession that he took first place in the 'VfL Wolfsburg' group, after clocking up 1,011.9 km with his E-bike in the space of three weeks. VfL Managing Director Michael Meeske has also taken part in the last couple of years and took fifth place in 2022 with 690.9 km logged.

by its Fan Shop. During the reporting period, this involved the launch of the 'Tomorrow together' product range: at the end of 2022, the 'Tomorrow together' range included T-shirts, sweaters, tableware, ballpoint pens and kitbags.

Till receipts for face-to-face sales in the shop are printed on pollutant-free thermal paper from Ökobon. Ökobon also offsets all of the carbon emissions created by every online order.

With services like these, VfL Wolfsburg achieved sixth place in the 2021 'How fair are their shops?' ranking, which assessed 36 clubs in the first and second Bundesliga divisions. Club rankings were calculated by Cum Ratione gGmbH – Gesellschaft für Aufklärung und Technik.

Today, VfL Wolfsburg earns more than a fifth of its merchandising revenue from its more sustainable product line – and has therefore exceeded its own target from the 2020 Sustainability Report by 100 percent.

Climate-compatible mobility

Footprint calculations show that the area of mobility still remains the biggest variable when calculating the overall footprint. Sporting success increases travel activities. At VfL, this doesn't just involve mobility for teams and club members, but also the transport arrangements for fans and media representatives. Since VfL cannot directly affect their carbon emissions, the club instead creates incentives for climate-conscious (travel) behaviour.

And VfL is looking to encourage a greater focus on tomorrow's travel solutions in its network. To this end, the club is preparing a community approach together with its partner organisations (see Magazine, 'Match day activities for climate action').

For the fan community, more figures on options for more climate-friendly trips to games have been available since October 2021, provided by a mobility and residential location analysis from the Fan Lab. According to the survey, 27 percent of respondents live in Wolfsburg county, while around 42 percent live within a 25-kilometre radius of the Volkswagen Arena. Nevertheless, around 40 percent do not travel to matches by car. However, VfL is looking to increase this proportion with other incentives and services, and has used the study results to develop a mobility plan and define some targeted measures. Some of these have already been implemented:

Incentives and motivation for using alternative forms of transport

In September 2022, VfL Wolfsburg opened a publicly accessible repairs and maintenance workshop for bikes and e-bikes outside the Fan Shop. The club is also talking to partners about expanding its train pass to the region of Magdeburg as well as possible bus routes to the north-east (Salzwedel and Stendal). Starting in March 2022, employees at VfL Wolfsburg have also been able to rent bikes and E-bikes at attractive rates from VfL's business partner Lease a Bike.

Apart from the Wolfsburg City Cycle, VfL also makes use of other motivational activities. The 2022/2023 season marked the first time that the club booked the

special 'Samba Train' not just for the first match of the season but also for the last.

Club EV facilities

The club has further expanded its charging infrastructure at the VfL Centre, recently installing 24 new charging points for alternating current (AC) and 1 for direct current (DC). As a result of global supply chain problems for semiconductors, however, the planned electrification of its vehicle pool, including new EVs for players and club management, has now been delayed. The club also plans to expand charging infrastructure in the underground car park at Volkswagen Arena.

Biodiversity

From experts to everyone else, we now know that species loss is as much of a threat to the future of humanity as climate change itself. Ecosystem services, such as the automatic regeneration of bodies of water and soils, the filtration of water and air or the pollination of fruit trees is being increasingly endangered by the excessive exploitation of natural resources. With their wealth of plant and animal species,

however, ecosystems are hugely important to human health and nutrition, and for clean drinking water, fertile soils, clean air to breathe, mitigating climate change and as a basis for our economies.

VfL agrees with this assessment, and applies comprehensive measures to conserve biodiversity both in its business operations and in its role as an ambassador in the community. As defined by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the club also understands diversity as the variation exhibited by the totality of all living organisms, habitats and ecosystems.

Of course, the club's direct impact on natural habitats is not particularly high when compared with that of companies working in the manufacturing, mining or agricultural sectors. However, the club still intends to do its part in helping to protect species and conserve biodiversity as a whole, so as to fulfil its role as a first mover for responsibility. To this end, the club has systematically analysed the potential for improvement in its own sphere of influence, and taken action to protect and improve biodiversity at the hotspots thereby identified.



En route with electricity: the team arrived in an electric coach on Climate Action Match Day.



FIRST MOVER WITH FILTER SOLUTIONS FOR LAUNDRY MICROPLASTICS

Tiny particles – big problems. Microplastics are pollution. Toxic substances stick to their surfaces and are ingested by many organisms. These creatures cannot digest them, so they build up in the animal's body and damage its organs. Microplastics also build up in the food chain, ending up on our plates, or in our lungs, our brains, and so on and so forth.

VfL is tackling this problem both as a polluter and as part of the solution. Plastic is one of the components of the hybrid turf used at the club, and its sports clothing and other merchandise often include synthetics. This isn't by itself harmful, as long as the plastics do not suffer mechanical abrasion or come into contact with laundry detergent and water. If they do, however, small particles are shed in the wash. These particles end up in sewage and, if small enough, pass through treatment plants, and out into streams, rivers and the sea. To prevent this from happening, VfL is working with the Guppyfriend start-up to install custom-built filters on its artificial turf pitches. Project partners also include the Fraunhofer Institute and a testing laboratory from Fulda.

Similar solutions have also been developed for the washing machines that the club uses to launder jerseys and training apparel. Tumble dryers have also been fitted with commercially available filters. Routine cleaning and maintenance have also been organised for the filter systems.

VfL's CSR Manager Nico Briskorn explains how the partnership got started. "We first heard about Guppyfriend thanks to its consumer laundry bags: these are a simple way to prevent a load of laundry from shedding microfibrils in the home environment. We're now working together to pilot a new filter technology for artificial turf and other sources of microplastics."

VfL is also looking for innovative approaches to its merchandising: the new plastic-free drinking bottles, wash bags, laundry detergent, dishcloths and cleaning cloths, plus home filters, are all aimed at motivating fans to take part.

First biodiversity study in the Bundesliga

In the 2021/2022 season, biodiversity researcher Dr Frauke Fischer and her consulting company Agentur auf! conducted a scientific study for VfL Wolfsburg on the topic of football and biodiversity. The study, entitled 'Fair play – naturally!' and presented to the club in January 2022, investigates the impact of business operations at VfL on biodiversity. And vice versa: because biodiversity loss has a knock-on effect on the business activities of VfL in both its immediate environment and further afield. The analyses made in the study can now help to positively influence the mutual impacts for both sides – the club and biodiversity.

'Fair play – naturally!' also once again confirms VfL's pioneering role as a green club. This study – unique in the German Bundesliga – provides a comprehensive list of measures to adopt for football companies who are looking to conserve biodiversity.

Risks for football

Biodiversity loss typically has an indirect impact on VfL's sporting business: as peatlands dry up, forests are cleared and other natural habitats are destroyed, this drives carbon emissions while harming the effectiveness of natural carbon sinks. Accordingly, damage to natural ecosystems has an impact as a driver of climate change. For VfL, this can most clearly be seen in the worsening of weather conditions for its training and match operations. As extreme weather events become more common, this also starts to impact public safety measures for events.

Direct impacts on biodiversity at VfL

Business operations at VfL Wolfsburg affect the local natural environment most directly in terms of the sealing of natural landscapes to construct buildings, car parks, paths and sporting facilities. These areas are obviously no longer available for use by natural ecosystems. Negative impacts also result from the operation of match venues, especially in relation to facility maintenance, light pollution and noise emissions.

Other impacts result from the quantity and type of waste produced, as well as potential leaks of fuels and other fluids. Littering presents another problem, as

do cases of rubbish being swept out of catering waste bins by strong winds. Plastic packaging in particular represents a direct threat to animals, as they can swallow this rubbish or be strangled by it. These are supplemented by indirect threats like the production of microplastics, which can accumulate in the food chain.

As a carbon emitter, the football club also indirectly affects the overall biodiversity footprint, since shifts in climatic zones can have dramatic consequences for many species. The primary driver of climate change here is the club's own use of fossil fuels, as well as upstream and downstream activities such as fan mobility (Scope 3).

Recommendations and implementation

After discussing the measures proposed in the Agentur auf! study at length with the City of Wolfsburg and NABU, VfL then drew up an action plan. Measures already implemented include the filtering of microplastics (see Magazine), as well as providing protection and care for a breeding colony of starlings by installing nesting boxes at the AOK Stadium and elsewhere. A pollinator patch was also sown at the pro players training pitch, and VfL has also planted raised beds

with herbs and vegetables. The club is also planning to install a biodiversity roof on a new building, which will feature insect-friendly vegetation as well as a photovoltaic system. Other measures still under discussion were not yet final at the time of going to press. These include replanting native species of trees at car parks P1 and P2 in front of the Volkswagen Arena, and installing another green roof on the VfL Centre, again sown with insect-friendly vegetation.

And VfL Wolfsburg also plans to go further than just the list of measures from the biodiversity study: the club intends to develop these solutions further and to professionalise them. This will involve new cooperative ventures with other experts in the field.



Pollinator patch at the pro players training pitch.

MILE-STONES

- ✓ First study on biodiversity in the Bundesliga
- ✓ Solution for microplastics (turf, clothing, etc.)
- ✓ Carbon transparency in online shop

OUTLOOK

Evaluation of internal waste analysis, and introduction of end-to-end measures to reduce waste and to promote the use of the circular economy





Society

Together for solidarity

Putty, superglue and cement?

Good for sticking things together but not for a really strong bond – and certainly not between people. So, what's a better way? A voluntary decision to do something for a sustainable and peaceful world in the future.

At VfL Wolfsburg, we aim to show people how that's done. By encouraging children and young people to lead an active and self-determined life, for example. By standing up for women's football and social participation in Wolfsburg and beyond.

We play our part in helping to create an open, democratic society, and football as a community for diversity and solidarity. That makes us strong.

Here together. More than ever.



VfL Wolfsburg makes the most of this potential to do good in many social projects in the region, as well as at a national and international level. The club engages in promoting inclusion, stands up for diversity, and has publicly declared its commitment to antidiscrimination and antiracism. The educational approach followed by VfL's Wolfsburg School for Diversity plays a leading role here.

As a regional partner and networker, the football club is also involved in many other issues of social importance. And these highlight the way in which social responsibility can also benefit the benefactor. To ensure that its efforts are well-targeted over the long term on areas with the greatest need and opportunity to make a difference, VfL Wolfsburg has consolidated its community engagement work within the 'Tomorrow together' initiative. The 'Tomorrow together' programmes range from the promotion of voluntary activities to offering in-kind and financial donations to support various social institutions. In putting these programmes together, VfL Wolfsburg always takes a partner-based approach, and maintains working relationships with companies, clubs, educational establishments and local councils, both in the region and much further afield. In March 2022, for example, the club

An achievement in civilisation

Even though things can get pretty rough on the pitch, football in general brings us together. Time and again, within our teams and within the footballing community in general, we learn that the 'beautiful game' is only enjoyable if everyone gets a sporting chance.

This is why football can break down prejudices, create communities and act as a role model within our societies. As the most popular national sport it also has an enormous potential to make a difference, especially when this involves bringing society together. This is why football in particular needs to bring its charisma to bear and motivate people to live together on the basis of peaceful, democratic values.



started its own international initiative, entitled 'StrongHER', as part of a collaboration with 'Operation Get Active' and Chattanooga FC. StrongHER has the aim of making it easier for girls from socially disadvantaged families to gain access to football as a sport and to empowerment programmes (see Magazine, 'StrongHER').

For diversity – against discrimination and racism

Xenophobia and racism are symptoms of a way of life that focuses only on itself, avoids new encounters, and works to promote fear and angst. To properly treat these symptoms, it is therefore important to tackle the underlying

worldviews that cause them. This is not about assigning blame, either, but about introducing people to a different, more joyful approach to life, and showing them how they, too can take part in this diversity.

Unfortunately, as with many other areas of our social lives, discrimination is

Making football affordable

Ticket prices for VfL Wolfsburg games are some of the lowest in the Bundesliga. And the club wants to ensure that its tickets stay affordable for all fans in the future. This is one reason why VfL is systematically tackling online ticket tout practices, to ensure that this doesn't distort the pricing structure. The club also reserves a quota of free tickets for social institutions like the Wolfsburg Family Foundation, so as to ensure that the people that they support also get the chance to attend a match.



On Diversity Match Day, the commitment to an open and tolerant society is visible through the jersey.

also found in football. Time and again, however, professional football shows how ethnic origin, religion or skin colour is irrelevant for team performance, and that people with diverse backgrounds can achieve great things together. And this is a generally valid experience beyond sport itself. This insight is fundamental to how VfL Wolfsburg works and how it approaches its projects.

While high-visibility commitments to diversity – such as team captains wearing rainbow armbands – are a good start, VfL Wolfsburg wants to do more. The club takes an integrated approach to the topic of diversity, structuring its activities and projects according to the seven dimensions in the Diversity Charter (see also the 'Employees' section). The following examples show what this means for the club's community engagement.

Setting standards

In both its stadium house rules and its code of conduct for official fan clubs (OFCs), VfL Wolfsburg clearly underlines the importance of treating other people with respect. Corresponding standards are also enshrined in the code of conduct for VfL's Youth Training Centre.

Taking a stand

VfL's 'Together for diversity' campaign publicly communicates its support for an open and tolerant society, with its core message of promoting diversity and showing solidarity with others despite our many differences. VfL naturally takes a lead in promoting a welcoming culture, and clearly rejects all forms of racism and discrimination.

VfL Wolfsburg has declared its commitment to UEFA's 10-point plan on racism and signed the 'Against Discrimination in Football' declaration issued by the European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF) in 2011. On Diversity Match Day, 2 May 2022, VfL's Managing Director Michael Meeske signed the working definitions of antisemitism and antigypsyism drafted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), thereby once again highlighting the commitment shown by VfL Wolfsburg to diversity, humanity and openness, and against discrimination. These values are also firmly held by the club's workforce. This was made evident by the memory walk entitled 'Never again! A Day of Remembrance for German Football', for example, held on 27 January 2022 to coincide with the German National Day of Remembrance for the Victims of National Socialism.

The project 'Diversity in stadiums – access, protection and participation' is another way in which VfL is working to meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ fans. The project was launched by the non-profit



'TIME TO MAKE A STAND'

It's November 11th, 2021. The Wolfsburg Stadium is brightly lit up in rainbow colours, inside and out, and the German national men's team is playing Liechtenstein in the qualifying round. Guests include representatives of the DFB, Volkswagen AG, and the Lesbian and Gay Association in Germany (LSVD). Together, Alexandra Popp, VfL Wolfsburg first team player and national team captain, and Elke Heitmüller, Head of Diversity Management at Volkswagen, use the occasion to send a clear message about diversity and tolerance.

This had been preceded by a Volkswagen #WeDriveProud talk entitled: 'What do queer lifestyles in football and the workplace have in common?' Later, in the stadium, Popp and Heitmüller talk about their impressions from this panel discussion during the half-time break:

Elke Heitmüller: "Embracing diversity means allowing everybody to contribute their knowledge and experience – regardless of their age, cultural background, ethnicity, gender, skin colour or sexual orientation."

Alexandra Popp: "It's time to make a stand. Fans, players and employees – all of us share this same responsibility, and both on and off the pitch. Let's play our part in supporting diversity!"



Welcoming new arrivals and promoting integration

VfL has also taken a stand to encourage greater acceptance of refugees. The club is part of the nationwide 'forwards and fit' programme (formerly 'Welcome to football'), which is organised by the German Children and Youth Foundation with support provided by the DFL Foundation, and the German Federal Government's Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration. Together with its cooperation partners, VfL Wolfsburg offers a number of activities aimed at making it easier for young refugees to find their feet and make their home in the region. In organising the programme at regional level, VfL Wolfsburg works closely together with the Integration Officer and Sports Unit at the City of Wolfsburg, with the associations StadtSportBund Wolfsburg and Christlicher Verein Junger Menschen e.V., and with local football club TSV Wolfsburg 1950 e.V.

'Fan Cultures & Sport-Related Social Work Competence Group' and aims to run until 2024. By partnering with this project, VfL is clearly showing its commitment to gender diversity, as with its introduction of gender-neutral toilets during the 2022 Diversity Match Day, for example.

A good example of the club's engagement on behalf of the refugee community was the 'Kicking and Cooking' event organised in association with Volkswagen's Refugee Aid team in May 2022. With coaching provided by Roy Präger, 25 refugees from Moldova, Ukraine and Syria got the chance to play football at VfL's Kicker Factory, cook with Volkswagen's chefs in the Skylounge and then enjoy their creations together. Refugees who are keen footballers also have the chance to take part in the club's weekly midnight kickabouts, with capacity for about 25 people.

Setting the bar for diversity

The 'Wolfsburg School for Diversity' is aimed at all secondary schools in Wolfsburg from the ninth grade onwards, and brings a hands-on approach to topics like diversity and humanity into the classroom. During the first six months of the school year, selected classes complete various workshops on diversity topics like 'Conquering prejudice', 'Football is lame' or 'Youth and religion'. The workshops give pupils the opportunity to tackle a wide range of aspects relating to diversity. In the second half of the year, pupils then plan and complete actual projects. After successfully completing the programme, the school then receives the Wolfsburg School for Diversity quality mark.

In this programme, VfL Wolfsburg is supported by many educational and



DIVERSITY MATCH DAY

Wolfsburg, 22 April 2022. Another very special day that begins with a lively tournament in front of the Arena and ends with a 5-0 win for home side VfL Wolfsburg against FSV Mainz 05.

Responding to an invitation from the VfL Football School, the first event sees a number of very different teams demonstrating the huge diversity found in regional football on the VfL training pitch. These include:

- the VfL Tradition Team,
- the Walking Football Team,
- a team from VfL Amateur Athletics,
- the Refugee Team from TuS Ehra-Lessen,
- the Girl's Team from TSV Heiligendorf,
- the Women's Team from SV 06 Lehrte,
- Lebenshilfe Wolfsburg and
- the Inclusion Team from JSG Gifhorn Nord.

And the day's events continue with the grand opening of the gender-neutral toilets in areas 7, 25, 46 and 64. One extra-wide cubicle is installed here, to provide space for a support person to help people with disabilities – and regardless of their gender identity.

As VfL Managing Director Michael Meeske explains: "We are creating a discrimination-free environment here for intersex, non-binary or transgender individuals – and sending a clear signal to everyone that underlines the community engagement on the part of VfL Wolfsburg."

His words are echoed by other statements as the VfL players walk onto the field. The Volkswagen logo on their chests, the decal from tyre manufacturer Linglong on their sleeves and the wording 'Together for diversity' on their backs are all it up in rainbow colours.



A month before, some of the players had taken part in a photo shoot with VfL fans and Italian theatre director Eyal. These photos were used in a campaign before the match day as another awareness-raising strategy.

Eyal works with Jewish history and Jewish life in Wolfsburg, and has already staged several works in partnership with VfL, including the musical theatre piece 'Shot on goal', starring pupils from Neue Schule Wolfsburg, which premiered in Wolfsburg's city centre in 2021.

Eyal: "Today, sport is perhaps the biggest social platform that brings people together. And it's always a great opportunity to break down prejudices."

Other players also use the match day as an opportunity to make new friends:





STRONGHER – ON THE BALL FOR EQUALITY

What's VfL Wolfsburg up to in Chattanooga? Group parent company Volkswagen operates a car plant in this, the third-largest city in the US state of Tennessee. It's therefore not surprising that VfL, as a group subsidiary, has also found a receptive environment for its social and footballing engagement here. From talking to Volkswagen, the club knows about the big issues in the county. As one example, young women and girls in neighbouring communities don't always find it easy to get a good education and make the most of their career opportunities.

To make a change here, VfL Wolfsburg has picked Chattanooga as a pilot location for the club's own international 'StrongHER' project. StrongHER aims to counter discrimination against girls and women in the fields of sports and education, and to empower them to become more active in their day-to-day lives. The project was officially launched in March 2022 with Volkswagen's 'Operation Get Active' initiative as a project partner.

To mark the start of the project, VfL Wolfsburg sent a coach to Chattanooga, who will be running a ten-week football camp there twice a year. The camp is free to attend for up to 30 girls from socially disadvantaged communities. As well as this training camp, mobile football schools for girls are also planned in disadvantaged rural communities. The educational programme also includes the option of completing training offered by VfL Wolfsburg to become an accredited certified coach.

As another pillar of the StrongHER project, VfL Wolfsburg is also helping the Chattanooga FC women's team get back into professional football. As one initial success here, the team was established as a member of the North American Women's Premier Soccer League (WPSL) in May 2022 and has now completed their first full season. And progress in other StrongHER activities continues to proceed apace. In September, VfL signed a partnership agreement with the Chicago Red Stars NWSL team. At the same time, VfL is preparing to open a North American office that will handle the coordination of its social and sporting engagement work.

project partners, which include the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, Kickfair e.V., Meet a Jew, Fan Project Wolfsburg and Stadtjugendring Wolfsburg. The programme itself has proved very popular, with 13 schools taking part in 84 events during 2021 and 2022. VfL maintains contacts with more than 50 teachers through the Wolfsburg School for Diversity.

On 13 July 2022, the club and its partner schools brought the third project year to an end with a fun-filled Diversity Cup. A total of 160 participants, split into 20 teams from 8 project schools, took part in this football tournament, with the title going to a team from Fallersleben High School.

Feedback from pupils on diversity teaching

I think it's generally a really good idea that we've had a project to teach us more about diversity. I felt that we often had the chance to express our opinions and talk about different views in the workshop, which was something I really appreciated. (pupil, Fallersleben High School, 9th grade)

I like the fact that we approached the topic as a class and that no one was left out when it came to talking about diversity. (pupil, Vorsfelde Secondary School, 9th grade)

I thought the whole day was great. It was a total eye-opener for me and I learned about things that I'd never heard of before. (pupil, Fallersleben Lower Secondary School, 10th grade)

Participant feedback is a routine part of the Wolfsburg School for Diversity programme. At the end of the third project year, 96 percent of pupils gave the workshop content a positive rating.

VfL as an award-winning learning environment

Alongside the Wolfsburg School for Diversity, VfL uses its Green/White Classroom to offer a flexible learning environment for various secondary-school age groups from eighth grade onwards. VfL's approach here is unusual due to its educational model, which meets modern requirements for extracurricular learning and has received the corresponding Education

The year-long 'Wolfsburg School for Diversity' project concluded with a fantastic sporting event enjoyed by all: the Diversity Cup with participating educational partners.



for Sustainable Development (ESD) certification. The Green/White Classroom is funded by the DFL Foundation and advised by Lernort Stadion e.V., a national umbrella organisation in Germany for learning centres in football stadiums. In March 2022, the Green/White Classroom received the 'Place of Learning for Democracy' award from the Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture.

Inclusion – the lifeblood of football

For many people, the footballing experience, with its stadiums and services, is either not accessible or very hard to access. While this problem isn't exclusive to football, inclusion and participation are absolutely central to the sport. Accordingly, VfL Wolfsburg wants to make it possible for everyone to enjoy the stadium experience, and has taken an integrated approach with the help of partners to develop strategies and structures to do so.

Removing barriers and creating access

As a general principle, VfL Wolfsburg wants to give everyone, whatever their abilities, the chance to experience professional football live at the venue itself. As part of its work with inclusion counselling unit KickIn!, and based on the stadium appraisal conducted in 2020 (see 2020 SR), the club introduced many measures in the reporting period with the



Pupils at a project school enjoy a kickabout with educational partner kickfair.

aim of making further progress towards achieving this goal.

In block 26, VfL set up an area with 32 seats for deaf fans (which also include signing services). The club has also expanded its mobility services team in order to offer tailor-made solutions to people with limited mobility. Safety for visually impaired spectators has also been improved with new markings on steps. New benches dotted around the Volkswagen Arena also offer a place for older people to catch their breath while on their way in and out of the grounds. In the new, gender-neutral toilets, an extra-wide cubicle has also been installed for people with disabilities, which provides additional space for a support person (of any gender) to offer them assistance.



ARENA WEEK BENEFITS SOCIAL INCLUSION

At the start of the summer break, the pitch doesn't always have to be at its best for first-division football. So this is a good time to use it for other purposes. In May 2022, VfL therefore opened its stadium doors for a week, reaching over 1,000 participants from all over the region with its wide-ranging programme for young and old. The Kids' Football Festival was especially well-attended by around 250 children. Another highlight was a 'walking football' tournament. In this football variant, players aren't allowed to run, which makes it especially suitable for older people or people with limited mobility. Ten teams from all over Germany, sent in both by amateur athletics associations and professional clubs, competed in the tournament.

Following a survey of many European football clubs on the topic of accessibility, the non-governmental organisation Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE) published its 'TotalAccess' list in March 2022. The report mentions 12 clubs by name as examples of best practice here. One of those clubs is VfL Wolfsburg. The report cites the high quality of information supplied by the club before the game as well as the many seats and spaces it offers people with disabilities.

Corporate citizenship – a leading light for regional development

VfL Wolfsburg forms an integral part of the social life of its city and its region, and its actions have a major impact on its surroundings. Accordingly, VfL Wolfsburg sees it as its central duty to take responsibility as a good citizen. Above all, this means doing more than is merely demanded or legally required to foster the well-being of its fellow citizens. The club sees this as its mission and makes every effort to become a leading light for regional development.

Working to further enhance the Wolfsburg region forms a key part of the

club's overall strategy. The measures that VfL has selected to achieve this objective are co-managed by a centralised working group. This working group is composed of management staff and specialists working in the fields of events, sports communication, sales, fan service, brand management, digitalisation and CSR, as well as the executive support office. The group is advised in its work by external stakeholders, such as from the Identity Working Group, where there are also some overlaps in terms of responsibilities.

Overall, community engagement work focuses on local activities organised together with the city, civil-society actors and fans. Alongside this CSR work, the working group also organises friendlies and events for the many amateur football clubs in the region. With these activities, VfL is aiming to reverse the trend towards declining membership numbers and a lack of interest in voluntary work that is a real threat to amateur sports.

VfL conducts its own dialogues, participates in negotiations initiated by the city with a range of stakeholders and also works with partners to develop a wide range of projects. The club also uses these encounters to attract sponsorships for projects such as the Neighbourhood Kick it organises with VfL Wolfsburg e.V. The overall coordination is managed here by VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH. The Neighbourhood Kick project is funded by the federal 'Auf!leben' programme, which helps children and young people to cope with the post-pandemic situation in Germany.

Better football for kids and youngsters

That's the name of the nationwide, accredited programme from the VfL Football School. In the 2021/2022 season, over 7,300 children and young people took part in the school's programme. On 25 May 2022, VfL Wolfsburg also hosted its Kids' Coaching Congress here with 150 participants. The school also partners with ADVANCE.FOOTBALL, a provider of digital solutions based on sports science. This gives the school's coaches access to a digital study platform, so they can easily pursue their training strategies and the VfL philosophy wherever they happen to be.

The VfL Football School has adopted a two-pronged approach here, aiming to promote the individual sporting development and health of children

in the region while strengthening grassroots participation in organised football (this approach was explained in detail in the 2020 Sustainability Report). The VfL Wolfsburg executive therefore sees the VfL Football School as making an important contribution to the development of the entire football sector. For the 2022/2023 season, the team has therefore decided to share its experience with 200 partner clubs and other partners, and provide them with help in designing the substantive content of their competitions and training courses. Among other things, this has involved setting up a 'match day meet' in the VfL Football World, which is used

as a meeting point for VfL partner clubs on home match days. At the same time, VfL has also talked to the Lower Saxony Football Association, and agreed to provide detailed support for organising referee examinations and children's football days. In this context, the VfL Football School also assumes the role of a training centre for C-licence coaches and DFB children's coaches.



VfL fans welcome the new block for fans with hearing loss on the back straight.



DIVERSITY IS A PAGE-TURNER

Reading opens doors in our minds to learning about different ways of life. And it is also a way to learn more about the fight for equal rights and recognition for one's individual personality. Since late September 2021, a partnership has been running between the Wolfsburg City Library, VfL and schools participating in the Wolfsburg School for Diversity project. In this project, the partners are aiming to make it easier for young people to gain access to these exciting materials.

The shelves in four learning centres – small school libraries – have since been filling up with books and media about the overall topic of diversity. The first four topic areas offered by these partners are: 'Girls and women', 'Racism and discrimination', 'LGBTQ+' and 'Youth novels'.

At the start of the project, a reading was held at Heinrich Nordhoff Comprehensive School in Wolfsburg, where author Julius Thesing read from his book 'You Don't Look Gay' to a group of ninth-grade pupils, followed by a Q&A session with the pupils about his experiences. In March 2022, author and podcaster Alice Hasters attracted an even bigger public to her reading at Fallersleben Secondary School, attended by an audience of 60 young people. She read from her (German-language) book 'What white people don't want to hear about racism but still should know'. Her reading was followed by an animated discussion with many contributions made from those present about their personal experiences of racism.

Other events and readings on 'diversity' are also planned.



'TOGETHER FOR YOU' DAY

The 'Moving Together' Day became the 'Together for You' Day in 2022. In renaming this event, VfL Wolfsburg again underlines its readiness to support community projects under its own steam – and without expecting anything in return. After being postponed in 2021 as a result of the pandemic, this year's Day was organised for 13 September 2022, with members of the VfL Wolfsburg women's and men's teams setting out on a total of ten 'missions', as described below.

The club has a long tradition of working with the 'House on Amber Lake', a recreational centre for kids with cancer and their parents, where VfL organises a camp for children in remission every year. This year, the players are helping to convert an old railway carriage into a training room. They sand away the rust from the walls of the carriage, lay electrical cabling and install new training equipment, financed by cup deposit donations from the Volkswagen Arena.

Things are also hands-on for the team at Wolfsburg Hospital, where volunteers are helping to serve meals, move beds and check compliance with pandemic health regulations at the main entrance.

In the workshops run by Lebenshilfe Gifhorn for people with disabilities, some VfL players are helping to construct a number of items of furniture from pallets, while others are tidying up the grounds, and cleaning and repairing the patio.



HILD-FRIENDLY FOOTBALL IN THE ARENA AND AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

During its Arena Week in May 2022, VfL holds a tournament using the child-friendly 'Funino' match format for the very first time at the Volkswagen Arena. Partners are primary schools from Gifhorn, Helmstedt and Wolfsburg. More than 300 pupils from grades 1 to 4 participate in the event, organised into roughly 50 teams and accompanied by their teachers, parents and grandparents. As a special treat, mascot 'Wölfi' helps out at the prize-giving ceremony.

With this event, VfL Wolfsburg aims to get kids keen on football and encourage them to follow a healthy lifestyle with plenty of sport. In the same spirit, the club also hosted its first primary school tournament for all-girl teams on Elsterweg in autumn 2022.

Alongside these tournaments, VfL also organises weekly school workshops with coaches from its football school at a total of 20 schools in Gifhorn, Helmstedt and Wolfsburg. During the 2021/2022 school year, 35 of these workshops attended by around 560 children took place as part of the project sponsored by long-standing partner Audi BKK. To ensure the project can continue to flourish, the club appointed a dedicated Workshop Coordinator in September 2022. As a result, over 45 workshops for around 720 children can now be offered for the new 2022/2023 school year.



Familienstiftung Wolfsburg
Wir schenken Chancen für Kinder und Eltern

WHILE STOCKS LAST

Applications for other programmes from VfL Wolfsburg for disadvantaged families in the region can be made to the Wolfsburg Family Foundation. The following are on offer for the 2022/2023 season:

- A place at each of the holiday camps in Wolfsburg
- 120 tickets for the stadium tour
- Various items of VfL Wolfsburg merchandise
- Ten kids to walk out with the teams at VfL Wolfsburg home games
- 20 tickets for each VfL Wolfsburg Bundesliga match



TRAIN LIKE THE PROS IN THE 'TOGETHER FOR YOU' CAMP

Late February – and 30 kids are streaming onto a big training pitch at the Volkswagen Arena. As a joint activity with the WölfiClub and the Wolfsburg Family Foundation, VfL had invited them to attend the 'Together for You' Camp and get coached by a professional trainer. Alongside four coaching sessions, the young footballers also receive a VfL Football School jersey set from Nike, as well as refreshments on the day.

With the 'Together for You' Camp, VfL Wolfsburg has joined forces with the Wolfsburg Family Foundation to show kids from the region currently living in difficult personal circumstances that the club is there for them.



Children from Westhagen and Detmerode show off their newly acquired ball skills. The Kick is open to everyone on local football grounds around Wolfsburg. The weekly event is organised by VfL coach Mohsen Makoo.

WOLFSBURG NEIGHBOURHOOD KICK

Everyone gets a turn. Week after week, the Neighbourhood Kick moves from one part of Wolfsburg to another. All that's needed is the local 5-a-side pitch. And there's no shortage of kids wanting a go. The Neighbourhood Kick is organised by VfL coach Mohsen Makoo.

round 25 kids and young people take part in each Kick. In the future, there are plans to have pro players take part – as role models up close and personal.

The Neighbourhood Kick is organised jointly with VfL Wolfsburg e.V. and the City of Wolfsburg, with VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH as project coordinator.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KRZYSZTOF NOWAK FOUNDATION



As a midfielder with the number 10 on his chest, Krzysztof Nowak was a legend in his own lifetime. Shortly after, he was diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND) and died 17 years ago as a result of muscle paralysis caused by MND. To support other people with MND, an as-yet incurable illness, a foundation was formed with the help of VfL in May 2002, while his disease was still in its early stages, and was named in his honour. The Krzysztof Nowak Foundation provides financial help, such as for purchasing voice synthesisers, special beds and wheelchairs. The Foundation also helps out with the conversions to living facilities needed for people living with MND. Since its formation, the Foundation has approved more than 100 applications with a total volume of EUR 670,000.



HELP AND SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

On 24 February 2022, the Russian army invaded Ukraine. This event deeply affected everyone at VfL. Looking for a way to respond to this terrible event, company management quickly decided to send a message of solidarity. For the home game weekend of 5 and 6 March 2022, VfL decided to project the peace symbol onto the centre spots of the pitches at the Volkswagen Arena and AOK Stadium. The wording #STOPWAR was also displayed on the corner flags, player jerseys, perimeter ad space and video wall. Until the end of the 2021/2022 season, the Arena was also lit up every evening in yellow and blue, the colours of Ukraine.

Simultaneously, VfL started an aid campaign: before the men's team's home game against Union Berlin on 5 March, in-kind donations were collected from employees and fans. These were then matched with clothing from the teams, and articles from the Fan Shop and the Football School, and handed over to the German Red Cross. All in all, this amounted to two entire truckloads.

On 20 March, the home game day against Bayer 04 Leverkusen, the club also started a cup deposit campaign for Ukraine. Total donations on the first day alone amounted to EUR 1,000, which was duly wired to the German Red Cross in Wolfsburg. The campaign continued until the end of the season, bringing in a total of EUR 5,250.

Players also made generous donations and the final sum was matched by company management. This money was then split into two equal payments made to the UN Refugee Agency and Stiftung Round Table Deutschland, which organises aid convoys into Ukraine, with some even starting from Wolfsburg.

Around 1,900 Ukrainian refugees were living in Wolfsburg by the end of 2022. VfL has organised many programmes to help these refugees, such as invitations to join the 'Kicking and Cooking' inclusion programme, get involved with the Neighbourhood Kick or attend language courses in the Green/White Classroom.

MILE-STONES

- ✓ Green/White Classroom receives 'Place of Learning for Democracy' award from the Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture
- ✓ Installation of gender-neutral toilets as part of the Diversity Match Day
- ✓ Launch of VfL's international StrongHER project

OUTLOOK

Continued expansion of the weekly football school workshops





Fans und Mitglieder

Together for emotion

37.0 °C ... 38.5 °C ... 39.9 °C ... 41.0 °C ...

These temperature records are not caused by climate change but the buzz from the crowds in the stadium. The fans come because they can show their passion here, and cheer on and celebrate their teams together.

But just as with body temperature, there also has to be an upper limit on emotions, too: violence and harassment have absolutely no place in sporting venues and their surroundings. Part of what makes for a great footballing experience is that everyone – old or young, people of colour, queer, with a visual impairment, wearing a hearing aid or using a wheelchair – should feel safe at our grounds.

Football is diversity. Both on and off the pitch. This is what we stand for – together with our partners on the terraces, in the fan clubs, in the city, the region and the international football community.

Here together. More than ever.

Familiar, passionate – and above all, safe

Football Made in Wolfsburg creates a community and makes connections. Time and again, the strong feeling of belonging to their club and to the people that cheer them on brings thousands of spectators into the VfL Wolfsburg stadiums. And everyone can share in this feeling, as long as they follow a few basic rules. At the same time, the football experience must be safe for everyone involved at all times. This is why VfL makes the case for mutual



For the 2022/2023 season, a new and revised training model was introduced for steward services.



understanding, promoting dialogue between the various members of the footballing family, and actively involving both its fans and its members. This kind of frank discussion is always preferable to any sanctions, since VfL greatly values an honest dialogue with its fans. Ensuring fans participate and keeping these discussions active is important, as the best solution for everyone involved can only be achieved together.

Responsibility means staying on the safe side

VfL is responsible for the games played in the Volkswagen Arena and the AOK Stadium. Accordingly, VfL must ensure the comprehensive safety and security of these venues, and protect all visitors from accidents, violence and health risks. From preventing activities that could endanger

safety in the stadiums and surrounding areas to infection control and the desire of the various groups of visitors to express themselves as freely as possible – a wide range of aspects have to be harmonised here.

Ensuring optimum health protection for all visitors during games attended by the public during the pandemic – as in the 2020/2021 season – was one of the biggest challenges the club had yet faced. VfL Wolfsburg lost no time in preparing a general hygiene and organisational plan for all of its departments, which fulfilled all of the requirements for safety and infection control while accommodating fan expectations as far as possible. In implementing this plan, the club maintained close and regular communications with local authorities and safety institutions.

Honest dialogue and preventive strategies generally enjoy a high status at VfL and are preferable to sanctions levied on individual fans or even entire groups of fans. VfL therefore always aims to communicate directly, and in this respect can make use of the well-established communications structures in place between the club, fans and key partner organisations such as the city and the safety authorities. Promoting these structures forms a key part of overall club governance.

For the 2022/2023 season, a new and revised training model was also introduced in relation to steward services, which meets and exceeds the requirements set by the DFB guidelines. Among other things, this model includes annual refresher courses and supplementary training on a wide range of safety and service topics. The topic of diversity is also addressed.

Networks create safety

The Local Committee for Safety in Sport (ÖASS) set up by the City of Wolfsburg is responsible for coordinating safety activities in relation to Wolfsburg as a Bundesliga city. At its match venues, however, VfL is itself responsible for ensuring high safety standards are met, with its integrated safety model. This model is regularly assessed by internal and external audits. In March 2022, DEKRA joined forces with the DFB to review the safety measures specifically put in place for match days. Once again, VfL was awarded a very good rating here.

Within the context of the DFL Stadium Alliance, VfL closely coordinates its activities before each match day with all of the individuals and institutions relevant for safety. One of the key goals here is to reduce the resulting workload for police



Fan liaison officers form the communicative link between fans and the club.



as well as potential match-day conflicts. VfL works with stakeholders to create a risk forecast that the police can use to optimise operations planning.

Preventive fan dialogue

In its dialogue with the fan community, VfL aims to prevent violent clashes, racist incidents and criminal activities without unnecessarily restricting fans in terms of their freedom. The general framework for this prevention work is formed by a collaboration agreement with the City of Wolfsburg and the Wolfsburg-Helmstedt Police Inspectorate.

If incidents still occur despite these open communication structures and preventive measures, sanctions will nonetheless be applied. In selecting appropriate sanctions, however, the network partners again prefer a dialogue-based approach, and operate a Stadium Ban Commission together with the Fan Project and fan liaison officers. This Commission meets to discuss any necessary sanctions while offering the fans involved their legal right to a hearing. A regular 'Fan Meeting' is held every month, providing a safe space where stakeholders can meet to discuss developments in the fan community, and to hold match debriefings and briefings on upcoming fixtures.



DIVERSITY FAN CLUB FORMED

On 21 July 2022, the Diversity Fan Club was officially launched in front of the Fan House at the Volkswagen Arena. Guests on this occasion included VfL Managing Director Michael Meeske, a representative of the Federal Disabled Fans Working Community, and members of Volkswagen's 'We drive proud' and 'LGBTIQ+ and friends' network. The Fan Club had 36 members at the start of September, with this number growing to 41 by the first General Assembly on 8 September 2022. The Articles of Association adopted at this meeting enshrined the objectives of highlighting the dimensions of diversity within the fan community itself and the general public, creating touchpoints in the club, and breaking down prejudice and barriers by allowing a range of perspectives to flourish.

Karen Reifenstein is one of its members: "For our Fan Club, diversity means not just inviting everybody but making sure everyone takes part. Everyone is truly welcome at our club – whatever their ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, ability or disability."

Diversity and equal opportunities

Football can be an important force for good in society and not merely in the region, but also at national and international level. However, to fully achieve this significant potential (see the 'Society' section), it is important to strengthen identification with VfL Wolfsburg and its values, while also involving the fans. In the reporting period, this was once again achieved by VfL, thanks to its strong fan dialogue, and specific services for fans and their families.

VfL's cooperation with the city's Fan Project also has an important role to

play here, since it helps the club raise awareness of the topic among its fans.

To better understand the needs of fans and ensure everyone enjoys an optimum footballing experience, VfL maintains regular and transparent communication with its fans. This helps the club to continuously improve its relationship with this important stakeholder group.

The Club Fan Council consists of members of the official fan clubs (OFCs), the Ultras Wolfsburg and the Supporters Wolfsburg. Fans with physical and mental disabilities also have representatives in the Club Fan Council. All representatives, in their role as official contact persons



Alongside the family block on the Wölfi Terrace, there is now another family block situated near to the North Terrace.

OUR LATEST FAMILY AREA – A GREAT FOOTBALLING EXPERIENCE FOR KIDS AND PARENTS

For the 2022/2023 season, VfL established another family area, which covers the previous blocks 13 and 15. This new area is located directly next to the North Terrace, where the Wolfsburg Ultras ensure the perfect atmosphere for every home game, offering parents and their children an unforgettable experience.

Both the design and the location of this new area was the result of surveys conducted by VfL, and decided on jointly by representatives of fans and families. As with our previous family areas, family representatives were also able to participate in work on expanding and improving the new area themselves. In the future, this area will also be marked out as a non-smoking area for local fans. During the half-time break, families can warm up in Building 09. The toilets have also been fitted out with child-safe sanitary equipment and a windbreak has also been installed.

The new area has already proved very popular: since its official opening, season ticket occupancy has stood at around 80 percent.



VfL KICKER FACTORY

What's a Kicker Factory? A place where footballers are made on an industrial scale?

Come on over to the Wolfsburg Allerpark and find out! In January 2022, VfL Wolfsburg opened a brand-new facility here with four indoor courts plus an outdoor court. Alongside the VfL Football School, the Academy for young players and many other CSR and kids' projects, the Factory gives up-and-coming footballers young and old a wind- and weather-proof place for their weekly kickabout.

Partner clubs also get discounts on Factory fees, which means that their teams can make use of the indoor courts in the event of bad weather. With its Kicker Factory, VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH is also focusing on the further expansion and promotion of youth and amateur sport, as well as social projects in the region.

and representatives of fan community interests, engage in regular dialogue with VfL Wolfsburg. Independently of the respective individuals involved, this ensures that close collaboration is always possible between the various fan groups. The Club Fan Council meets on a quarterly basis, although it may also be convened at short notice on special occasions. At the end of the reporting period, VfL Wolfsburg had more than 120 OFCs with around 10,500 members. Three of these OFCs specifically target women's football.

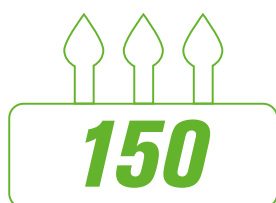
Everything a fan could wish for – the World of VfL Experience for young and old alike

From child-safe sanitary installations in the Arena to all-weather match and training facilities in Allerpark: VfL continues to improve the package it offers fans and amateur footballers.

WölfiClub in figures

4,000
WölfiCLUB

WölfiClub members



kids' birthdays

200

appearances by
the Wölfi mascot
per season



children at
the annual
VfL Kids' Day



People at the lantern parade

MILE- STONES

- ✓ Creation of a new family area
- ✓ Repeat certification from DEKRA and the DFB for the measures developed for stadium safety and security on match days.
- ✓ Official opening of the VfL Kicker Factory

OUTLOOK

Looking forward to the first home game of 2023, 20 to 22 January: setting up a 'Stadium Contact Point' as part of the project 'Diversity in stadiums – access, protection and participation' in partnership with the 'Fan Cultures & Sport-Related Social Work Competence Group' (KoFaS)

CSR programme






Targeted sustainability management

The CSR programme provides an overview of VfL Wolfsburg's multifaceted engagement, and provides details of the respective targets and progress made in their implementation. The programme serves as an internal control mechanism for measures while providing transparent reporting about the club's achievements.






STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT

Target	Planned completion date	Implementation stage	Status
Strategic organisational development	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the 'OKR' agile target management method to improve understanding of company targets continues on a departmental basis Formation of a Diversity Steering Committee to support and guide measures to promote diversity throughout the organisation Implementation of an integrated child protection model in November 2021 Plans include training and workshops for employees, regular monitoring and audits, as well as comprehensive annual reporting to the Group Management Board within the scope of the Group-wide policy on the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act 	
Expansion and establishment of sustainability assessment for partner organisations and suppliers	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parent Group's policies on the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act were implemented at the end of October 2022 Assessment of new catering service providers according to sustainability criteria 	
Transition of 50 percent of merchandising products to products with sustainability certification by 2025	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The jersey for the 2022/2023 season consists of at least 75 percent recycled material Range comprising around 30 items of clothing and other products certified according to GOTS, Fairtrade or GRS, or which have been awarded the official 'Green Button' quality mark 	
Boosting the club's popularity rating	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular surveying of opinion on the club's appeal in the region Development of measures by the Identity Working Group 	
Continuation of regular stakeholder dialogue at various levels	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining offers of dialogue for sustainable industry development Dialogue formats were organised online due to the coronavirus pandemic 	



EMPLOYEES

Target	Planned completion date	Implementation stage	Status
Provision of systematic coaching to support employees and management staff	End of 2022/2023 season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are plans to create a coaching role in Human Resources and to draw up a coaching plan 	
Promotion of sports and health-related programmes for employees	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resumption of sports programmes following break due to pandemic (e.g. Yoga and Employee Kick) 	
Promotion of youth work	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering academic and personal skills for junior teams by providing support staff and mental performance coaches Creation of a nutritional guide and cookbook for the Academy within the scope of the 'Skills for Life' programme Six players took advantage of the offer of training or a dual-study course at Volkswagen Group Services or VfL Wolfsburg 	
Expansion of awareness-raising measures for employees – especially in relation to climate action and diversity	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kick-off event on 18 November 2020 at the start of the 'Race to Zero' Discussion and presentation of topics using the Culture Cafe dialogue format Completion of topic-specific workshops and training by diversity managers and the Environment Team for all employees, including management staff 	
Strengthening of relationship with the workforce and modern company culture	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slight rise in staff turnover: 6.43 percent (2020 figure: 5.3 percent) Slight decline in proportion of women: 35.2 percent (2020 figure: 36 percent) Improvement in employee satisfaction according to the Mood Barometer: 77.7 percent (2020 figure: 75.2 percent) Regular dialogue events, open to everyone, using Culture Cafe format Planned female empowerment by the Diversity Steering Committee 	



ENVIRONMENT

Target	Planned completion date	Implementation stage	Status
Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	End of 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 16.71 percent in comparison to the 2017/2018 season year Reduction of all emissions (scopes 1, 2 and 3) by 19.28 percent in comparison to the 2017/2018 season year 	
Promotion of sustainable mobility in the workforce, in the sport and for fans	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of a mobility survey in autumn 2021 Discussions about expanding the train pass Booking of an additional special train on selected match days Installation of a repair workshop for bicycles in August 2022 Bike leasing programme for all employees Step-by-step expansion of charging infrastructure for EVs Electrification of vehicle pool 	
Conservation of natural resources	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of LED lighting to two additional training pitches Installation of a PV system from autumn 2022 (covering 10 percent of demand) Completion of waste analysis by the end of the 2022/2023 season and implementation of waste separation measures Introduction of reusable cups made from recycled material for hot beverages in Catering for the 2021/2022 season Use of attached-cap cola bottles instead of reusable cups in Catering 	
Minimisation of microplastics	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with Guppyfriend start-up to reduce microplastics Filter solution for hybrid turf pitches in the Volkswagen Arena in place since August 2022 Microplastics filter solution for washing machines has been developed and tested – installation planned for the end of 2022 Microplastics filters were installed in all air dryers in August 2022 Products to avoid microplastics planned for Fan Shop 	
Conservation of biodiversity	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of 'Fair play – naturally!' study on the impact of biodiversity in January 2022 Continual implementation of the package of measures developed to protect biodiversity Installation of nesting boxes for starlings to protect a breeding colony in autumn 2022 Sowing of pollinator patches on brownfield land Installation of a biodiversity roof for the 2022/2023 season Plans to replant native tree species 	

SOCIETY

Target	Planned completion date	Implementation stage	Status
Completion of measures in relation to diversity and antidiscrimination	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of the club's own international StrongHER initiative in March 2022 Diversity Match Day against discrimination Special 'Diversity' jersey in 2021 and 2022 Development of the Wolfsburg School for Diversity project 	
Expansion and strengthening of partnership networks	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of partnerships with schools to enlarge the school workout programme, appointment of a coordinator in September 2022 Establishment of the VfL 'match day meet' in the VfL Football World as a meeting point for VfL partner clubs 	
Promotion of corporate volunteering among employees	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of an annual 'Together for You' Day based on corporate volunteering in a wide range of Wolfsburg organisations (last held in September 2022) 	
Expansion of activities at the VfL Football School	End of 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International: organisation of training camps in China and the USA, as well as pilot projects in Japan and South Korea Regional: organisation of a tournament on Diversity Match Day, hosting of a Kids' Trainer Congress and cooperation with groups within the Lower Saxony Football Association Expansion of a needs-based, target group-focused programme 	

FANS AND MEMBERS

Target	Planned completion date	Implementation stage	Status
Development of an integrated approach to creating diversity in all areas	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continual implementation of measures based on the 2020 stadium assessment on accessibility, in cooperation with inclusion counselling unit KickIn! Expansion of VfL's mobility service Installation of gender-neutral toilets Setting up a 'Stadium Contact Point' for the first home match day in 2023 	
Improvement of quality of services for fans	Continuous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation of the 'Service Quality Working Group' in early 2022 with the aim of improving service quality Planned implementation of new tools for measuring fan satisfaction Continual development of digital service provision with the 'VfL CONNECT' app 	

GRI Content Index

This report was prepared in accordance with the GRI standards, using the option 'in reference to GRI'. The standard was published by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The GRI Content Index provides an overview of the general and specific details to be contained in the report.

General Disclosures		
GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021*		
The organization and its reporting practices	Reference	Commentary and additional information
2-1 Organizational details	Page 4	VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH, Hauptsitz: Wolfsburg
2-2 Entities included in the organization's sustainability reporting		VfL Wolfsburg-Fußball GmbH
2-3 Reporting period, frequency and contact point	Page 4, page 91	
2-4 Restatements of information	Page 14	
2-5 External assurance		This report has not been audited by external third parties.
Activities and workers	Reference	Commentary and additional information
2-6 Activities, value chain and other business relationships	Page 4, page 25, page 18	For competitive reasons, revenue, overall capitalisation and other financial key figures are not reported on. There were no significant changes in the organisation or the supply chain.
2-7 Employees	Page 34, page 35	
2-8 Workers who are not employees	Page 34	
Governance	Reference	Commentary and additional information
2-9 Governance structure and composition	Page 16	
Strategy, policies and practices	Reference	Commentary and additional information
2-22 Statement on sustainable development strategy	Page 6	
2-23 Policy commitments	Page 19, page 22	
2-24 Embedding policy commitments	Page 21	
2-25 Processes to remediate negative impacts	Page 22, page 25	
2-27 Compliance with laws and regulations	Page 21	
2-28 Membership associations	Page 27	
stakeholder engagement	Reference	Commentary and additional information
2-29 Approach to stakeholder engagement	Page 28, page 81	
2-30 Collective bargaining agreements	Page 35	
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021*	Reference	Commentary and additional information
3-1 Process to determine material topics	Page 30	
3-2 List of material topics	Page 30	
Specific Standard Information		
GRI 205: Anti-corruption 2016	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 19	Scope: within the organisation
205-2 Communication and training about anti-corruption policies and procedures	Page 19	

GRI 206: Anti-competitive Behavior	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 19	Scope: within the organisation
206-1 Legal actions for anti-competitive behavior, anti-trust, and monopoly practices	Page 19	
GRI 302: Energy 2016	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 48, page 52, page 52, page 89	Scope: within the organisation
302-1 Energy consumption within the organization	Page 52	VfL reports energy consumption using the kilowatt hour (kWh) unit. A kilowatt hour is equivalent to 3.6 megajoules (MJ).
GRI 303: Water and Effluents 2018	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 48, page 50, page 89	Scope: within the organisation
303-5 Water consumption	Page 51	
GRI 305: Emissions 2016	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 48, page 51, page 52, page 89	Scope: within and outside of the organisation
305-1 Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions	Page 53	
305-2 Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG	Page 53	
305-3 Other indirect (Scope 3) GHG emissions	Page 53	
GRI 306: Waste 2020	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 50, page 89	Scope: within and outside of the organisation
306-3 Waste generated	Page 51	
GRI 307: Environmental Compliance 2016	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 48	Scope: within the organisation
307-1 Non-Compliance with environmental laws and regulations	Page 21	
GRI 401: Employment 2016	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 34, page 88	Scope: within the organisation
401-1 New employee hires and employee turnover	Page 37	
GRI 402: Labor/Management Relations 2016	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 34	Scope: within the organisation
402-1 Minimum notice periods regarding operational changes	Page 35	If significant changes are planned within the company, worker representatives are involved in the process at an early stage. A minimum period of advance notification has not been formally agreed in this context to date.
GRI 403: Occupational Health and Safety 2018	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 44, page 88	Scope: within the organisation
403-9 Work-related injuries	Page 44	
GRI 404: Training and Education 2016	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 37, page 39, page 88	Scope: within the organisation
404-2 Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programs	Page 37, page 38, page 39	
GRI 406: Non-discrimination 2016	Reference	Commentary and additional information
GRI 3-3 Management of material topics	Page 22, page 41, page 88	Scope: within the organisation
406-1 Incidents of discrimination and corrective actions taken	Page 22, page 41	No cases of discrimination occurred during the reporting period.

TCFD index

Implementation of the recommendations made by the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure (TCFD)

TCFD INDEX		
TCFD core elements	Implementation at VfL Wolfsburg	Additional information
Governance		
Disclosure of company governance in relation to climate-related risks and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Company management bears responsibility for sustainability and climate protection as well as climate-related risks.A dedicated Environment Team develops strategies and targets, and monitors progress towards them. This team consists of the Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, the Climate Protection Officer, Facility Management and the Energy Officer.The CSR Department works together with the Environment Team to steer the measures and their implementation, and reports to Member of the Management Board Michael Meeske.	<div>Page 16</div> <div>Page 48</div>
Strategy		
Disclosure of current and potential future impacts from climate-related risks and opportunities on business operations, as well as the company's strategic and financial planning insofar as this information is of material importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A worsening of climatic conditions and the resulting extreme weather events will endanger the organisation and completion of match day and training operations.As drivers for long-term business success, climate change mitigation and carbon reduction form an elementary part of company strategy.Comprehensive programme for improving energy efficiency and reducing energy consumption, as well as the use of renewable energy.	<div>Page 58</div> <div>Page 52</div>
Risk management		
Disclose how the company identifies, assesses and manages climate-related risks	An Environment Compliance Management System (ECMS) helps to identify risks and opportunities. An annual report is submitted to company management. The system currently helps to identify and manage environmental risks and opportunities, and therefore works to effectively reduce environmental impacts along the club's value chain. However, climate-related risks are not specifically assessed by company management as of this writing.	<div>Page 48</div>
Key indicators and targets		
Disclose the key indicators and targets with which relevant climate-related risks and opportunities are assessed and managed, insofar as this information is of material importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Comprehensive and complete carbon footprint calculated for building stock and business operations according to GHG Protocol.CO2e 2021/2022 season: 10,618.815 t (scopes 1, 2 and 3)Targets: climate neutrality and net zero emissions by 2025	<div>Page 53</div>

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More information on VfL Wolfsburg's CSR
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www.vfl-wolfsburg.de/der-vfl/soziales/

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