



VDT Verband der
Deutschen Tapetenindustrie e.V.

FOR A GREEN FUTURE: THE VDT'S POSITION ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE WALLPAPER INDUSTRY



Sustainability has dominated the German wallpaper industry for many years and has become a key part of its evolution.

Individual manufacturers run a variety of projects centering around sustainability factors like the environment, social issues, and the economy. Innovation is driven by investments in new processes and products.

There are even working groups at association level for sustainability projects. The VDT regularly monitors the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (UN) for their relevance to the industry. Representa-

tives of the wallpaper industry, the supplier industry, and the trade sector have worked together to develop an action plan for six of the UN goals which was passed at the VDT's Annual General Meeting. Our members have undertaken to proactively work on attaining these goals.

Over the following pages, we showcase a few activities from our VDT members under these six UN goals – you can find out more by visiting the manufacturer websites listed at the end of these highlights.



A. UN Goal No. 4:

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- The VDT's members offer young people vocational training opportunities, with new apprenticeships constantly proposed as technology progresses. Local initiatives from chambers of industry and commerce are actively supported. Education strategies involve close cooperation with schools on site, holding 'future days,' and participating in initiatives to promote vocational training and continuing education.
- Employees can benefit from continuing development in internal and external seminars for their own individual advancement.
- Business customers and end consumers are trained specifically in using wallpaper. Furthermore, experienced speakers impart merchandise knowledge and sales techniques. A large number of employees in painting, interior design, and both wholesale and retail are offered opportunities to upskill through these trades.



- The wallpaper industry and the supplier firms directly upstream employ around 5,000 people. It is estimated that a further 15,000 work directly with wallpaper in the wholesale and retail sectors.
- More than 1,000 young people are in apprenticeships, on dual work and study courses, or undertaking further training.



Find out more here:

- ▶ *Rasch – Women and their careers*
- ▶ *Vitrulan – Sustainability*
- ▶ *Erfurt – Tips*
- ▶ *Erismann – Apprenticeships*
- ▶ *Inspiring women to pursue a career in STEM*
- ▶ *Bauhaus – Wallpapering courses for consumers*



B. UN Goal No. 6:

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- VDT members actively run projects to minimize water consumption and water contamination.
- Water consumption per kg in the production of wallpapers and liner papers is continually being reduced.
- Wastewater treatment ensures that potential contaminants are removed. There is close

cooperation with local sewage treatment plants.

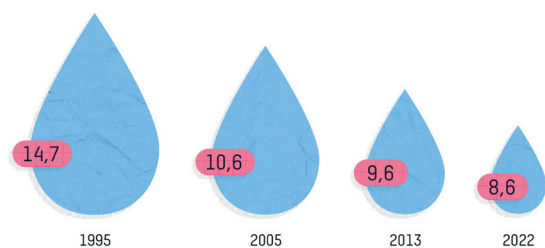
- Wastewater is reused wherever technically possible.
- Innovative methods are used in existing processes, as are a selection of new methods (e.g. digital printing), to reduce water consumption.

Find out more here:

The German paper industry has cut the water consumption specific to the production of paper by 40% in recent years.

- ▶ [Paper industry – Publications](#)
- ▶ [Rasch – Sustainability](#)
- ▶ [Glatfelter – Sustainability](#)
- ▶ [Marburg – Sustainability](#)

The paper industry (2023):



Survey of water and leftover material in the German pulp and paper industry in 2022



C. UN Goal No. 11:

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

As a construction product, wall coverings are relevant to city dwelling in many ways.

- The industry ensures that wall coverings meet all regulations, like those governing fire prevention, emissions, and environmental impact.
- VDT manufacturers are continually working on developing wallpaper for 'healthier living' which surpasses all legal requirements, e.g. in terms of minimizing interior emissions.
- A large number of jointly developed German industrial standards govern the quality of wall coverings (lightfastness, washability,...), making them long-lasting and resource-friendly. Their longevity means they are used for particularly high-wear surfaces,

such as in hotels. In addition to this, non-woven wallpapers are particularly easy to work with.

- Decorative wall coverings are effective design options in interior spaces. They play a major role in helping to personalize living areas for everyone at an affordable price.
- Wallpaper has been proven to uplift moods through its colors and patterns, contributing to the well-being of dwellers in private living spaces as well as shared accommodation, such as hospitals, hotels, and kindergartens.
- As a century-old interior design product with a dedicated museum in the German city of Kassel, wallpaper is symbolic of the cultural history of human habitat.

Find out more here:

Product ranges for healthier living:

- ▶ *Leco-Werke – Technical specifications*
- ▶ *Rasch – Greenline*
- ▶ *Erfurt – Product info*



The retail sector guides its customers in their purchases:

- ▶ *Bauhaus – Healthy living – Breathe freely!*
- ▶ *The MEGA Group – MEGAgrün Healthier Living*
- ▶ *OBI – Sustainability*

Wallpaper as a cultural asset:

- ▶ *Hessen Kassel Heritage – The German Wallpaper Museum*
- ▶ *The German Wallpaper Museum Association*

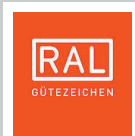
D. UN Goal No. 12:

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

- VDT members continually optimize their energy and resource efficiency in product design and production. Reducing waste rates and the treatment of wastewater and waste are permanent goals in wallpaper production.
- Recycled materials are used in wallpaper production wherever possible to make products recyclable in the medium term.
- Instead of leftover material in production simply being disposed, it is recycled if possible. The increase in this recycling rate is continually monitored and improved.
- All manufacturers use FSC products, in other words pulp from sustainable forestry.
- Wallpaper is particularly durable: it can last on walls for decades and does not need to be painted over constantly. This product-immanent sustainability is used in public interiors on surfaces that are particularly high-wear, such as in hotels.
- Information on the product and its effects is made available to users (professionals and private consumers), via, for example, the Gütegemeinschaft Tapete association, which has been providing transparent and comprehensive information on the properties of wallpaper for over 30 years with its RAL quality mark. It focuses on the environment and consumers.
- Manufacturers also work together with the industry to develop German industrial standards (DIN) and EPDs as information for consumers and all other stakeholders.

Find out more here:

- ▶ *Erfurt – Sustainability Report 2022*
- ▶ *HP – Sustainability Report 2023*
- ▶ *Globus – Sustainability*
- ▶ *RAL wallpaper quality seal info*
- ▶ *Henkel – Sustainability*
- ▶ *German industrial standard DIN EN 15102*
- ▶ *International EPDs – Info*
- ▶ *FSC – Website*
- ▶ *Komar – Sustainability*



E. UN Goal No. 13:

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

- As members of the IGI, the Global Wallcoverings Association, VDT members use the IGI's Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) to monitor and cut the environmental impact of their activities. One of the aims is to continuously reduce CO2 emissions.



- All manufacturers work on reducing energy consumption, use renewable energies and also use heat pumps.

- Many wallpaper manufacturers use the waste heat from the production process to heat/cool buildings or even make it available to the communes, e.g. to heat the local swimming pool.

- The wallpaper manufacturers use pulp/paper from sustainable forestry (FSC).

- The percentage of wall coverings made of recycled material (pulp and plastic fibers) is ever increasing.

Find out more here:

- ▶ *EPDs – Info*
- ▶ *FSC – Website*
- ▶ *Hohenberger – Sustainability*
- ▶ *Erfurt – Sustainability Report*
- ▶ *Erismann – Environmental Statement*
- ▶ *HP – Climate Action*
- ▶ *Marburg – Sustainability*

CO2 Reduction

We cut our CO2 emissions per wallpaper roll produced at our Bramsche site by 15 percent between 2013 and 2020.

This is equivalent to 506 grams of CO2/wallpaper roll.



CO2 reduction at Rasch



The manufacturer Erismann has created a solar park with an output of 3,265,000 kWh



Solar panels on the Leco production building



To mark its 180th anniversary, the Marburger Tapetenfabrik planted 180 trees

F. UN Goal No. 17:

Partnerships for the goals

- Manufacturers and the supplier industry work together on a technical level to develop joint products that are both innovative and resource-friendly. This takes place both bilaterally and in cross-association working groups. The VDT's Technical Committee carries out joint development projects, e.g. for nonwoven material quality or to cut harmful emissions.
- The entire value-creation chain (upstream products, the wallpaper industry, and retail) collaborate in sustainability workshops to draw up joint concepts – as presented in this overview, for example.

- The concepts and solutions drawn up that fall under the fields of technology and sustainability are discussed with authorities, institutions, standardization bodies and other contacts in the public sector and further developed.
- Networking at international level is via the IGI industry association: German manufacturers monitor and optimize the environmental impact of their products using the IGI's EPD program. Like the cooperation at national level, technological cooperation is via the IGI both between manufacturers and also with suppliers worldwide.

Find out more here:

- Information on the global cooperation within the IGI industry association:

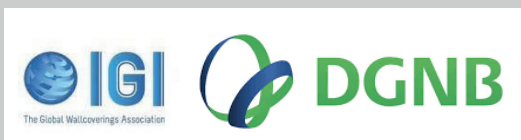
- ▶ [IGI – Wallcoverings](#)
- ▶ [IBU EPD – Publication](#)
- ▶ [IGI – Green Walls](#)

- Many wallpapers are used in buildings that have been certified by the DGNB, the German Sustainable Building Council, e.g.

- ▶ [DGNB – Product database](#)

- Market Partners:

- ▶ [Association of painters – Website](#)
- ▶ [ZVR – Info](#)



The 2023 VDT Conference at Henkel in Düsseldorf

An overview of our member sustainability programs

Explore the websites of our members to find out more about their commitment, from individual projects to all-encompassing sustainability strategies.

Find out more here:



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