

# MANUAL

# GUIDELINE

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY



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KORNBUSCH & STARTING GMBH & CO. KG

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# OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE

Kornbusch & Starting GmbH & Co. KG (K&S), as part of the Bierbaum Unternehmensgruppe (BUG), is committed to its social responsibility, regardless of whether it operates in Germany, Europe or other parts of the world. Driven by a responsible awareness of the social, ecological and economic organization of the entire textile value chain, Kornbusch & Starting GmbH & Co. KG meets the challenges of an increasingly networked and global economy.

Kornbusch & Starting GmbH & Co. KG is committed to complying with the “Code of Conduct” recommended by the Textile Association in the organization of its corresponding economic and social activities.



With this manual, K&S defines regulations, processes and responsibilities for the implementation and handling of the risks identified by us in this guideline, which relate in particular to the following points of labor rights and labor rights conditions:

- Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining
- Forced labor
- Child labor and protection of young workers
- Discrimination in employment and occupation
- Working hours
- Wages
- Employment relationships
- Health and safety in the workplace
- Changing rooms, washrooms / toilets
- Sexual harassment in the workplace
- Humane treatment
- Protection of vulnerable groups
- Sexual harassment

# SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This manual applies to all areas of the company within the scope of the quality and environmental management system (IMS Integrated Management System) as well as to the entire Bierbaum Group.



# SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL RE- SPONSIBILITY

The main organizational units at BUG are the following divisions, organizational units::

## **Superordinate service and administrative tasks**

Such as IT, internal financial and organizational services as part of the management of the Group's entire organization.

## **Sales companies**

The sales companies are the first point of contact with retailers and, in some cases, end customers; they are essentially responsible for traditional marketing and sales tasks. The sales companies are responsible for the products and generally have them produced in BUG's own production facilities:

- Kornbusch & Starting
- Irisette
- Bierbaum Wohnen
- Sito International

## **Production company**

The production company manufactures the products; here, for example, the main quality-determining finishing processes such as bleaching, dyeing and printing as well as packaging activities are carried out at the production facility in Borken.

The tasks and roles of the organizational units within the entire BUG can be seen in the process landscape diagram.

# PROCEDURE DE- SCRIPTION SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## **Organization and tasks in the area of labor rights and working conditions**

All BUG employees are responsible for the highest possible implementation of the provisions on labor rights and labor rights conditions. Accordingly, all employees and members of external companies must observe the relevant BUG requirements as binding legal principles and comply with or obtain the corresponding instructions from their superiors. In addition, all employees have the important task of reporting deviations and violations to the Ethics Officer.

In this context, BUG has commissioned the General Works Council to perform the function of the Ethics Officer. In particular, the following tasks must be taken into account:

- Observe, check and monitor the implementation of labor rights and conditions
- Supporting the management in the implementation of labor rights and conditions
- Work towards ensuring that all employees behave in accordance with the requirements of labor rights and labor rights conditions
- Cooperate with management, department heads and other authorized persons in the implementation of labor rights and conditions
- Acting as a point of contact for reporting case-by-case deviations and violations
- Recording of incidents on a case-by-case basis, preparation of analyses, conclusions





and definition of measures in cooperation with GL

- Participation in operational measures, e.g. planning and design of workplaces, working environment and working conditions

All employees can also contact their supervisors and the management, who will deal with any such incidents in cooperation with the Ethics Officer, among others. In addition, BUG has set up a grievance box that can also be used to report incidents.

### **Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining**

The BUG respects the right of employees and employers to form organizations without prior approval and at their own choice, which aim to promote and protect the interests of employees or employers, to join these organizations and to freely elect their representatives. Companies shall respect the right of employees and employers to bargain collectively on pay and working conditions. Employees shall not be disadvantaged with regard to their employment because of their membership in employee organizations. A works council has been introduced at BUG. The works council meets approximately once a month for a sector committee with IG Metall. In addition, a delegates' meeting of IG Metall takes place every three months in Bocholt, in which the company is represented by two people. Written invitations to the works council meetings are sent out with reference to the agenda, and the minutes of the last works council meeting are enclosed. Minutes are taken at every works council meeting.

**Forced labor**

At BUG, economic activity based on forced or compulsory labor, debt bondage or serfdom is prohibited and excluded.

**Child labor and protection of young workers**

Child labor is prohibited and excluded at BUG. As part of the recruitment process for each employee, it is mandatory to present valid identification documents that enable clear age verification. This is also documented in the personnel file.

BUG only employs young people from the age of 16 if the nature or conditions of the work they perform do not endanger the life, health or morals of the young people concerned and they receive appropriate, relevant instruction or vocational training in the relevant sector.

**Discrimination in employment and occupation**

BUG prohibits any form of discrimination, exclusion or preference based on ethnic origin, skin color, gender, religion, political opinion, national origin or social background that has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation. All employees, supervisors and management keep an eye out for violations and misconduct and immediately take the necessary measures in cooperation with the Ethics Officer. The principle of equal pay for male and female employees for work of equal value also applies.

**Working hours**

With regard to working hours, the collective agreement and statutory regulations are binding. Overtime is remunerated at least in accordance with the respective statutory or collectively agreed regulations. The same applies to the right to rest breaks on each working day, vacation and the extent of days off. Relevant public holidays are observed. Working hours are recorded systematically and transparently.



### **Wages**

With regard to working hours, the collective bargaining and statutory regulations are binding. State or collectively agreed minimum wages are not undercut. Wages are not withheld and are paid regularly in a form suitable for the employee. Deductions from wages (tax and social security contributions, etc.) are only made and reported within the legal or collectively agreed framework. Regular checks are carried out by the tax authorities and social security institutions.

### **Employment relationships**

The rules of national labor law must be complied with. Employees are provided with comprehensible information on the main working conditions, including working hours, remuneration and payment and settlement modalities. BUG protects the right of employees to terminate their employment relationship in compliance with the relevant notice period. In doing so, BUG observes the statutory and collective bargaining requirements. The systematic regulation of personnel management promotes the need for further training and the professional development of employees.

### **Health and safety in the workplace**

BUG has taken appropriate measures to ensure health and safety in the workplace, taking into account national requirements, in order to prevent accidents at work and protect the health of its employees within the scope of its activities. Applicable local regulations on occupational health and safety, health and safety in the workplace, building safety and fire protection are complied with in order to minimize the risk of accidents and occupational illnesses. The relevant processes, responsibilities and regulations are set out in a procedural instruction.

At the same time, appropriately trained and responsible persons are appointed and tasked with systematically monitoring and optimizing this. BUG has also implemented an

occupational safety committee, which also systematically supports and optimizes these tasks.

### **Changing rooms, washrooms / toilets**

BUG provides the employees in the respective companies / organizational units with social rooms (toilet rooms, washrooms, changing rooms and break rooms or break areas) in accordance with the workplace guidelines. The provision of the above-mentioned social rooms is mandatory for BUG and must be taken into account when planning a workplace.

The proper condition of the social rooms is checked systematically and regularly, including with regard to:

- adequate ventilation
- drinking water supply
- structural condition and equipment of the rooms
- perfect functionality of the sanitary facilities
- heating
- Cleanliness and hygiene

The occupational safety specialist is responsible for regular inspections in collaboration with occupational health care. The inspections are usually carried out as part of the ASA meetings. If optimization measures are required, this is recorded in the ASA minutes.

### **Humane treatment**

BUG treats its employees with dignity and respect. Any form of undignified treatment, abuse, harassment and intimidation as well as unlawful penalties against employees will not be tolerated in any way. All employees, supervisors and management pay attention to violations and take appropriate measures immediately, including in cooperation with the



Ethics Officer.

Disciplinary measures are set out in writing in an understandable form for the employee in accordance with the requirements of national labor law.

### **Protection of vulnerable groups**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, BUG undertakes to pay particular attention to the “... protection of vulnerable persons such as young employees, young mothers and pregnant women as well as people with disabilities ...” in the areas of health and safety in the workplace. Against this backdrop, BUG is committed to taking special care of vulnerable groups of people.

Vulnerable groups of people are more vulnerable (=vulnerable) groups of people due to their physical and/or mental constitution (e.g. disability, mental disorder, pregnancy, old age) and/or due to their particular social situation.

The Bierbaum Group has set itself the goal of specifically identifying vulnerable groups of people, defining measures relating to these vulnerable groups, implementing them consistently and reviewing their effectiveness.

The regular identification, recording and evaluation, derivation, implementation and monitoring of measures is the task of the management in cooperation with the superior employees and authorized persons.

The following table contains an overview of the main identified stakeholder groups and shows a list of the measures taken depending on the groups of people affected:

Vulnerable group of people	Measures
People with cognitive deficits and/or physical disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers within the framework of occupational health management</li> <li>• Targeted adaptation of possible barriers (acoustic, hygienic, spatial, visual, social, etc.)</li> <li>• Applicant and employee deployment management</li> <li>• Targeted deployment taking vulnerability into account (systematic regulations for induction, etc.)</li> <li>• Targeted consideration of the physical and psychological working environment as part of the risk assessment</li> <li>• Targeted and systematic induction</li> </ul>



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Children and adolescents unable to make decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prohibition of child labor</li><li>• Consideration of legal requirements for the protection of minors</li><li>• Regulations on the specific employment of young people</li><li>• Special requirements for induction and instruction (taking into account the specific risk situation)</li><li>• Use within the framework of contract design (training contracts that comply with specifications, etc.)</li></ul>
Pregnant women and single mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adapted working time models</li><li>• Maternity protection measures (adapting the job to less physically demanding tasks)</li><li>• Home office offers</li><li>• Strict adherence to legal protective measures</li></ul>
Employees with a migration background (little knowledge of German)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offering language courses</li><li>• Use of simple language within the document management system</li><li>• Ethics officer, e.g. also assistance in finding accommodation and/or dealing with authorities</li></ul>

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Elderly people

- Adaptation of the team structure
- Further training measures for older employees and partial retirement models
- Adaptation of the workplace, e.g. better lighting or high-contrast screens
- Competence management, specific matching of skills and area of application (with targeted consideration of risk analyses, etc.)

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People at risk of poverty

- Remuneration according to tariff

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People with a mentally unstable constitution

- Collegial support, promotion of the corporate culture “we look out for each other and help each other”
  - Installation of an ethics officer with a correspondingly introduced system for corrective and improvement measures
  - Systematic and regular risk assessments and workplace analyses (psychological assessment and exposure to the working environment and stress, etc.)
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In general, all employees at BUG are responsible for protecting vulnerable stakeholder groups, and this responsibility manifests itself in particular in the promotion of the corporate culture:

**“We look out for each other and help each other”**

All employees are responsible for the implementation of the aforementioned requirements within the framework of operational cooperation. In particular, the department heads, the authorized persons (FASI, company medical care, ethics officer, ASA meeting, etc.) as well as the plant management and management board are to be addressed in the monitoring and implementation of guidelines and measures.

**Sexual harassment**

Any form of sexual harassment is prohibited at BUG. All employees, supervisors and the management pay attention to violations and misconduct, which must be reported immediately to the Ethics Officer, who initiates further measures in consultation and together with the management.

**Documentation**

The Ethics Officer is responsible for documenting deviations, incidents and misconduct in the context of the aforementioned aspects of labor rights and labor rights conditions in cooperation with the Management Board.

# PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

With around 350 employees, all essential quality-determining finishing processes such as bleaching, dyeing and printing are carried out in Germany.

For the Bierbaum Unternehmensgruppe, as a 4th generation family business and parent company of the sales companies Bierbaum Wohnen, Irisette, Sito International and Kornbusch & Starting, sustainability is not just a buzzword, but a corporate principle - with responsibility towards previous and future generations.

Bierbaum is committed to this philosophy through three fundamental principles:

- social sustainability
- ecological sustainability and
- economic sustainability

All materials, chemicals and auxiliary substances used are constantly checked by independent authorities and institutes (Hohenstein Textile Testing Institute, Bureau Veritas) for human-ecological safety (Oeko-Tex Standard 100) and environmental compatibility. We use the following modules to ensure compliance with sustainable manufacturing conditions:



- Chemicals management
- Environmental performance
- Environmental management
- Workplace safety
- Social responsibility
- Quality management

**Modules****Measures**

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Chemicals management

- Introduction of a suitable chemicals management system
  - Adherence to the requirements of a list of hazardous substances (MRSL)
  - Regular training and further education regarding the handling of chemicals used
  - Transparent communication and control of the chemicals used and their risks
  - Monitoring the use of chemicals, the procurement of chemicals and auxiliary materials as well as storage and application
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Environmental performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with the prescribed limit values (waste water, emissions, etc.)</li> <li>• Use of state-of-the-art production technologies</li> <li>• Efficient use of resources</li> <li>• Reduction of the CO2 footprint</li> </ul>
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Environmental management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of existing environmental management systems for the targeted coordination and systematic implementation of all environmental protection measures</li> <li>• Setting environmental targets</li> <li>• Regular preparation of environmental reports</li> </ul>
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Social responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring social working conditions in line with the UN human rights conventions and ILO core labor standards</li> <li>• Implementation of management systems for the continuous improvement of working conditions</li> <li>• Compliance with strict requirements, including working hours, wages, etc.</li> <li>• Involvement of local stakeholders</li> </ul>
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#### Quality management

- Implementierung eines QM-Systems, z.B. gemäß ISO 9001 oder anderen betrieblichen Ansätzen
- Ensuring traceability, accountability and appropriate documentation in relation to the flow of manufactured products
- Further management aspects such as risk management, corporate governance including anti-corruption and corporate codes of conduct

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#### Workplace safety

- Implementation of recognized safety standards (e.g. in accordance with OHSAS 18001)
  - Measures to ensure safety in the workplace and personal protective equipment
  - Ensuring the safety of buildings and production facilities (e.g. through structural measures, escape plans, separation of production areas, etc.)
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As a member of the Business Social Compliance Initiative ([www.bsci-intl.org](http://www.bsci-intl.org)), Bierbaum also exerts influence on the international procurement markets for yarns and raw fabrics. This primarily involves enforcing the conventions of the ILO, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN conventions on the rights of children and against discrimination against women (see also Code of Conduct).

The Bierbaum Group has been actively participating in the BEPI campaign since 2017. BEPI campaign (amfori BEPI is an initiative for retailers, importers and private labels that want to improve environmental performance in their global supply chains). The initiative supports buying companies in implementing the BEPI system as an essential part of their business practice and in developing their supply chains while improving their environmental performance.

With the “Grüner Knopf” meta-label, Bierbaum assumes responsibility for its corporate actions, particularly with its Bierbaum Wohnen and Irisette sales lines, and monitors processes for the production, manufacture and procurement of labeled products in its supply chains as part of its corporate due diligence obligations.

Through the use of organic cotton and the continuous certification of all production stages in accordance with the “Global Organic Textile Standard”, Bierbaum supports efforts to improve ecological cultivation conditions ([www.global-standard.org](http://www.global-standard.org)).

In addition to the aforementioned high standards that the Bierbaum Group and its subsidiaries meet, the TWD production facility in Borcken is also certified in accordance with international quality and energy management standards (see ISO 9001 and 50001).



### **ISO 9001 certification - quality management system**

With quality management, or QM for short, companies plan, organize and continuously monitor the quality of work processes, products and services over the long term. Quality management ensures the consistently high-quality output performance of a company and thus also sustainable economic success. In the long term, there can be no ecological and social sustainability without sustainable economic success. Not least for this reason, this system is suitable for establishing a basic framework of regulations for systematic tasks and processes in the company, which can also be used by other tasks in sustainability management.

Forward-looking and prudent strategies are necessary to guide a company safely through the future. As an organization in particular, it is important to be aware of your own position within the market or society. Every company operates in certain economic and legal contexts that have a significant influence on the design of its management system. The company management regularly analyses this context in order to identify the resulting requirements/risks (ecological and social) for the organization and its management system and to respond to them in a targeted manner. It thus defines the starting point for the strategic orientation of the company.

In addition to acquisition, one of the key tasks for the sales companies during the bidding phase is not to prepare any bids or place any orders that cannot be carried out in terms of their feasibility, particularly with regard to compliance with ecological and economic requirements. To this end, further production planning along the process chain is prepared in cooperation with the scheduling department by systematically creating the corresponding orders with all their production requirements.

All further steps are systematically and reliably regulated in your processes via the quality management of the production facilities. To this end, TWD, for example, has introduced a certified quality management system.

**Certification according to ISO 50001 - Energy management system**

TWD's energy management is essentially about setting up a system of regulations to implement the tasks and processes for optimizing and reducing the use of energy in production processes. Against the backdrop of current climate discussions, responsible and optimized use of energy resources is a very important aspect of sustainability.







Further information on the topic of sustainability at  
Kornbusch & Starting GmbH & Co. KG can be found on our website..

**[www.kornbusch.com/sustainability](http://www.kornbusch.com/sustainability)**