

# nhs\* group

## ESG Report 2023

Report by the project team

“Sustainability of the nhs\* group”

September 2023



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# Project team



The background of the left side of the slide is a close-up photograph of vibrant green leaves on a tree branch, with sunlight filtering through them.

„We want to  
make nhs\*  
sustainable.“



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# Project timeline



# “So, what’s the point of this?”

## Importance of ESG Compliance

ESG or **E**nvironment, **S**ocial and **G**overnance are three essential elements in companies today. What was initially considered additional compliance is now seen as an essential part of corporate strategy. This shows that companies become increasingly aware of the importance of ESG issues and potential risks associated with not managing them as a core part of business. Good E&S management and governance improves business performance. Integrating these value-adding practices provides strong synergies for innovation, competitiveness and business growth.

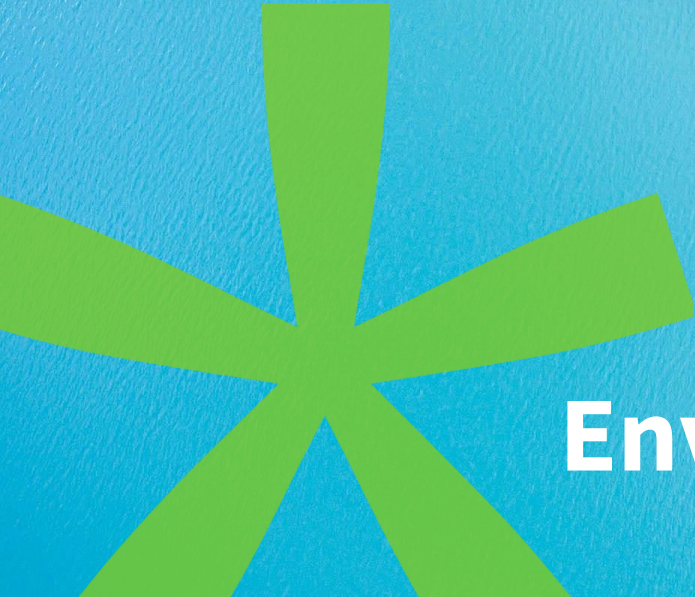
## The project timeline until today:

- \* The project manager Ralph Stadler first put together a project team that represented nhs\* as balanced as possible.
- \* At the first meeting at the end of 2022, we jointly selected a total of nine goals that we would like to pursue in the project. Each goal has one or two responsible persons.
- \* The results of this project are reported openly and transparently and should in no way be misunderstood as a mere marketing tool.
- \* In regular meetings (every six to eight weeks), we discussed the status of the individual goals together and agreed on next steps.
- \* Then, in mid-July 2023, we developed an interim status, which is reflected in the following section, “Goals and Status Quo.”

# Goals & Status Quo







**Environment**



## Goal #1: Digitalization and a paperless office

- \* We pursue the goal of processing only digital documents in financial accounting and payroll.
- \* Our reporting to clients is to be fully digitalized.
- \* We no longer want to send invoices to our clients by mail.
- \* We want to digitalize our internal processes in such a way that all employees in the areas of financial accounting, payroll accounting and tax consulting can carry out their activities from their home offices. This will also enable us to find potential employees outside the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area.
- \* In the area of auditing, the goal is paperless auditing, but this should essentially take place at the client's premises. We value the proximity to the client in the annual audit process and are convinced that the audit is much more effective at the client's premises.
- \* In the area of administration, it is important to us that there is always an employee present in the office, regardless of the degree of digitalization of activities.

## Status Quo:

- \* We have achieved the certificate "DATEV Digital Law Firm" for the third time in a row in 2023.
- \* We regularly monitor the corresponding digitalization rates.
- \* In the area of financial accounting, there are still a few clients who do not make their documents available via Datev Unternehmen Online (DUO). We are currently in the process of uploading these documents to DUO ourselves.
- \* For our international clients we have found a way to connect our cloud solution Dracoon with DUO to overcome the language barrier in the German DUO interface.
- \* In the area of payroll, we have significantly increased the rate of digital transaction data since the beginning of 2023 to date. This rate is to be increased further.
- \* Reports on the preparation of annual financial statements and audit reports have now been fully digitally signed and delivered to our clients since 2023. However, report critique is still done on paper. We are currently working on moving this process over to tablet solutions to enable paperless work here as well.
- \* The creation of outgoing invoices is still done entirely on paper. Although some invoices are sent by mail, the invoices are been printed out and scanned beforehand.
- \* We have achieved the goal of enabling colleagues to work from home in the areas of financial accounting, payroll accounting and tax consulting. Some colleagues work entirely from home.

## Goal #2: Office vs. work from home, travel

- \* Our goal is to achieve a balance between working from home and being present in the office.
- \* A good community and working atmosphere in the nhs\* group is very important to us, and we believe that this cannot be achieved exclusively virtually.
- \* Also, with regard to travel, we are convinced that it is beneficial to hold many meetings virtually. Nevertheless, we consider personal contact with clients in real life to be extremely important.
- \* Over the course of the next year, we want to create a movement profile of our colleagues' commuting and travel activities. In addition, the means of transport used is to be depicted.

## Status Quo:

- \* We have maintained full flexibility to work from home for most of our employees even after the end of the pandemic. Only for trainees, new employees in the training phase, employees in administration and in auditing, we prefer a certain presence in the office or at our clients' premises.
- \* At the beginning of the year, we sent out a data collection file to all colleagues to record ratio of working from home vs. working in the office and the used means of transport. In this way, we want to survey the current situation at the beginning of 2024 and track its development in future years.
- \* We hold team meetings on MS Teams twice a week and place a high value on meeting attendance.
- \* Our office is very much designed for the use of public transport or bicycle. Parking facilities for cars are almost non-existent.
- \* In 2023, we have established a company bicycle program, which is subsidized by the nhs\* group with 25€ per month and employee.

## Goal #3: Energy and resource efficiency of IT

- \* We have defined the goal that selecting our IT provider should be guided not only by services and cost efficiency, but also by its energy efficiency.

## Status Quo:

- \* When we founded the nhs\* group, we decided to rely fully on the services of DATEV.
- \* At the same time, we also decided on our current DATEV solution partner.
- \* In the course of this sustainability project, we have determined that our goal depends in particular on the data center used and its handling of the hardware as well as the energy consumption.
- \* In addition, we have found that all DATEV solution partners ultimately work with DATEV's data center, so that a possible change of solution partner has no impact on our target achievement.
- \* Therefore, we want to follow DATEV's sustainability efforts in the future, but we have to accept that we cannot exert any significant influence here.
- \* DATEV's Sustainability Report 2021 is available at the following link:  
<https://www.datev.de/web/de/ueber-datev/das-unternehmen/nachhaltigkeit-und-csr/nachhaltigkeit2021/>



**Social**



## Goal #4: Equal Pay

- \* As the nhs\*group, we are convinced that compensation depends on performance and experience and is completely independent of other characteristics such as gender, origin, religion, etc.
- \* In the next sustainability report, the Equal Pay Ambassador will report on their activities, the results of their work and the response of the company's management.

## Status Quo:

- \* In the course of the project, we tried to develop key figures showing equal pay between genders. However, we found that the population of our colleagues was too small to develop figures that did not point to individual persons.
- \* Subsequently, we have now discussed in the project to appoint an Equal Pay Ambassador in the future, who compares the salaries of colleagues with regard to qualification, experience and the respective working time model and points out possible critical cases to the partners and reports on how to deal with them.

## Goal #5: Social commitment of the nhs\* group and its employees

- \* For 2023, we set ourselves the goal of combining our annual summer event with the participation in social projects.
- \* Overall, we want to support the social commitment of our colleagues and - together as the nhs\* group - commit permanently to social causes.
- \* We do not want to get involved solely by providing financial resources, but with active support on the ground.

## Status Quo:

- \* Our summer event on August 17, 2023 was held with participation in two projects:
  - \* Project Jumpers in Düsseldorf-Hassels  
<https://www.jumpers.de/stadtteilprojekt-duesseldorf/>
  - \* Johanniter House in Erkrath  
<https://www.johanniter.de/johanniter-unfall-hilfe/einrichtung/johanniter-haus-erkrath-1335/>
- \* After this first contact with the Jumpers in Düsseldorf-Hassels, we are currently thinking about how we can develop further joint activities as well as active and lasting support.

## Goal #6: Employee satisfaction

- \* We want to maintain and also expand a high level of employee satisfaction. We are convinced that a good working atmosphere is an important building block for the success of our company.
- \* We believe that our colleagues' own initiative is important for the nhs\* group and also for employee satisfaction.
- \* Well-trained employees are able to cope with the daily challenges of our work routine without being overwhelmed and frustrated.
- \* In order to promote sustainable employee satisfaction, we will conduct an annual employee satisfaction survey from now on and report on its results.

## Status Quo:

- \* The project team developed an employee questionnaire that was completed by a total of 15 colleagues in the spring of 2023.
- \* The results were evaluated. The focus was on the five best and the six worst results.
- \* These results should be addressed within the next nine months until the next survey.
- \* All results were processed in September 2023 and will successively be presented at our team meetings.
- \* We have decided that in the future we will introduce a digital whiteboard for improvement suggestions that can be viewed by all.



# Governance





## Goal #7: Select our clients and comply with ethical principles

- \* We identify ourselves with our clients and our work. It is important to us that our clients meet certain requirements or more specifically do not correspond to our defined negative catalogue.
- \* At the beginning of 2023, the Institute of Public Auditors in Germany ([IDW](#)) published a code of values for auditors in Germany ([IDW Code of Values 2023](#)). The code describes the values that auditors stand for and the principles that guide them in their work. Trust and sustainability are among the core values. The Code is intended to be applied by professionals and to give the public a better understanding of the services provided by auditors.

## Status Quo:

- \* We started developing a negative catalogue during this project but have not completed it at this time.
- \* We have also discussed that we want to put our ethical principles in writing. Here, too, we are still in the early stages. The basis for this will be the IDW Code of Values for Auditors.

## Goal #8: Continuing education and developing proficiencies

- \* The proficiencies available in the nhs\* group must be geared to the requirements of our clients. In this context, competence development must be closely linked to the company strategy.
- \* Not only for the goal of employee satisfaction applies the following: Well-trained employees are able to cope with the daily challenges of our work routine without being overwhelmed and frustrated.
- \* The proficiencies available in the company must also be known and retrievable by all colleagues.
- \* The nhs\* group should continue to develop; to do this, all colleagues must also continue to develop.

## Status Quo:

- \* In the first step, the partners and group leaders of the nhs\* group defined the necessary proficiencies that are important for the provision of our services to clients. On the one hand, these are technical proficiencies in the areas of accounting, payroll and taxes. On the other hand, they also include operational and IT-related proficiencies.
- \* In the next step, as a pilot project for the area of taxes, these proficiencies were - as far as possible - allocated to employees who cover these proficiencies or who should and want to cover them in the future.
- \* In the next step, measures are then to be agreed with the employees that are intended to further develop the proficiencies, keep them up to date or deepen them. These agreements are to be made as part of the annual employee appraisal.
- \* In addition, after six months, a status meeting is to be held within the respective areas at which group leaders and colleagues discuss the implementation status.
- \* It was agreed that the area of wages should be the next to follow the area of taxes here.

## Goal #9: Client satisfaction

- \* Of course, the satisfaction of our clients is important to us.
- \* Our goal, however, is to determine the degree of satisfaction and, above all, dissatisfaction in order to identify potential for improvement.

## Status Quo:

- \* We first identified the nhs\* group's top 25 clients based on 2022 annual revenue.
- \* An evaluation form was developed.
- \* The first step was to start discussing the current situation with individual clients with employees, group leaders and partners to be able to draw conclusions about the client's likely level of satisfaction.
- \* At the current time, this has taken place with three clients. Further meetings are already scheduled.
- \* It was very interesting to see how the different colleagues evaluated the situation of the client.
- \* The exchange between colleagues also led to a better understanding of the existing client relationship within the team.
- \* Surveys of client satisfaction are not currently planned but will be considered in future years.

# Company





# nhs\* group at a glance



**2016**  
**Establishment**

office in  
Düsseldorf



**35+** Employees

nhs\* group


nhs GmbH  
WPG

nhs Consulting  
GmbH

second office  
in Cologne



Clients from more than  
**15 countries**  
with focus on Japan

nhs\* | Member of **winglobally** 

Network of partners in over 35 countries in Europe, Asia and North & South America

# International Network



The nhs\* group is the German member of winglobally.

Network partners in over 35 countries in Europe, Asia and North America.

We collaborate with our network partners to provide our clients with fast and competent service when they have international accounting needs.

Further information at: <http://winglobally.ch>



# Closer to clients. Deeper in the topic.

The nhs\* group's consultancy portfolio is designed to deliver individual strategies that reflect the client's specific needs.