

ANCHORING A CROSSCUTTING ISSUE

Sustainability is a pillar of Interroll's corporate strategy and, for this reason, is jointly promoted the Board of Directors and Group Management. But where does the company stand in meeting this challenge, which affects not only our environment but every one of us? How does Interroll ensure that the appropriate measures have the greatest possible impact? We spoke to Heinz Hösli, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), who is responsible for sustainability reporting at Group Management level.



Heinz Hösli, Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

What does sustainability mean for Interroll?

Heinz Hösli: For us, sustainability is a holistic commitment. It goes beyond the well-known climate protection and environmental issues to include human rights, working conditions and fighting corruption. It encompasses everything we understand under the terms “environmental, social and governance,” or ESG for short. For Interroll, sustainability is not solely about individual measures; it's a crosscutting issue that needs to be deeply anchored in our business activities, processes, products and strategies. It affects all employees and all their work.

Is this just a quasi-moral commitment?

No. This topic is not only about ethical responsibility. ESG reporting has definitely become an instrument of the financial market as well, used to attract new and retain existing investors. Their decisions are increasingly influenced by a company's performance in this area. Numerous studies have verified how the value of investments can be increased when ESG factors are considered.

How is your company mastering this task?

Sustainability is not a new issue for us. Over the past five years, we have published sustainability reports in our annual reports, providing information on our measures as a member of the United Nations Global Compact initiative. We have also integrated key targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our reporting beginning in 2020. For the past fiscal year 2022, we will report on sustainability for the first time based on the internationally standardized guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). For us, this step takes sustainability to a new level.

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How so?

We describe the situation in Switzerland and in our international subsidiaries in quantitative terms, underpinning them with appropriate indicators. Our performance in this area can now be measured and compared across the Group – both over time and in relation to other companies. Incidentally, this policy not only ensures external transparency, but also provides a meaningful database for our own business decisions.

Would you say that the Sustainability Report 2022 serves as a benchmark for future progress?

Yes. We have set ourselves binding targets to achieve by 2030. It’s important for us to know now where we stand on this path. The current sustainability report creates transparency through the comprehensive collection of data at our sites. It helps us determine, for example, the current environmental impact and our carbon footprint, allowing us to make a targeted impact. After all, what we can’t measure we can’t reduce in a targeted manner. Where monitoring is not possible, a specific measure cannot be assessed for its actual effectiveness.

So, in other words, you’re creating the basis for aligning your measures with actual effectiveness?

That’s right. We reject greenwashing as a matter of principle. We focus on measures whose impact we can validate. We can now also identify much more precisely where we can apply the greatest leverage for rapid and significant improvements, for example, in measures to reduce so-called Scope 1 and 2 emissions. These are the direct emissions that can be influenced by our own actions.

Why did you decide to apply the GRI guidelines?

In recent years, these guidelines have established themselves as the most widely used standards for sustainability reporting worldwide. In the European Union in particular, they have now become the de facto standard for sustainability reporting by larger companies. In addition to quality and informative value, the standards provide the necessary comparability at the international level to comprehensively assess performance in this area.

But sustainability standards are constantly in flux.

And that’s another reason to use the GRI standards. For us as a global company headquartered in Ticino, they are a viable basis for integrating existing and future requirements not only in Switzerland, but also in other countries. Further significant changes in sustainability reporting are pending in the next few years, such as the legal anchoring of climate reporting according to TCFD (Task force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure) in Switzerland and the European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). These changes must be given due consideration. The GRI standards offer the best prerequisites for meeting new requirements.