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Sustainability.

More relevant

than ever.



Dear Reader,

The ability to adapt to changing situations makes us successful as human beings. Recognising the signs of the times in advance puts you in an even better position. It means you are able to adjust to the necessary changes in good time and head in the right direction. As a family business with more than 85 years of experience in the packaging and advertising material industry, we have always successfully kept our fingers on the pulse and often been that decisive step ahead.

Sometimes, we have achieved this by deciding to take a different path. Instead of aiming for faster, higher, farther, we opted for better quality, more efficient and more regional solutions at an early stage and geared ourselves entirely towards this strategy. All our developments and solutions, our production processes, our material procurement, our efficient handling of resources and our commitment to our staff and to social and community projects in the region have all borne fruit. We also substantially improved our sustainability in 2023. Once again, our packaging won awards, not only for its innovation, but also for its sustainability.

This is something that remains a key issue in the packaging industry, as consumers are increasingly looking for more environmentally friendly, minimalist and sustainable solutions. They prefer their packaging small, rather than oversized, and opt for cardboard and paper over plastic. These are trends that are working in our favour, but we cannot rest on our laurels. After all, they involve new challenges we want to overcome for our customers. And we will.

We have an experienced team we can rely on, and we would like to take this opportunity to extend a big thanks to them. Many of our employees have already been on board for decades, which we are proud of, as it shows we are sustainable in this respect too. Two of these valued employees joined the management team as of the beginning of 2024: Nicki Eberle and Marco Manna. This means there are now four of us steering the Karl Knauer Group, ensuring it stays a step ahead and helping to shape the packaging industry with solutions that are 'remarkably different'.

Karl Knauer Group Management Team

Stefanie Wieckenberg

Marco Manna

Nicki Eberle

Karolina Matysiak

Highlights

Cardboard, paper, corrugated board

Using a renewable resource: cardboard, paper and corrugated board. Also, using recycled cardboard and FSC®- and PEFC-certified cardboard and paper.









tonnes of CO

In 2023, Karl Knauer Biberach offset more CO. than it produced.



Changing the factory hall lighting to

Complete compensation the energy balance in Biberach





Power

consumption reduces

when comparing 2023 to 2022 Karl Knauer Biberach

Training in Biberach



apprenticeships

dual degree programmes

apprentices and students

over 600.000€

Since its establishment in 1995, the Karl Knauer Foundation has generously supported the region every year.

SEVERAL AWARDED



For innovative packaging and industry know-how.

membership **CO**₂ Climate Initiative of the printing and media associations

-15%



Repeated reduction in water consumption

when comparing 2023 to 2022 Karl Knauer Poland



Implementation of sustainable trainee projects



The Karl Knauer Group is a successful medium-sized, family-owned company for Packaging, Promotional Products, Gift Packaging and Mechanical Engineering.

With its two locations including Biberach (Baden) in Germany, and Pniewy in Poland, the Karl Knauer Group is one of the leading suppliers in the packaging industry. Customers from the branded goods and services industry across Europe benefit from the diverse expertise and the remarkably extensive vertical integration. Together with customers, our experts design constructions that fulfil every packaging need – from product protection and safety to appealing presentation at the point of sale.

Karl Knauer offers tailored programmes with state-of-the-art packaging technologies for areas of expertise in eight industries: Cosmetics/Body Care, Pharmaceuticals/Health, Home/Industry, Environment/Nature, Food/Agriculture, Beverages, Blister Cards and Mechanical Engineering.

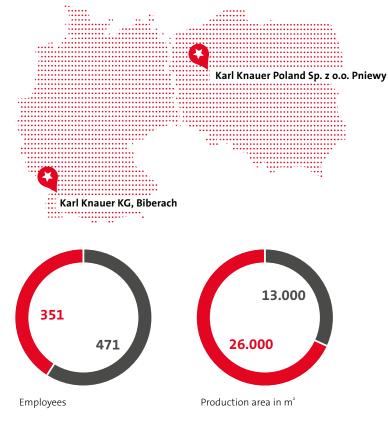
In addition, the research and development department is constantly working on innovations for future packaging demands. In the field of mechanical engineering, Karl Knauer develops individual solutions that increase efficiency in the packaging industry.

Karl Knauer is one of Europe's leading providers of note advertising media made of cardboard and paper, and offers customers in the gift packaging segment high-quality, refined and trendy pack-aging that can be customised on request.

To the corporate film:



www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTQ6diai2us



Karl Knauer employed a total of 822 employees at two locations Karl Knauer produces at the headquarters Biberach (Germany) and in the modern, efficient production plant in Pniewy (Poland)

■ Karl Knauer KG, Biberach/Baden

■ Karl Knauer Poland Sp. z o.o., Pniewy

2.2

Natural advantage

Cardboard 'grows', making it one of the most sustainable packaging materials.

Cardboard consists of wood, a renewable raw material, and is therefore particularly environmentally friendly. This applies to the acquisition of the raw material as well as its manufacture, use and disposal. Using FSC®- and PEFC-certified materials also demonstrably supports sustainable forestry and consistent measures against illegal logging. Supporting sustainable forestry by using wood as a raw material helps offset the carbon footprint in the fibre cycle. Renewable forests reabsorb the carbon released by cardboard, pasteboard or paper packaging and advertising media at the end of their life cycle.

Cardboard conserves our resources: no product is as intensively recycled as cardboard, pasteboard or paper packaging. Reusing the raw material several times conserves all types of resources, including energy and water. The recycling rate for cardboard, pasteboard and paper in Europe is around 81% according to data from the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI). In Europe, 60% of folding cartons are manufactured from recycled cardboard.

A key issue in the manufacture of folding cartons is designing them to be efficient and safe throughout their entire life cycle.

This should ensure that the packaged goods are not discarded of due to damage, inadequate hygiene or insufficient instructions for use. Simply considering these criteria helps avoid waste and thus the loss of the resources necessary to manufacture the goods.

Most consumers make their first choice based on the cardboard packaging of the goods on the shelf. The versatility of cardboard is ideal for promoting the packaged product in the best possible manner. Material, printing method, surface structure and creative shapes all contribute to innovative and natural

packaging design, and may elicit a visual and tactile experience. A folding carton can perfectly reflect the values of a brand and make it a consumer's first choice at the point of sale.

Cf. European Association of Carton and Cartonboard Manufacturers: http://www.procarton.com/de/ why-cartons/

2.3

Current developments

Packaging for ZWILLING sharpening steel sets standards for sustainability and resource preservation

Karl Knauer has been nominated for the prestigious Pro Carton award in conjunction with ZWILLING. This highly respected award honours exceptional achievements in cardboard packaging and we are proud to present our brand new, plastic-free packaging solution for the entire range of ZWILLING sharpening steels.

The innovative packaging consists of two components made entirely from FSC®-certified virgin fibre cardboard, meaning it can be disposed of with

other wastepaper. The cardboard-based solution also saves ZWILLING 2.5 tons of plastic a year. An insert, also made of cardboard, holds the sharpening steel safely in place, and the packaging has a cut-out window for optimum product visibility.

Not only does the packaging score highly in terms of functionality, it looks great too. The presentation is perfect, with a slimline form and the window through which you can even touch the product.





Video shoot at Siemens AG in Amberg

Karl Knauer mechanical engineering division is growing

As one of the leading packaging specialists in Germany, Karl Knauer is also the go-to manufacturer for premium packaging machines. Our experts develop, design and construct perfect-fit packaging machines to meet the requirements of customers in a range of different industries. Thanks to the synergies from our comprehensive expertise on all things packaging, the systems stand out by virtue of their cost-effectiveness, precision and ease of use.

The mechanical engineering division is now set for further growth at the company's Biberach site. The assembly area has been moved to a larger hall and the machines currently under construction demonstrate that this was an important move and the right decision. As an established machine construction partner of Siemens AG, we also had

the opportunity of a professional film shoot at their factory in Amberg in early August 2023. We would like to offer a special thank you to our head of mechanical engineering, Franz Mäntele, our packaging key account manager Dominic Pfaff, the two Siemens employees, project director Bernhard Mayer and technology specialist Reinhold Rupprecht for their personal statements on the cooperation, and, of course, to all others involved.



www.karlknauer.com/en/products/ mechanical-engineering

Expansion of Karl Knauer Poland

We added a new socialising space to our company building in Pniewy in 2023. The new building is home to a canteen, changing rooms, a conference room, a breast-feeding room, bathroom facilities and a production preparation area.

It creates comfortable, safe and hygienic working conditions for our growing numbers of staff. The extension has increased the area of the Karl Knauer Poland site by more than 1,000 m².









Volunteer-friendly employer for Baden-Württemberg HH Global's Strategic Partner Award

German Packaging Award for Pohl-Scandia

Our top objective is to make our customers happy. The fact that our creative solutions also regularly win over international juries is a welcome knock-on side effect.



Volunteer-friendly

Baden-Württemberg

In October, Thomas Strobl, Deputy

Minister President and Minister for

the Interior, Digitalisation and Local

Authorities in Baden-Württemberg,

honoured Karl Knauer as a 'volunteer-

friendly employer for civil protection'.

The prize is awarded by the state of

Baden-Württemberg for a period of

five years and recognises our commit-

ment to encouraging our employees

to engage in voluntary activities.

employer for





Silver in

Druck&Medien

Awards

Karl Knauer won SILVER in the 'Training Company of the Year' category at the 19th Druck&Medien Awards. As a family business, trainees are very important, and this award highlights our work with and focus on up-and-coming talent.

Forbes Diamond for Karl Knauer Poland

For the 15th time, Forbes magazine and Dun & Bradstreet Poland have jointly published a list of companies in Poland that have increased their value the fastest in the last three years. The list for 2023 includes companies that have achieved growth of 15 % or more in the last three years. Karl Knauer Poland is one of these successful companies.



HH Global Strategic Partner Award

With a global turnover of around 2 billion US dollars, HH Global is the world's leading provider of technology-driven creative production and procurement. The HH Global Group of Companies has some 4,500 employees supporting marketing campaigns for top international conglomerates. In 2023, for the first time, it awarded the Strategic Partner Award to its best and most important strategic suppliers, including Karl Knauer in the packaging category.



German Packaging Award for Pohl-Scandia

The management at Pohl-Scandia GmbH are also enjoying their 2023 German Packaging Prize in the 'Functionality & Convenience' category. The specialist jury believed that the innovative shipping packaging designed by Karl Knauer for its associated company Pohl-Scandia met all the requirements in terms of functionality, sustainability and aesthetics.

Karl Knauer Sustainability Report 2023 About the Karl Knauer Group







Nature conservation through biotope maintenance 'Biodiversity' action day

Trainees build an insect hotel

Biotope maintenance

For five of our trainees, 2023 was all about rolling their sleeves up and getting stuck in. In cooperation with the countryside preservation association Ortenaukreis e.V. and the team at Baumpflege Volk, the aim was to look after the reed canary grass, reed belt biotope and the wet meadow on the Reiherbach in the district of Prinzbach, part of the parish of Biberach, Baden.

Grazing animals were once responsible for clearing the cultivated landscapes, but these days active maintenance is required, which means clearing and cutting back by hand. And this was where the five young would-be packaging experts got their hands dirty. After a morning working in the fresh November air, the job was done and all those involved were happy with the results.

'Biodiversity' action day

A real oasis of flowers arrived at Karl Knauer at the end of the year in the form of a generous delivery: a pallet of flower bulbs and seeds from our valued customer. This included not only bee-friendly seeds but also radiant sunflowers, edible flowers and colourful flowers for balcony boxes.

We would really like to thank Bruno Nebelung GmbH for this wonderful support! All of our employees were able to stock up on seeds for their own gardens. But that was not all: not only did we share them around, we also set up

an inspirational give-away to highlight the importance of biodiversity. A big thank you also goes out to all our employees for their enthusiastic participation in the competition.

More activities are also planned for 2024. One of them will involve trainees making nesting boxes and raffling them off among the staff.

Our very own Karl Knauer insect hotel

In spring 2020, the Karl Knauer trainees also laid the foundations for a further future project. With our support, a 2,600 m² space was cleared for some 60,000 new Karl Knauer workers in Zell am Harmersbach. The idea was to set up a flower meadow which has since been in bloom throughout the summer, with a range of varieties attracting numerous insects and also providing valuable habitat to the new Karl Knauer bee colony. Decked out in their protective clothing, the Karl Knauer trainees headed off to harvest the honey under the expert guidance of 'Martin the Bee Man'.

A total of 32 kilograms has been extracted and filled into jars by hand. As you would expect from packaging experts, a special honeycomb packaging has been designed and produced for the honey and, of course, the trainees were also involved in this. We're especially proud that an insect hotel built by the trainees themselves has graced the bee pasture since 2022.









Efficiency

Important precautions for efficient energy use in Biberach, and Pniewy.

For all new acquisitions of machines and and systems, it is a company requirement to constantly improve energy efficiency.

In addition, a certified energy management system is introduced, significant energy users are defined, consumption is measured and monthly reviews are conducted.

Saving

Saving energy and using renewable energy in Biberach, and Pniewy.

In Biberach, a considerable part of the electricity demand is electricity demand is produced via photovoltaics. Since 2021, eight charging points and two electric vehicles have been added to the vehicle fleet. In 2023, another electric vehicle was purchased to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.

The conversion of the factory lighting to LED is currently underway. As of December 2023, this has been completed to approx. 85 %. Where it is already possible, the lighting is controlled automatically depending on the amount of daylight. In addition, the radiator thermostats were checked, defective equipment was replaced and 35,000 kWh of electricity were saved by switching off the oil heating of two punching machines at weekends.

CO₂ emissions from energy consumption

Biberach, in tonnes of CO, per year

We avoid producing CO₂ emissions wherever possible and have managed to reduce them to a minimum. Nevertheless, we compensate for unavoidable CO₂ emissions by supporting climate change projects that offset CO₂ elsewhere. Thus, in 2023 alone, we saved 107 tonnes more CO₃ than we produced.

Compensation exceeds consumption

CO₂ emissions from the energy consumed per 1,000 accepted sheets

for all Karl Knauer in kg CO2/1,000 sheets



Thanks to the numerous measures, the Karl Knauer Group was once again able to reduce CO₂ emissions from energy consumption per 1,000 sheets.

Consistently low emissions





Efficiency

Important precautions for efficient water use at Karl Knauer.

We monitor all our water consumption. This allows us to keep track of water consumption and its causes and to develop and implement measures for more efficient use in the identified areas. In order to save water, automatic faucets were installed in the last few years.

Biberach		2021	2022	2023	
Water consumption	m³	4.763	5.878	5.030	
Waste water	m³	2.560	2.526	3.208	

Reduction of approx. 15 % of the overall very low water consumption

Pniewy

Water consumption	m³	4.716	4.022	4.169
Waste water	m³	3.095	2.427	2.331

For all Karl Knauer

Water consumption	m³	9.479	9.900	9.199
Water consumption per 1,000 accepted sheets	l/1.000 Bg	57,1	61	63,2
Waste water	m³	5.655	4.953	5.539
Waste water per 1,000 accepted sheets	l/1.000 Bg	34,1	30,5	38

Wastewater generation constant low: 6,378 m² of our outdoor facilities are little or unsealed, so that rainwater infiltrates and replenishes groundwater reserves. In addition, the rainwater from 17,248 m² is discharged into open ditches/water bodies.

Cardboard Biberach, in t



Cardboard for all Karl Knauer, in t





The aim is to reduce the use of IPA year on year. Printing in Biberach and Pniewy is practically alcohol free. In Biberach and Pniewy, the use of IPA decreased in 2022 due to stockpiling during the coronavirus years. Regular purchases were made again in 2023, which explains the increase.

Inks and varnishes for all Karl Knauer



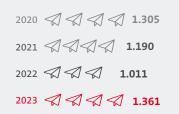
Corrugated board Biberach

Processed only in Biberach, in m²



Paper Pniewy

Processed only in Pniewy, in t





Important precautions for preventing waste in all areas

Our waste prevention strategy kicks in at the product development stage: new packaging is designed and imposed on the printing sheet in such a way as to minimise material use and offcuts. Each imposition is checked by experts and packaging technologists.

In Biberach, comprehensive waste management has been integrated into the company's day-to-day activities for many years. Here, all waste is classified and recycled accordingly, in a manner that maximises value added. Developments related to waste that is classified as dangerous are particularly positive: the volume of such waste was reduced for the third year running as a result of optimised processes and a higher degree of standardisation.

In addition, purchasing cardboard sheets in the correct format for each individual type of folding box ensures less waste and the correct separation (hazardous/hazardous/paper/metal). For the purchase of paints, varnishes and glues, the focus is on demand and shelf life.

In Pniewy, the acquisition of a new printing machine had a positive impact on waste consumption: for example start-up losses (test sheets for adjusting the machine) were further reduced. This also applied to printing errors and colour deviations, which further reduced the waste.

Due to the reduction blister film thickness, in Pniewy can be saved 20 tonnes of plastic per year.

Biberach		2021	2022	2023
Cardboard waste	t	6.370	5.614	4.64
Hazardous waste	t	41,1	41,8	39,8
Pniewy				
Cardboard waste	t	4.773	4.644	4.18
Hazardous waste	t	27,6	31,2	42,3

Karl Knauer gesamt

Cardboard waste	t	11.143	10.258	8.826
Hazardous waste	t	69	73	82
Total cardboard waste per 1,000 accepted sheets	kg/1.000 Bg	67,1	63,2	60,6
Total hazardous waste per 1,000 accepted sheets	kg/1.000 Bg	0,4	0,4	0,6





Key performers are valued both independently of and particularly for their individual and cultural diversity.

Employees are the heart of the company and essential for Karl Knauer's success. They are valued and are entitled to transparent and cooperative leadership based on clearly defined, attainable goals. All employees work together in a respectful manner, hold each other in high regard and support each other. Gender, religious or social discrimination is not tolerated.

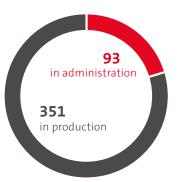
Both acknowledging good performance and conducting honest and transparent appraisals contribute to the efficient and harmonious advancement of all employees. Constantly assessing the working environment helps us maintain and improve our employees' health and well-being. Working methods, the atmosphere at work and health-related factors always have a high priority in evaluating the overall process.

Karl Knauer has established occupational health and safety (OHS) management to promote health in all aspects of work, behaviour and the organisation. This OHS management also organises various activities related to health and prevention, and is involved in decisions relevant to employees and their health.

The fact that Karl Knauer Group employees feel good and are content is amply demonstrated by their loyalty to the company. The turnover rate of approximately 13% is very low compared to the industry average.



Biberach
351 employees,
including 19 apprentices and students



Pniewy
471 employees,
including
27 apprentices





As a major regional employer, Karl Knauer accepts responsibility for training a skilled workforce and for the future prospects of young people in the region.

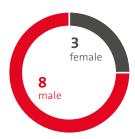
Karl Knauer has already received several awards as 'Training Company of the Year'

Karl Knauer helps prepare young people for the future. As an approved training company, Karl Knauer offers ten apprenticeships and two dual degree programmes in Biberach: apprentices and students totalled 19 in 2023. There were 27 apprentices in Pniewy.



Group photo at the careers fair in Offenburg

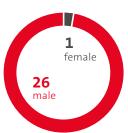
Biberach Apprenticeships commercial professions



Biberach Apprenticeships technicial professions



Pniewy Apprenticeships technicial professions



Biberach

apprenticeships

dual degree programmes

apprentices and students

5.1

Responsibility for the supply chain

The Karl Knauer Group maintains a close partnership with all suppliers.



Karl Knauer works in close partnership with its suppliers. There have been no grievances with regard to working conditions or human rights to date. This is verified by supplier audits.

The right conditions are the prerequisite for collaboration. Beyond that, we maintain an open and transparent relationship with our suppliers.

Our suppliers are predominantly based in the EU. Sustainable forestry is preferred.

Karl Knauer purchases predominantly from EU suppliers. Supplier audits assess both environmental and hygiene aspects, as well as processes and their improvement. FSC®- and PEFC-certified

materials are purchased and used for production, if requested by the customer. In addition, Karl Knauer advises customers on ecological packaging alternatives and sustainable packaging.

Green supply chains

To navigate complex supply chains and introduce greater efficiency and sustainability, Karl Knauer relies on green transport solutions from service providers. These offer, for example, CO₂ reporting for strategic supply chain

optimisation, sustainable fuel offers and new technologies. In addition, Karl Knauer relies on FTL (Full Truck Load) when desired and possible by the customer. Efficient full truck load eliminates waiting times at loading and unloading points.





Karl Knauer is a link in the environmental supply chain. We conduct our activities with care and responsibility for the environment.

The Karl Knauer Foundation is generous in its support to regional institutions and is a sponsor and education partner.

Employees in Biberach are involved in various committees, bodies and associations, for example, as examiners for chamber of commerce (IHK) examination boards and volunteers at the German Life Saving Association (DLRG), the German Red Cross (DRK), the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) and the fire brigade.

Moreover, 24% of the employees in Biberach are qualified first-aiders.

Karl Knauer is aware of its social responsibility and is fundamentally committed to the principles of democratic basic order and fair coexistence. The Karl Knauer Foundation, which was established by Karl Knauer in 1995, donates around € 20,000–30,000 to associations, institutions and social services in Biberach, Harmersbachtal and Nordrach annually. Since it was established, the foundation has invested more than € 600,000 in the region. As a sponsor of numerous regional sports clubs, Karl Knauer sustainably supports people in the surrounding areas.

Karl Knauer, located in Biberach, has also formed education partnerships with the Heinrich-Hansjakob-Bildungszentrum in Haslach and the Bildungszentrum Ritter von Buss in Zell am Harmersbach. As an education partner, we implement practical educational projects to introduce pupils to the world of work, which helps them with their career choices down the line.

All activities including school trips, presentations about the various professions, training on how to write job applications and internship opportunities are established at the beginning of the scholastic year and reviewed at least annually.

The Karl Knauer bee pasture is a new trainee project initiated in 2020, which won the 2021 and 2022 PSI Sustainability Award. In collaboration with a local beekeeper, honey was extracted under the direction of our trainees, packaged in grass paper boxes and distributed to customers as corporate gifts.

The Pniewy factory provides financial support for kindergartens, schools and sports clubs (volleyball and indoor football through sponsorship and contributions to sports events and tournaments. Guided tours of the premises for kindergartens and schools are organised regularly. In addition, Karl Knauer Poland

has also formed partnerships with the schools in Pniewy, and provides internship opportunities and taster weeks for pupils.

In cooperation with the Landschaftserhaltungsverband Ortenau e. V., forest district manager Christoph Müller and the forestry service Schnaitter, we reforested an approximately 1,000 m² fallow area in Biberach/Baden at the beginning of March 2022. During this action, a total of 250 sessile oaks and 50 littleleaf limes were planted to recultivate a former burnt area.







Achieving our sustainability objectives through management systems.

Within the company, interdisciplinary teams are responsible for sustainability management in close consultation with the management. Together, they are responsible for the successful implementation of the sustainability programme

and review the implementation of the environmental and energy goals which are set out in a target overview and key performance indicators. All measures are reviewed and evaluated.

Our comprehensive KPI system

We use this system to check whether we have achieved our objectives on a monthly basis. All departments work with KPIs; sustainability management is no exception.

Our KPIs include inter alia: occupational accidents, employee turnover, further education, performance appraisals, greenhouse gas emissions, waste and customer statistics.

In Biberach

- ISO 50001 Energy management systems
- ISO 9001 Quality management systems
- Living PSO!® certification for the offset printing process standard
- ISO 14001 Environmental management systems
- Environmental certificate Grüner Punkt
- FSC® certification: FSC® C005891
- PEFC certification: PEFC/04-31-1318
- Certificate of participation in carbonneutral production for environmental management
- BRC Global Standard

All current certificates can be found at: www.karlknauer.com/downloads

In Pniewy

- ISO 22000 hygiene management systems
- ISO 9001 Quality management systems
- ISO 14001 Environmental management systems
- FSC® certification: FSC® C009030
- Living PSO!® certification for the offset printing process standard
- ISO 50001 Energy management systems
- PEFC certification: PEFC/32-31-011

7 | Imprint and contact information

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About this report

This is an extract from the Karl Knauer Group's seventh Sustainability Report. Information on developments and projects concerns the financial year of 2023 and also includes figures from previous years. The Sustainability Report is based on the German Sustainability Code (2015 version), which was adopted by the German Council for Sustainable

Development (RNE). The German government supports the Code as an instrument for promoting sustainable development. The German Sustainability Code considers 27 performance indicators from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G4 Guidelines. In addition to this Sustainability Report, the Karl Knauer Group has issued a declaration of conformity, thus fulfilling the requirements of the German Sustainability Code.

A free template obtained from the Institute for Sustainability (Berlin) was used to create this report.

This is an extract from the Karl Knauer Group's 2023 Sustainability Report. The full version in German is available at www.karlknauer.de/nachhaltigkeit







