

KIRCHDORFER NEWS

For the Employees, Customers, and
Partners of the Kirchdorfer Group



TOGETHER SAFE AT WORK AND BEYOND

Congratulations to the winners of the
LEO+S foto contest „safety in focus“

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KIAS RECYCLING

A visit to Ohlsdorf at Austria's largest
scrap tire reprocessor.

PP. 10 – 11

KÖ ÉS HOMOK

In Babót (HU), raw materials are extract-
ed with with commitment and efficiency.

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KORALM RAILWAY

ÖBB's project of the century enters the
finals with Kirchdorfer products.

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Foto: © Sissi Furgler

EDITORIAL

DIVERSIFICATION ENSURES STABILITY

When the economy is heading for stormy times, a diversified group of companies operating in different market segments, regions and with a variety of business models is generally better able to compensate for economic downturns. In the light of the pleasing business results of recent years, we are therefore entering the coming years with both confidence and the necessary caution, which – judging by developments around our continent – will in all probability be challenging.

From this perspective, we regard our success over decades and generations as "sustainable" in the broadest sense. However, the specific sustainability on which we are focusing increasingly not only in economic terms, but also in social and environmental terms, will also strengthen us as a Group. I am therefore particularly pleased to report for the first time in this issue on the Group-wide efforts that will secure and improve our operations for decades to come.

In this spirit, may I once again wish you an informative and enjoyable read.

Yours sincerely
Erich Frommwald

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TOP-CLASS TEAM FOR KIRCHDORFER GROUP'S SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Joao Paulo Pereira (steering committee member and coordinator with the Group Executive Board, see presentation on page 6) and **Armin Richter** (project manager and head of division KCM) have been commissioned by the Group Executive Board to steer and control the sustainability project launched on June 28, 2022.

All analyses, preparations and recommendations will be completed by spring 2023. The aim of the project is to develop a sustainability strategy at Group level and to carry out a "test run" for the sustainability report as early as the 2023 financial year.

In addition to **Thomas Pommerening** (CFO), **Andreas Hermann** (Deputy Project Manager, QM/QA) and **Carina Bauer** (Controlling/Reporting) are also involved in the project team for KIGS. **Alfred Wiener** (KCE), **Reinhard Pönisch** (KCM), **Gerald Lanz** (KCS) and **Marco Pollok** (KRT) are involved for the individual group divisions. In total, 2,500 working hours are planned for the project team of the large-scale project until spring 2023.



Spearheading the Group-wide sustainability strategy:
from left, Joao Paulo Pereira da Silva, Armin Richter and
Andreas Hermann.

KICK-OFF FOR GROUP-WIDE STRATEGY PROJECT

SUSTAINABILITY FOR GENERATIONS

A group of companies that has existed since 1888 and has been successfully operated from the founding through two world wars and countless economic crises and business cycles to this day embodies, so to speak, the definition of "sustainability". With a contemporary focus on economic but also on social and ecological development goals, the Kirchdorfer Group is now making itself fit for the future and sustainable for decades and generations to come.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations and a globally recognized survey methodology that can be verified by auditors (GRI – Global Reporting Initiative) have now established themselves as standards against which the future viability and sustainability of companies are developed. Added to this is the fact that a corresponding reporting system will already be mandatory in Austria for the 2025 financial year.

The Kirchdorf Group management therefore launched a comprehensive strategy project this summer. Under the leadership of Armin Richter and his cross-divisional project team, future requirements, but above all the internal processes, material flows, and energy requirements of the entire Group are being analyzed in detail in order to determine opportunities, risks, and development possibilities. The strategy project will of course result in concrete measures that will be implemented over the coming years.

Perfect opportunity for discovering new competitive advantages

"We are undertaking this large-scale strategy project primarily for ourselves – and will be taking a close look at all input and output

flows in the Group in order to come as close as possible to an optimum on the basis of specific targets," explains project manager Armin Richter.

Together with the four divisions, an evaluation will be carried out by the beginning of next year to determine which SDGs are to be pursued by the group divisions. In addition to optimizing all material flows and cycles, the aim is to achieve a decisive strategic competitive advantage for the Group in the coming years. In light of the current upheavals on the energy and raw material markets, the challenges – and thus the market opportunities – could not be greater.

Transparency for all stakeholders

By defining a Group-wide sustainability strategy, the Kirchdorfer Group not only promotes transparent sustainability for all employees, but will also meet the information needs of all stakeholders (from customers to banks to authorities).

Last but not least, this creates a knowledge base within the company that is also beneficial for discussions with political decision-makers. Both Armin Richter (Head

of the Raw Materials Division) and Michael Wardian (Group Managing Director) are active in leading positions in the European industry associations.

With a structured sustainability strategy and consistent implementation, the Group thus will soon be well-positioned for its future development.





KIRCHDORFER GROUP SERVICES GMBH

SERVICE PROVIDER FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ENTIRE GROUP

Not only has the internal LEO value campaign been given an additional "S" (for the topic of safety) this year, so has KIG: As "Kirchdorfer Group Services GmbH" (now "KIGS"), the 57 employees at the operational Group headquarters in Wöllersdorf now also bear in their name the services they have been providing for years.

So-called "shared services" are increasingly common in large corporations. A number of specific services are provided for which it simply does not pay off for the majority of the subsidiary companies to build up their own personnel resources.

When the current structure of the Kirchdorfer Group was implemented almost 20 years ago, with four business divisions, a superordinate company was also created at that time in the form of "Kirchdorfer Industries" (KIG), which supported the individual companies by providing central services such as IT, accounting and payroll accounting. What started back then with around two dozen employees is now an integral part of the corporate group. Since then, not only have Group sales more than doubled, but so has the number of KIGS employees.

Growing range of services

While the number of employees has grown along with the group turnover, the number of services offered has de facto also multiplied: "Accounting and payroll accounting has actually hardly grown since then, although today we do much more and, above all, for many more companies," says Thomas Pommerening, who knows the early days of KIG all too well.

After all, he started in 2005 as an employee in Controlling under the leadership of first CFO at the time, Michael Wardian, and in the following years built up Group Reporting and Risk Management and also headed up Internal Audit until 2013. After a three-year excursion as head of risk management at the Austrian Post AG, he finally returned to the Kirchdorfer Group in January 2017

as the new "Chief Financial Officer." Now he is basically working again for Michael Wardian, who has been promoted to the Group Executive Board since the beginning of the year. "Certain things don't change," Pommerening jokes, "but our range of services has grown enormously in recent years!"

Digitalization and cybersecurity

Group IT has developed extremely positively, with 18 employees quickly joining the team. In particular, the comprehensive digitization strategy of the precast segment and the growing IT requirements throughout the Group (not least in business-critical cybersecurity) are keeping KIGS employees really busy. As the home office infrastructure expanded significantly during the pandemic, as well as a hacker attack that

was relatively well handled and resolved, the IT department has earned a lot of recognition across the Group in recent years.

Demographic change, sustainability

Other social trends that are already reflected in KIGS' development include strategic positioning in the changing labor market (employer branding, apprentice offensive, etc.) and new agendas related to the Group-wide sustainability strategy.

Andreas Hermann and Carina Bauer are two KIGS experts who have already been involved in the sustainability project from the very beginning. In addition, the Group-wide demand for KIGS services is developing so dynamically that, due to the lack of space in Wöllersdorf, two complete departments (Accounting and HR) have recently moved to office premises in Sollenau. A good sign that the Kirchdorfer family of companies is growing and flourishing – and that joint synergies are being better and better exploited!



Kirchdorfer Group Services: Under the direction of Andreas Hermann and in cooperation with Quality Austria, a total of 20 employees of the Kirchdorfer Group were trained as internal auditors in the areas of quality (ISO 9001), environment (ISO 14001) and occupational health and safety (ISO 45001). The last examination marked the successful completion of the two-year training series in June 2022. The Kirchdorfer Group now has 20 highly trained new auditors at its disposal, who received their "appointment as integrated internal auditors" from Group Managing Director Michael Wardian on October 4, 2022.

KIRCHDORFER GROUP SERVICES: OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENTS



Head: Thomas Pommerening
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

Head: Tibor Laky

Annual financial close, consolidation, treasury management, tax accounting & bookkeeping



GROUP MARKETING

Head: Sandra Ehrenhöfer,
(during maternity leave of Marlene Mies)

Internal & external communication, crisis communication, graphics, online & social media, event support



HUMAN RESSOURCES

Head: Günter Jungbauer

Payroll accounting, personnel administration, recruiting and personnel development, employer branding

GROUP CONTROLLING & INTERNAL REVISION

Head: Carina Bauer

Controlling, planning and reporting, risk management, internal auditing



GROUP IT (Information Technology)

Head: Christian Rosenbichler

IT infrastructure and support, IT projects and software development, SAP, licensing, IT security



INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS / ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

Head: Andreas Hermann

ISO certifications (quality, occupational safety, cybersecurity, environment, etc.), internal audits



LEGAL DEPARTMENT & COMPLIANCE

Head: Stefan Obergottsberger

Contracting, claims and warranty, insurance management, legal compliance, legal advice

NEW IN THE KIRCHDORFER GROUP

TEAM PLAYER WITH A SENSE OF FAMILY

Joao Paulo Pereira da Silva has been strengthening the management of the Kirchdorf Group since October 1, 2022. The 52-year-old Brazilian brings not only international management experience but also sporting ambition and a pronounced sense of family to his new professional challenge.

"Family is always the most important thing," sums up Joao Paulo Pereira at the end of our in-depth conversation about life, career and sports. If he hadn't met his future wife at the post office on Universitätsplatz in Heidelberg, he wouldn't have come to Italy to study for an MBA. Or from the Brazilian subsidiary to the headquarters of the then Lafarge Group in Paris.

From there, Lafarge (via Chile) finally sent him to Vienna as CFO in 2008. "Originally, I wanted to come to Vienna for three years. Now it has already become 14, and since February 2022 I am now also a proud Austrian citizen!" So Vienna not only became a permanent residence for him and his family, from here he also looked after the neighboring countries of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia for Lafarge-Holcim. As well as the Kirchdorf cement plant – as co-managing director alongside Erich Frommwald.

Thus the circle closes

"I already know the Kirchdorfer Group very well from my time at the cement plant – and it was actually always my dream to move to a dynamic, family-run company after many interesting challenges in an international, listed major group," confesses the passionate team player. That's understandable, because JPP comes from a world in which countless decisionmakers and stakeholders – from supervisory boards to stock exchange regulators – considerably limit responsibility and scope for action. Helping to shape the long success story of the Kirchdorf Group alongside Michael Wardian in the future, when Erich Frommwald retires in a few years, is of course a much more promising task.

Until then, JPP, as a member of the Steering Committee, will initially also be looking after, among other things, the ambitious sustainability strategy (more on this on page 2 as well as in upcoming issues!) as well as focusing on the further development of the Road & Traffic division. The dynamic, international business model and range of services offered by the division and the strategic vision of the division management are a perfect match.

Which brings us finally to sports: "A strategy is nothing more than a plan to win the game!" the sportsman, who was born and raised



Joao Paulo Pereira da Silva: The trained mechanical engineer with a Master's degree in Business Administration has found a new home in Vienna and a new professional challenge with the Kirchdorfer Group.

near Rio de Janeiro, explains to us. It was there, of course, that he was born to play soccer. His active sports enthusiasm primarily brought him to "futsal" – with two manageable teams of 5, the fast and offensive game is played on a hardcourt. "Brazilians like to play and have fun doing it – and in the end there is a clear result!" After two torn cruciate ligaments and a damaged Achilles heel, however, JPP has recently been taking it easy – playing paddle tennis and practising kung fu!

And then, of course, there is the subject of family: after his son has been training in London for some time and now his daughter has also started studying at Exeter University, the new addition in the form of the Kirchdorf family of companies has come at just the right time for him and his wife. In this sense: Bem-vindo à família Kirchdorfer, senhor Pereira.



Nature study walk: The owner families and managers of the Kirchdorf Group took an extended hike through the flower and orchid meadows in the renaturalized part of the limestone quarry in Micheldorf.

EXCELLENT NATURE PARTNERSHIP

The Kirchdorf cement plant and the "Bergma(n)dl" nature conservation association have been honored for their cooperation in creating the Himmelreich biotope by the Forum of Mineral Resources and BirdLife Austria.

It is not the first award in nature conservation, and certainly not the last: The partnership of the Kirchdorf cement plant (as operator of the limestone quarry in Micheldorf) with the local nature conservationists is an important and long-term matter. The two owner families of the Kirchdorf Group also acknowledged this, and in the summer, on the occasion of a Group meeting, they accepted Werner Bejvl's invitation to take a joint walk through the Himmelreich biotope, which has been operated by Bejvl and his comrades-in-arms for decades – a lovingly created nature trail and hiking path located in the immediate vicinity of the quarry.

The excursion program naturally also included the renaturalized Himmelreich meadows covered with orchids at the quarry site, which are maintained and cared for by the Bergma(n)dl association. Werner Bejvl as well as a landscape ecologist demonstrated

the botanical diversity of these unique meadows. Then refreshments were served in the partially renovated clubhouse of the nature conservationists: the property adjacent to the quarry and half-finished converted and expanded single-family house was for sale and acquired by the cement plant.

The property is made available to the nature

conservationists as a clubhouse and training location, including a garage and workshop for their many scythes and beam mowers.

The house should be completed in time for the 20th anniversary of the association next year, thanks to the energetic efforts of the members themselves and material subsidies from the cement plant.



Sustainability Award for the "Himmelreich Nature Partnership": For more than 30 years, nature conservationist Werner Bejvl has been working at the Himmelreich biotope in Micheldorf. The excellent cooperation with the Kirchdorf cement plant has now been honored.

KIRCHDORFER CEMENT PLANT



REGULATED TRAFFIC, BEAUTIFIED PLANT

The expansions at the Kirchdorf cement plant are slowly entering their preliminary finale: After the commissioning of the burnout line including loading terminals, the truck traffic at the plant site still had to be reorganized. And the opportunity was also taken to plant some more greenery!

Kirchdorf has always paid as much attention to internal values as to external ones: Not only the energy-efficient and low-emission plant technology, but also the old weeping willow at the plant entrance and the wonderful orchard along the access road have long characterized the plant's (pleasant) image.

And this despite the fact that the legendary saying that a cement plant is "not a chocolate factory" is of course still valid. Even though the space required for the new replacement raw materials and fuel supplies is significant, the Kirchdorfers nevertheless succeeded in extending the traditional green areas around the plant – not only with new hedges, trees and shrubs, but also with further facade designs in the characteristic graffiti style.

In addition to the old office building, the facade of the 52-meter-high mixing silo also had to be renovated – industrial climbers abseiled down from dizzy heights from the facade with various paint buckets and implemented another "mosaic stone" of the design concept of the Viennese artists from CONCRETE.AT.

Buffer zone for substitute fuel deliveries

The core of the new traffic concept, however, is a new large parking lot at the rear of the plant: Here, up to eight trailers delivered by Kerschner Umwelttechnik can be temporarily stored, especially for the weekends. In this way, the burnout line remains supplied with substitute fuels from secondary fuel production when truck transports have to rest. Around one million euros was provided for the overall project, which was planned and implemented by Alfred Wiener. In addition to the new parking areas, the project also includes relocating the weighing facilities and introducing modern logistics terminals for incoming truck trains. In addition, a whole series of new cypress, columnar oak, maple and wild apple trees were planted along the plant site. With hedges and wild shrubs, the newly arranged truck traffic in the inner courtyard is shielded from the surrounding area and the townscape along the access roads is greatly enhanced.

Speaking of energy and plant beautification ...

Due to the current distortions on the energy markets and the horrendous electricity prices, the cement plant is currently producing at massive losses. This naturally brings to mind the Steyrdurchbruch power plant, which the Group had to sell in the 1970s. The turbines built by Hoffman & Co in 1907 are still running today and the entire plant is a listed building. So many beautiful industrial plants to be proud of!



A lot of green in the world's lowest-emission cement plant: While old apple trees call for harvest, the mixing silo appears in fresh colors.



New logistics concept for the delivery of substitute fuels: An intermediate storage facility for the new terminals was built at the rear of the plant. On this occasion, the entire traffic flow into and out of the plant is also being reorganized.



RENEWED CERTIFICATION



In 2014, an extensive program of workplace health promotion ("BGF") was launched at the Kirchdorf cement plant. Now the cement plant has been re-certified by the provincial Upper Austrian Health Insurance Fund.

"Health contributes a great deal to safety," both agree. That's why, in addition to yoga classes at the cement plant, free gym memberships, walking, hiking, and group bike rides in the summer, there have also been a number of lectures for employees in recent years – from proper nutrition to smoking cessation, to recent lectures on the early detection of heart attacks and strokes.



Sabine Rumpl (occupational safety) will continue the Kirchdorf BGF initiatives set up by **Manfred Mairhofer**.

"Health is an ongoing topic – you have to keep at it all the time," explains Manfred Mairhofer. As a former production foreman and trained safety specialist, he has built up the health and safety initiatives at the cement plant over the years. Since the beginning of June 2022, Sabine Rumpl has now taken over, which is also closely related to her work as a safety specialist.

The program also included numerous investments and training courses, such as the purchase of ergonomic desks and the study of specific work processes, e.g. correct lifting.


KIAS RECYCLING GMBH

A ROUND THING: CIRCULAR ECONOMY PAR EXCELLENCE

Tires are not only made of rubber, but also contain a significant proportion of steel and textile cord. These are all raw materials that call out for careful reintegration into the material cycle. This is exactly what happens in Ohlsdorf, not far from the shores of Lake Traunsee in Upper Austria.

Literature lovers immediately think of Thomas Bernhard's legendary square farm when they think of Ohlsdorf. Connoisseurs of the building materials industry, in turn, naturally think of the Asamer Group. However, hardly anyone knows that in Ohlsdorf a large proportion of the scrap tires accumulating in Austria are meticulously separated into the individual precious raw materials and recycled in an exemplary high-tech plant. This is, of course, due to the fact that we usually hand in our used tires to our local waste disposal company in return for an appropriate disposal fee, which in turn passes them on to KIAS Recycling GmbH. But this was not always the case: In earlier times, it was not uncommon in Austria to simply bury scrap tires in various pits. Until the ASAMER Group finally asked itself whether something more sensible could be done with the valuable raw materials contained in the tons of scrap tires ...

From the Rubber Recycling Company to modern-day KIAS

As early as the beginning of the 2000s, the Asamer Group started accepting and recycling scrap tires in its own company with the founding of GVG (Rubber Recycling Company). A few years later, this became Asamer Rubber Technology with a future-oriented, ambitious and costly research program.

Finally, in 2014, the Kirchdorf cement plant joined the company and the joint venture was given the initials of the two Upper Austrian corporate groups, KIAS. And with the cement plant as a reliable customer for the polyester fibers, a.k.a. textile lint, contained in the tires: These dissolve in air at a sufficiently high temperature in the burner of the cement kiln and thus contribute a caloric value that enables the 1:1 substitution of coal.

The entry of the cement plant has enabled KIAS to establish a good market position over the past few years, acquire numerous customers, and develop its own applications for the rubber granules obtained from the tires. All this with impressive plant technology that is among the largest and most technologically advanced in Europe.



Managing Director Christian Zirgoi shows us how the tires, which are crisscrossed with steel wires, are gradually disassembled into their component parts.

How rubber becomes granules

"Please don't take pictures of the details of the machines," the young managing director of the sophisticated plant asks us: because at the heart of the costly equipment lies an important competitive advantage of the Ohlsdorf processing plant.

Christian Zirgoi started at KIAS Sales in 2017 and has been managing director of the 18-employee, highly automated operation since September 2020. He shows us how tires are first cut into palm-sized pieces in a powerful shredder and then broken down into their individual components through a series of sophisticated mechanical processes. For outsiders, this is a true miracle of machine technology when we consider how incredibly resistant and almost indestructible such a tire actually is.

In the end, in addition to the textile fibers and the shredded steel wires, the entire rubber components are also available and are packed in different grain sizes via various filling stations into so-called big bags, which are then sent on their further journey by forklift truck. Apart from the textile lint, however, only a small proportion of the valuable granules is thermally recycled.

The majority of the rubber components are given a new lease of life in various applications: from rubber mats and molded parts to rubber-modified bituminous asphalt, the possible uses of the rubber granules are enormously diverse.

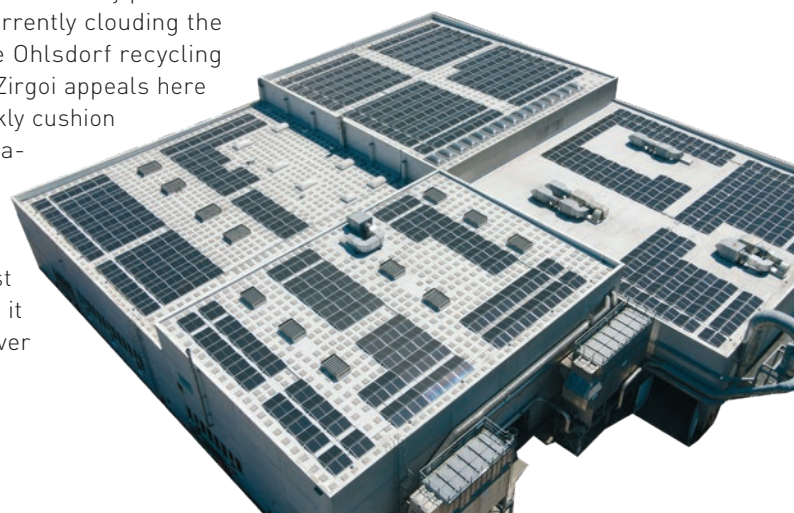
KIAS has also been successful for years with its own product developments. For example, a bullet trap was developed under the brand name "KIAS Protect", which is already in use in numerous shooting ranges. The KIAS oil binding agent, which is DEKRA-certified for use on traffic surfaces, is also used by fire departments, industrial partners and haulage companies, for example.

Only the escalation in electricity prices in recent months is currently clouding the success story of the Ohlsdorf recycling company. Christian Zirgoi appeals here to politicians to quickly cushion the energy cost situation: "The professional recycling of recyclable materials is in the public interest of sustainability, but it is not possible to cover

costs in the current energy cost situation."

This despite the fact that a large part of the 5,000 square metre roof area was recently fitted with solar panels: A first big step towards PV expansion ...

Speaking of costs: At the end of our visit, Christian Zirgoi pointed out that KIAS also takes over used tires from private individuals. At a much lower cost. And with the savings on a set of tires, we can have lunch with a view of the Traunstein ... and a visit to the neighboring Thomas Bernhard House!



KÁMEN A PÍSEK



30 YEARS IN SERVICE OF KÁMEN A PÍSEK

In a series of long service anniversaries at the Bohemian Kámen a písek, this year Otakar Veselý junior, son of the company's founder, celebrates 30 years of service to the company.

1992 was an important year in the history of KaP: it marked not only the entry of the Kirchdorf Group into the still young company, but also the arrival of Otakar Veselý junior. And anyone who now thinks that the son of the company founder got a cushy office job there is very much mistaken: because the trained toolmaker began his career in the Ševětín quarry as a plant fitter.

He then moved to the central workshops and finally to the Plešovice quarry as a foreman in 1997. A year later, he returned to Ševětín and became the plant manager there. In 2003 he then took over the position of production manager and at the same time graduated from the vocational school of economics. In the following years, Veselý also completed two university studies and received a bachelor's degree in 2009 and an engineering degree in 2011 from the Faculty of Mining and Geology at the University of Mining in Ostrava.

Only after completing his studies – and 20 years at Kámen a písek – did the time

finally come for an office job.

At the end of 2012, he took over the management of the investment department, which was merged with the production department the following year. Since then, Otakar Veselý has been the company's production engineering manager.

Finally, in 2019, he was appointed an authorized signatory. Simultaneously with the 30th anniversary of the company, the passionate family man also celebrates the 30th wedding anniversary with his wife Václava as well as four children and two grandchildren.



In 2022, **Otakar Veselý** will not only celebrate 30 years of service to Kámen a písek, but also his 30th wedding anniversary!

KŐ ÉS HOMOK KFT.



A powerful team: the proud men and women of Kő és Homok in Babót, Hungary, deliver top quality, stable volumes, and outstanding team spirit.

MEETING THE MOST PRODUCTIVE GRAVEL PRODUCERS

A small but mighty outfit from Hungary is consistently at the absolute top of the Kirchdorfer Group's ranking of the most efficient companies. We took a personal look at the productivity miracle not far from the Austrian border. In search of the company secret that is not one!

Sometimes in life, as in business, things turn out quite differently than you imagine: Who would expect, for example, to be welcomed with coffee and cake when visiting a gravel plant – and in an office (container) that is more lovingly furnished than many an apartment! This is exactly what happened to us in Babót, a small community of 1,200 inhabitants in northwestern Hungary.

The Kirchdorf Group has been operating a gravel plant there since the end of the 1990s, which was originally only intended as a backup in case the market situation in MABA's catchment area in eastern Austria

had developed unfavorably. However, at the latest with the entry of the Schraufstädter company as a new partner in 2005, the gravel plant was operated more and more seriously and has developed into an extremely strong operating unit over the years.

Through the earthworks company based in Wimpassing in Burgenland, today's operations and sales manager Zoltán Tárnoki finally also came to Kő és Homok. When we first meet him, he immediately apologizes for the beautiful office during our interview: "We did a lot here ourselves. If it's going to be new, then let's make it a little bit nice, I



Do-it-yourself: The team of Kő és Homok did the office extension themselves. The result is something to behold!



The new floating grab in Babót has already dredged a decent new pond in just three years.



say. For example, here sits the accountant, who has also painted the room himself!", explains the 50-year-old Hungarian, who has lived with his family in Deutschkreutz for many years.

"By the way, the accountant, Mr. Fenyvesi, also drives the forklift when there is a need," says Joachim Gruber when we tell him about our visit. Together with Wolfgang Schraufstädter, the CFO of the cement plant forms the management of the gravel plant, which has barely a dozen employees. The managing directors are also suitably proud: "Kő és Homok moves unbelievable quantities and has really built up a very stable business, although the competition from the immediate vicinity is now very big," Joachim Gruber tells us. "Yes, the customers can always rely on us," Zoltán Tárnoki explains: "The others sometimes promise deliveries they cannot keep. So we benefit a lot from our good reputation and, of course, we always make sure that the quality is right!"

The annual capacity in Babót is designed

for up to 350,000 t per year. Only in 2019, a new pond was started with the installation of a new semi-automatic floating grab, which has already reached a stately size and depth. The raw material reserves are secured with an additional property at least for the next 25 years and sales are very good, not least due to the construction of the M85 between Sopron and Győr. Part of the output is also delivered across the border to Austria.

Despite the high pressure and demanding work, the Hungarian team also always likes to take time out to regularly show groups of children and young people from the region around the site, in cooperation with the educational institutions.

Or, for that matter, to spoil the reporter from the Kirchdorfer News with delicious sweets during a visit to the plant!



Site manager Zoltán Tárnoki and his team have built up an excellent reputation as a reliable and stable supplier.



Open house: Kő és Homok employees regularly welcome children and young people and explain how everything works.



Small team, big plants: A staff of just under a dozen extract and process several hundred thousand tons of gravel and crushed stone per year.



UWT UMWELTECHNIK GMBH, LINZ

30 YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION WASTE RE- CYCLING

In Austria, over 90% of the construction waste generated is recycled. This is primarily thanks to companies like WIBAU, which founded UWT Umwelttechnik GmbH 30 years ago. There, the construction waste collected by the WIBAU container service is professionally recycled as building material.

In January 1993, UWT Umwelttechnik GmbH started operations in Linz. An absolute novelty, WIBAU was the first company in Upper Austria to start separating and recycling construction waste. And all this in the middle of the city – directly opposite voestalpine Stahl GmbH – and in a hall where it rains all day: The dust created when unloading the trucks, as well as when excavating in the huge mountains of demolition material, is minimized by a sprinkler system and the water used is recirculated efficiently.

The plant manager Robert Fischerlehner, who leads us through the huge hall, has been with the company longer than the company even exists. Three years before the founding of UWT Umwelttechnik, he started his long and loyal career at WIBAU as a truck driver and moved to the new subsidiary right at the time of its founding 30 years ago.

New high-performance plant

Brand new to the company, on the other hand, is a modern,

semi-mobile crushing plant that recently replaced the old 40-meter-long stationary plant: With less space requirement, but significantly higher performance, the RUBBLE MASTER 90 now processes up to 100 tons of construction waste per hour without emissions – and does so completely automatically. Wood, paper, plastic and pallets are first sorted by hand or with the excavator. The crusher takes care of the rest by reliably separating light-weight contaminants and impurities from the crushed material by means of an air classifier and metal parts by means of a magnetic separator.

Wide range of applications for the processed construction waste UWT Umwelttechnik primarily processes bricks, concrete, mortar, tiles and ceramics. The concrete or brick recycling material produced is then re-used at various construction sites, for example as material for backfilling and for the construction of access roads. Thus, WIBAU closes the circle as a full-service provider for all routes to and from the construction site: from disposal with the company's own container service to delivery of recycled building materials.

The nine employees of UWT Umwelttechnik form an important link in this circular economy. Reason enough to celebrate 30 years of UWT Umwelttechnik!



New plant – experienced, reliable operations manager: Robert Fischerlehner, sales manager of WIBAU- Containerdienst and since one year also UWT Umwelttechnik operations manager has been working for the company since day one. As a former truck driver, machinist and weighing master, he knows the entire operation like no other...

KIRCHDORFER CONCRETE SOLUTIONS



Workshop with Wilhelm Budin: As part of the "Workers Care 20" safety initiative, around 50 workshops are held each year across all KCS production sites. Safety-related issues are also discussed directly at the workplace.

WORKERS CARE 20: SAFETY COMES FIRST

Did you know that, in purely statistical terms, for every serious occupational accident there are about 30 minor accidents, 300 "near misses" and around 3,000 unsafe acts? With the aim of keeping occupational accidents at KCS companies to below 20 per million working hours on a sustainable basis, Wilhelm Budin tours the individual production sites with regular workshops.

In small groups of 8-10 employees, the topic of occupational safety is addressed in around 50 individual workshops per year as part of the "Workers Care 20" initiative and the LEO+S safety campaign. In this way, Wilhelm Budin would like to have reached all employees of the precast division in Austria in a timely manner at some point. The workshops are – as we were able to convince ourselves during an appointment at the TIBA plant in southern Styria – extremely effective: while many an employee still talked about their own mishaps with a smile during the first few minutes of the 2-hour "work break", the mood quickly became more reflective and one or the other safety problem in the company was openly discussed. In addition to the workshop, the former papermaker, driver and EDP employee, who works in the Legal Compliance department, also takes time to discuss safety-related problems directly at the individual workplaces with the workers in the plant at eye level. The success proves him right: since the start of the workshop series, the number of workplace accidents has demonstrably decreased.

Unsafe actions creep in particularly easily with years of routine and constant time pressure. By actively addressing safety issues directly on site, employees and their families not only save themselves suffering in the best case, but the individual companies also save themselves a lot of unnecessary sick leave in the long run. The time and attention is therefore well invested.





MABA FERTIGTEILINDUSTRIE GMBH

LARGE CONTRACTS ON MAJOR HIGHWAY

With an order volume of EUR 3.5 million, the installation of safety barriers on the A2 Südbahnhof between Graz-West and Lieboch was the largest single call-off to date in the current framework agreement with ASFINAG. Work is also continuing south of Vienna on the noise protection measures begun last year.

In the last two years, Austria's "southern freeway" (A2) has been an important focus for the safety barriers and noise protection systems manufactured and installed by MABA Fertigteileindustrie. During the general rehabilitation of the two directional carriageways on the 9 km section between the Graz-West junction and Lieboch, a total of 23 km of Deltabloc® restraint systems were used both on the central reservation and on the edges of the carriageway.

These included a number of special solutions such as bridge elements mounted in steel plates, which do not shift despite vibrations and are only torn out of their anchorage in a controlled manner in the event of an accident. For the roadway drainage, elements with customized manhole recesses were also used, each of which was replaced individually by the employees of MABA Montagebau GmbH on the basis of on-site measurements following the erection of a temporary element chain.

Part of the complex pavement rehabilitation, which was already started in 2020, was also the dual use of DB80-elements, which were first used as temporary construction site protection to guide oncoming traffic and only installed permanently at the edge of the carriageway in a later construction phase.

Production, temporary storage, delivery and installation are carried out by MABA as a full-service provider, because this is where special know-how and experience are required. This was the case with the installation of a space-saving combination of restraint system and noise barrier in the area of the Kaiserwald rest stop. Noise protection is currently also a priority south of Vienna, where MABA, in cooperation with the Forster company, is erecting combined systems of wood-concrete absorbers and aluminum and acrylic panels mounted above them at record heights of up to 13 meters.



Record wall: In 2021, a noise protection installation up to 13 m high was erected near Wiener Neudorf in the direction of Graz with MABA participation. In 2022/23, an 11-meter-high wall will be built in the direction of Vienna.

ÖBB KORALMBAHN PROJECT OF THE CENTURY

THE BIG FINALE

130 km of new line, including a 33 km long tunnel and more than 25 years of construction time: Construction of the Koralm Railway from Graz to Klagenfurt is entering the final phase and is scheduled to go into operation in 2025 with a large number of precast components from MABA FTI and an incredible end spurt by the project operator under extremely difficult conditions.

"In a (quarter) century project, even the proverbial end spurt is a 3-year marathon for us," says Klaus Schneider (59), ÖBB overall coordinator for the Koralmbahn project. We met the man from Graz along the route in western Styria.

At the entrance to the office containers and meeting rooms in the equipment base and construction office in Wettmannstätten, a fully equipped track support slab stands directly in front of the door, and behind it a huge model of the tunnel boring machine. These are two eloquent symbols of the heart of the Koralm Railway, the sixth-longest tunnel in the world and 33 km long.

Behind this symbolism, of course, are two large orders for MABA Fertigteileindustrie, which produced the segment rings that were laid by the tunnel boring machine in a field factory at the tunnel portal. And the demonstrative track support slab is one of the 18,500 pieces that have already been manufactured at MABA's main plant in Wöllersdorf.

"Are you satisfied with MABA's services and products?" we ask the trained industrial engineer at the end of our short meeting: "Everything is fine!" the busy project coordinator says quickly, raises his hand to clarify and say goodbye at the same time, and hurries off to the next meeting.

Reliable suppliers in demand

"Everything is fine" is, of course, welcome news. Because in the middle of the project finale, you have to be able to rely on your suppliers. And even more so in times when no stone is left unturned:

"Imagine entering the final sprint at the end of a marathon and suddenly all kinds of unexpected, massive hurdles are set up in front of you – a pandemic out of the blue as well as the economic upheavals that are currently taking place. Of course, that's a huge challenge for all of us!" says Klaus Schneider. Not to apologize, but rather to reaffirm. His meaning is clear: "We can do it!"

The complexity of the entire project process is, of course, difficult to imagine, much like the integration into the overall rail system itself. For example, construction work has to be completed more or less a year before commissioning, because from the extensive testing to the various approvals, there is still a lot to do even in the commissioning phase.



The marathon man: For 25 years, **Klaus Schneider** has been managing the construction of the Koralm Railway project of the century for the Austrian Federal Railways from Graz. For the final spurt until commissioning in 2025, he and his team are facing another marathon distance – and under difficult conditions at that!

Final construction phases

At the moment, however, construction is still going on intensively – on the Styrian side in particular on the last project section, which runs from Graz via Feldkirchen to Weitendorf. Along the A9 Phyrnautobahn, the section is still largely under construction (see title picture): The subgrade has been asphalted, and the power poles (MABA) and drainage system (TIBA) have already been installed.

The 3.2 km underfloor section in the vicinity of the airport is also a major challenge – another section for which the corresponding track support slabs will be produced by MABA in the coming year.

Klaus Schneider is confident that the deadline will be met. After all, as is so common in this country, once you've started something, you finish it!



Not only special products: In addition to the complex and spectacular segment and track-bearing slab productions, the Kirchdorfer Group is once again supplying many standard products along the line, such as mainline sleepers, turnout sleepers, catenary poles, and platform edges, as have just been installed here at Hengsberg station.



Norbert Stricker is responsible for the slab track project in Wöllersdorf.

ARGE KORALMBAHN with HABAU GROUP

Production of 20,000 track-bearing slabs that will be used along the Koralm Railway started in August 2020 at the Wöllersdorf site and is now 95% complete. In a joint venture with the Upper Austrian HABAU Group, MABA Fertigteilindustrie has taken over production while HABAU is taking care of logistics, storage yard construction, and commercial processing.

Norbert Stricker, technical managing director of the consortium for MABA FTI, expressly praises the excellent cooperation between the two Austrian family-owned companies: "We follow a similar philosophy and therefore have a very good basis for working together on this major project".



In Sollenau, the ARGE Koralmbahn (MABA + HABAU consortium) operates a temporary storage yard for approx. 4,300 track support slabs. Another 2,400 slabs are stored in St. Andrä on the Carinthian side of the Koralm Tunnel.

MABA FERTIGTEILINDUSTRIE



RENOVATED RAILWAY SIDING IN WÖLLERSDORF

Like many locations of the Kirchdorf Precast Division, MABA's main plant in Wöllersdorf has always had its own rail siding. This has now been comprehensively modernized at a cost of more than 2 million euros.

The historic Wöllersdorf siding has now been completely redesigned in a large-scale renovation project sponsored by the rail infrastructure company. The siding was in urgent need of refurbishment. It previously ran in an elongated curve and is now being straightened over a 190-meter section. This also meant that the track alignment had to be adapted to the new 20-ton gantry crane above the siding at the same time.

On this occasion, the existing terrain jumps were also removed and a professional drainage system was implemented, which will prevent the facility from silting up in the future.

The new siding now has a higher load capacity, can be used at higher speeds, and is also technically up to date. Most of the conversion work had to be carried out during ongoing production and delivery.



A photograph of two men in a factory setting. They are standing in front of a large, cylindrical industrial machine with a metallic, slightly worn surface. The man on the left is wearing a light blue button-down shirt, dark jeans, a white hard hat, and glasses. The man on the right is wearing a blue short-sleeved button-down shirt, grey trousers, a white hard hat, and has a tattoo on his left arm. The background shows blue structural beams and overhead lighting.

TIBA AUSTRIA GMBH

FURTHER ON COURSE FOR EXPANSION

TIBA Managing Director Norbert Schuster and Site Manager Dietmar Boitsits recently commissioned a new, largely automated, production plant for shafts and rings. By investing millions in Sollenau, TIBA AUSTRIA is continuing its dynamic growth course, which has made the civil engineering specialists the absolute market leader in Austria in just a few years.

With numerous training opportunities, a good work-life balance and a strong spirit of innovation, TIBA AUSTRIA GmbH, which now has around 150 employees at five locations, has not only become an attractive employer within just a few years, but also the absolute market leader in civil engineering in Austria! "There are two important values at our company: customer satisfaction and team spirit!" explains site manager Dietmar Boisits at the Sollenau plant in Lower Austria. And for the two managing directors Christian Nageler and Norbert Schuster, the good working atmosphere and a positive attitude are of course also enormously important!

Increasing turnover, attractive product range

The company, which was only founded in 2005, with core competence in civil engineering products for sewers, traffic, drainage and environmental technology, exceeded sales of 30 million euros for the first time in 2021. The acquisition of LUIKI-Betonwerke GmbH in the Austrian province of Upper Styria by the Kirchdorfer Group also enabled the company to expand its broad product range and open up a new market segment in the gardening and landscaping sector. TIBA AUSTRIA can now produce further special precast elements in the civil engineering and landscaping sector at the newly acquired location in Leoben, thus ensuring shorter transport routes.

"The high-quality product range, which is in demand far beyond Upper Styria, has proven to be a stable sales driver and is a wonderful addition to our portfolio. Thus, our products are not only used underground, but we also supply the building blocks for great greening projects and beautiful paving," explains Norbert Schuster. The additional location and a growing export business to neighboring countries will keep the expansion alive and growing. The company has opened its own sales location in Croatia and implemented other measures. The current investment at the Sollenau site is just one of many that have been realized in cooperation with the long-standing production technology partner Schlüsselbauer Technology.

Down-to-earth business

TIBA AUSTRIA has long established itself in the Austrian building materials industry with its strategic focus on mass-produced "price list products", which are offered through the building materials trade and also through the construction industry. Thus, TIBA AUSTRIA products immediately catch the eye on construction sites – not only evidenced by the logo sprayed in red, the Kirchdorf trademark, but of course above all by the excellent quality. And new investments and the continuing expansion means that this will not change anytime soon.



New facilities, new offices, proven quality: Not only new investment in new Schlüsselbauer "Magic" production facilities at the Sollenau site, but occupation of new offices. The impeccable quality of TIBA products is therefore still assured.

MABA FTI – GERASDORF PRODUCTION SITE

FACTORY CONVERSION WITH FULL PRODUCTION

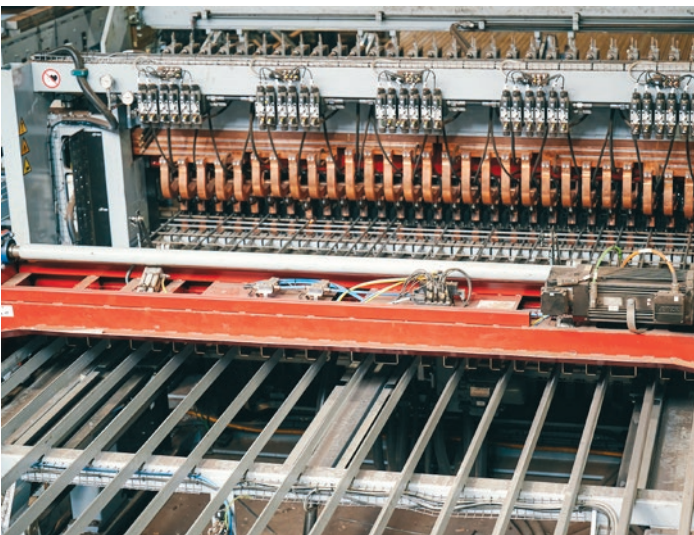
The MABA plant in Gerasdorf near Vienna was significantly modernized this spring while full operations continued. With state-of-the-art equipment, the productivity of the site, which has always been highly automated, was once again improved.

With additional work shifts and a young, highly motivated production manager on the ball, the team in Gerasdorf was able to handle the three-month conversion phase of Hall 3, where the basket and double walls are now produced in parallel, with great commitment while partially maintaining production.

The plant conversion planned by Gernot Koisser was completed on schedule. By optimizing the production layout and using an additional shuttering robot, it was possible to significantly increase production capacity through higher cycle rates. The old mesh welding plant from 1995 was retired and the site's added value was increased with its own lattice girder production. Towards the end of the rebuild phase, Jürgen Strohschneider took over management of the Gerasdorf site, thus returning to his ancestral plant after six years in Wöllersdorf.



Site Manager Jürgen Strohschneider and Production Manager Markus Giefing are now producing again using state-of-the-art technology.



Modern technology, high added value: The mesh welding plant was replaced and the new lattice girder welding plant increases added value.



KAMMEL GMBH

OVERDUE EXPANSION FOR EASIER BUILDING

More light, more space, photovoltaics on the roof and a revamped circulation system in the factory: After a series of conversions in its own factory, it is now even easier to build with Kammel!

With the slogan "Simply easier building", KAMMEL GmbH in Grafendorf near Hartberg has earned an excellent reputation as a full-range supplier and regularly shines with pleasing business results. But the office had been bursting at the seams for years, the old mixing plant was no longer sufficient in terms of capacity, and the tried-and-tested circulation system also deserved a fundamental modernization after more than 20 years.

State-of-the-art productivity

Work has become much easier for the employees with a new control system, an additional automatic concrete spreader, a new compaction station, and new additions to the formwork and reinforcement robots. This all means that a higher cycle rate and significant production progress can be achieved.

Improved room and working climate

Productivity is of course an issue in the office as well as on the shop floor. So in June, Father Alois Puntigam-Juritsch was able to inaugurate not only the completely renovated circulation system, but also a 350 square metre office extension. The employees are now well provided for ergonomically with height-adjustable desks, and new meeting rooms for customer and planning discussions. It is again possible to cook all day in the social room, even when customers are in the building. In the future, it will not only be easier to build at Kammel, but also easier to work.



New employees: Strong reinforcement for the robotics department.



Increased speed: With the new systems, production is moving fast.

THE DIGITIZATION IS ON A GOOD PATH

The increasing digitization of products, services and ways of working at KCS companies has long been a hot topic. Things are now progressing well with a formal digitalization roadmap and professional consulting.

The Digitalization Roadmap project was launched last year with the consultants from Horváth & Partners. This involved clarifying what KCS actually means by digitization and what measurable objectives are to be set for the almost 50 individual digitization projects in coming years. In the course of this, the establishment of a specialized project management office was initiated (see report on p. 29). Following the completion of an initial test project in spring 2022, KCS digitization is now well underway.

Resource planning as a challenge

In addition to evaluating which higher-level programs should be included in the roadmap as clusters for the large number of projects and who is responsible and accountable for each of them, it was also necessary to organize the underlying resource planning and agree on measurable goals. Time and budgets are precious, limited resources, and the individual digitization projects can only be implemented with strict prioritization and specifically allocated resources.

Important principles according to the mission statement are, above all, standardization, even across company boundaries, and prioritization of customer-oriented and business-enhancing initiatives.

Test run with the new PMO

Forejtek has already successfully implemented a first project according to the process defined by the PMO, using the business coordination software Projektron.

"This shows that we are on the right track here. The PMO is now teaching this methodology to current and future project managers so that we can move from individual, systemically uncoordinated projects to multi-project management," explains Forejtek. His department, with the two specialists Michael Bulant (CAD system support/BIM) and Erwin Hofmann (SAP, ECM, hardware), consistently coordinates

with IT management and the respective specialist departments.

Compliance with the strategy and the assessment of individual project progress are ensured by regular meetings of the so-called Digitization Board. In this board, not only members of management but also experts and the project managers as well as the PMO and, of course, the team leaders for digitization have a new contact person who ensures that everyone involved pulls together, above all, the companies.



In line with our digital **mission statement**, we want to enable **sustainable intelligent construction** for our customers and partners by expanding digital services and automating processes.

”

Thomas Forejtek
Leader Digitization/BIM

THE FIVE PROGRAMS OF THE KCS DIGITIZATION ROADMAP: YOUR RESPONSIBLE PERSONS AND THE MOST IMPORTANT KEYWORDS

Industry 4.0

(Franz Buschmüller)

Production planning and manufacturing, digitization of quality assurance

Transparency & Reporting

(Jens Schmidt)

Real-time data for business management

IT Systems, Processes & Data

(Christian Rosenbichler)

Optimization of SAP landscape, ECM data, process costs

Digital Products & Services

(Christian Nageler)

Smart Products, Smart Services

Digital Customer Experience

(Klaus Aichholzer)

Customer contacts, customer claims, digital product availability

OUTSTANDING IDEA + EXCELLENT HANDLING

The head of finance had a perfect idea and the employee formerly responsible for Business Excellence has been ensuring excellent implementation in her new function since February 2022: The new Project Management Office is a resounding success after less than a year!

In times of advancing digitization and with a strong tailwind from divisional management, good ideas naturally come particularly easily and end up in the form of dozens of projects (mainly) with Group IT, which then no longer knows which one to attack first. Unless someone has a really good idea and brings method and rigorous consistency to the project.

PMO ensures project progress

Since everyone prefers to tackle their own project first, and in the end everyone is dissatisfied with the resulting backlog, Jens Schmidt, the commercial manager of the precast division, had taken the initiative to establish a Project Management Office in the course of the KCS Digitalization Roadmap project.

In other words, this is a permanent organizational unit through which project ideas and applications are first filtered, evaluated and analyzed. In the end, implementation be as efficient as possible, on schedule and above all, draw on resources that are currently available and can be called upon reliably.

The idea for such a PMO came to Schmidt not least because he had the perfect candidate for this role in his department in Simone Stricker. She had extensive experience as a project manager and as the corresponding project management know-how and the necessary interest for this task.



Jens Schmidt (Commercial Manager) initiated the KCS Project Management Office, **Simone Stricker (PMO Manager)** ensures its successful implementation.

Acute need, existing infrastructure

As early as 2014, the Kirchdorfer Group had purchased the Projektron Business Coordination Software, a powerful tool that can be used to clearly coordinate different projects with a variety of different roles (from management to department heads to project managers and project participants). However, it has not yet been used consistently.

Since the ambitious KCS Digitalization Roadmap (see report on page 28), an IT megaproject that literally cries out for structured project management, was launched in 2022, the timing was just right. Before the actual work could begin, the new PMO first constituted itself by implementing a "model project".

After defining all uniform processes, roles and communication rules, the Project Management Office has now been in

regular operation since February of this year, initially focusing on managing KCS IT projects as well as KIGS IT projects related to the precast division. In addition, Simone Stricker also performs resource management for Group IT as well as for KCS Business Excellence and the digitalization team.

Good example sets a precedent

Meanwhile, other Group divisions have already become aware of the new PMO, the software solution behind it, and Simone Stricker's expertise. A number of training courses have already been held so that the Kirchdorfer Group can also benefit from the PMO's know-how it has built up in other areas.



„ROAD TO GREEN“: GENERATIONAL DEVELOP- MENT UNDER WAY

Concrete formulations with a reduced CO₂ footprint, increased recyclability and concrete safety barriers with lower weight are among many other development projects on the "Road to Green" of the Kirchdorfer Road & Traffic division. This major generational change is also reflected in the development team itself.

Franz Spitzer, chief developer of the DELTABLOC® product family, will – after almost 30 years of service to the Kirchdorfer Group – take his well-deserved retirement in a few years. Until then, however, he still has a few trump cards up his sleeve. The gifted developer, who joined MABA Fertigteilindustrie in the 1990s as an assistant to Helmut Heibel, the inventor of DELTABLOC®, has his hands full with the development of the new, "green" product series.

He is being actively supported by his young deputy and designated successor, Vladimir Crovetto. The native Chilean only joined DELTABLOC International in April 2018 – but has already done some impressive work since then. First for two years in the STEELBLOC® development team, and since 2020 also for the DELTABLOC® product line.

The young highflyer originally came to Austria for the first time

as a 17-year-old via a student exchange. Quickly, the host family in Vienna became a second family to him, and he enrolled in mechanical engineering studies at the Vienna University of Technology after graduating from high school. He first started his professional career in Chile, where he got married. Fortunately for DELTABLOC®, he was also able to inspire his wife to come to live in Austria. And this past summer, he even became the father of a little daughter.

The motivation to develop new generations of products for future generations of people is therefore now a very personal concern for him. And for the next, "green" generation of DELTABLOC® concrete safety barriers, he is coming across exactly the right path, as he explains to us: "In my work with steel products, I have learned to save every single gram of weight without weakening safety performance. This is now benefiting me enormously on our Road to Green," he tells us in our conversation. As one of the graduates of the Kirchdorfer Group's management training course, which concluded just in March 2022, he is ideally prepared to help shape the sustainable future of the Group.



DELTABLOC GERMANY



ON THE SPOT WHEN IT COUNTS

When an emergency arose on a German freeway in the spring of 2020, DELTABLOC Germany was rapidly on hand with a solution. This has now resulted in a wonderful new customer relationship, which recently gave rise to an attractive noise protection project.

In the middle of the first coronavirus lockdown, an old noise barrier suddenly threatened to collapse on a highway in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. After calls for help from the local authorities to various suppliers, Robert Edelmann, with special travel permission from DELTABLOC Germany, rushed immediately to the spot to help out with a quick solution: Noise barriers, which were used for temporary protection of construction sites in Berlin-Potsdam a few years ago, could be provided for 5 years at an attractive price as a makeshift noise protection measure.

The head of the department responsible for the urban district of Stuttgart was so impressed by this action that a new challenge arose for DELTABLOC Germany the following year: For a construction project in the area of Zuffenhausen, south of Stuttgart, a space-saving solution for noise protection and vehicle safety barriers was needed, which, in addition, had to be produced and installed within a very short time: In other words, a clear case for the PHONOBLOC® DB NBF system!

This view was shared by the clients, in September 2021 the order was placed, and in December they were installed along a 700 metre section of the road, after a construction period of only 4 weeks. And what's more, the installation had to take place at night and



Barrier-free escape door, integrated radar unit: The new PHONOBLOC® DB NBF noise barriers on the A81 in the Zuffenhausen area leave nothing to be desired.

during snowfall and winter storms – the highway is just too busy in this section during the day. "Actually, the project was really great for us – although practically all the circumstances came together that you would NOT actually want: enormous time pressure and miserable weather. But we simply love the challenge – and everything worked out perfectly," Robert Edelmann sums up. And with this job, follow-up orders are probably only a matter of time!



STORIES FROM THE NEW WORLD

For the past 10 years, Georg Ferner has been flying around the world for DELTABLOC International, evaluating markets, initiating business and handling projects. The Latin American continent in particular keeps him constantly on his toes – with difficult challenges and enormous opportunities alike.

It was in 2010 when the then DELTABLOC Europe got wanderlust, so to speak, and renamed itself DELTABLOC International. Two years later, Georg Ferner came on board as a consultant and bringing a pronounced enthusiasm for distant countries. While previously at PORR, where he had worked as a civil engineer and then as a product manager responsible for all kinds of distant countries, he was gripped by a passion for travel. Nothing could hold him back at DELTABLOC, because there is a demand for high-quality and tested safety barriers almost all across the globe. The challenge is simply to find access to a particular market. And then to work with all possibilities, restrictions and standard-related technical conditions that emerge along the way. Not forgetting customs formalities and other bureaucratic stumbling blocks or cost drivers.

As a trained civil engineer and with Spanish in his luggage, Ferner therefore first sought a conversation with the Austrian trade delegate in Brazil. "Forget Brazil," he was advised. "Chile is prosperous, better developed and generally very interested in Europe. Known

as "the Germany of Latin America", it is often the first port of call for European companies in the western hemisphere south of the Rio Grande. Nevertheless, parallel to various project initiations in Chile, Ferner did not let up on Brazil, because the huge country generally has the best highways on the continent. With a 30-year state license, these are built and operated by huge private consortia, which often have several thousand kilometers of highway at their disposal. And they are open for business!

Difficult start, impressive success

While ultimately nothing ever came of a project in Chile, despite a great deal of personal effort and expert advice, Brazil has indeed proven to be fertile ground over the years. "But the beginning was really hard" admits Ferner, "The years before, Brazil was a real gold rush for Austrian companies, everyone had to go there, and almost all of them failed in the end."

But with the necessary prudence and persistence, DELTABLOC International finally succeeded in winning some projects. In any case, the enthusiasm on the part of the highway operators is great, but unfortunately, so are the customs duties on the imported tension bars and moulds, a factor that should not be underestimated. "The concessionaires are very interested in our efficient system, because every minute that a highway is at a standstill is directly

reflected in massive revenue losses in the toll system there," explains Ferner. In any case, the potential would be enormous: In southern Brazil alone, there are 25,000 kilometers of highway and the network is set to double over the coming years.

Jackpot in neighboring country

In Paraguay, a landlocked country between Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia with a population of just 7 million, Georg Ferner was

able to start a giant project in 2018. With local partners, over 100 kilometres of DELTABLOC® safety barriers have already been installed since.

A great success, considering that the entire staff on the ground in Latin America consists of one employee, who on top of that is not even permanently on site and in between also is tasked with looking around for new countries and markets to

invest in. "There are a few really exciting countries on my map," he tells us in closing. However, we won't reveal here which ones because DELTABLOC International, after all, has developed into a closely observed role model in recent years. So precisely where the best opportunities lie must for now remain a secret.



Red earth, green pastures: Southern Brazil, between Sao Paolo and Rio de Janeiro, is an especially fertile ground for DELTABLOC® installations.



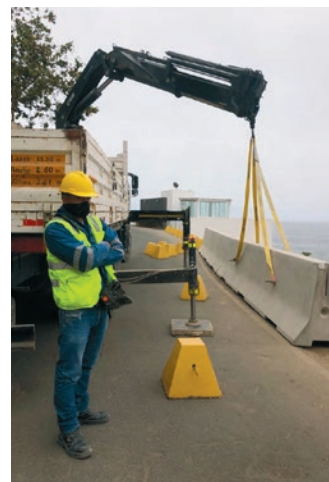
Top-notch infrastructure in Brazil: The best (and most expensive) highways in Latin America are all in private hands.



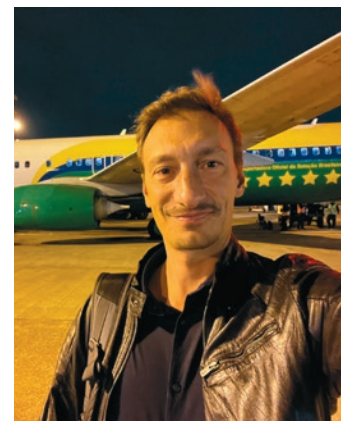
Training the concessionaires: The best safety barriers for the best roads. Comprehensive training included!



Megaproject in Paraguay: 113 km (!) of Deltabloc® elements have been installed along the Rota del Este towards Brazil since 2018.



Lima, Peru: With one foot already on the Pacific Coast...



Georg Ferner in his element: Airports are an extension of his office and the hub of quest for new projects.



DELTABLOC INTERNATIONAL

NORWAY
IS GOING FOR
STEELBLOC®

When it comes to road safety, the Scandinavians leave nothing to chance. In Norway, where they rely almost entirely on steel guardrails, the safety setup received a major boost with the addition of the STEELBLOC® "all-in-one" system, the most efficient solution in the world!

When DELTABLOC International introduced the revolutionary STEELBLOC® system in spring 2019, the interest among experts was enormous: an extremely slim guardrail system consisting of only three standardized components designed to cover a wide range of different requirements and performance classes was completely new. Whether the radical concept would prove itself in practice, however, was of course a completely different question. In Norway, the largest state road equipment supplier has now answered this question with an unequivocal "yes".

STEELBLOC® simplifies everything

Patrik Ekberg, who has been serving the Swedish market for many years, is familiar with the challenges in the neighboring land of a thousand fjords: a complex road network over long distances and difficult terrain. Add to that a rusty competitive situation that literally calls for a new approach.

"In Norway, you have the challenge that the suppliers there have a special system for each specification," explains Ekberg. "And that's a challenge even for any large road



Patrik Ekberg: In neighboring Norway, he has found an enthusiastic new customer for the up and coming STEELBLOC® system.

equipment supplier, because they have to keep all the individual parts for over half a dozen different systems in stock at all times. A logistical nightmare!"

In Norway, the state essentially builds its own roads. With over 3,000 employees, this road equipment supplier reports directly to the Ministry of Transport and is responsible for the construction and maintenance of a considerable part of the Norwegian road network. In other words, complicated logistics and challenging project implementation situations are not the usual problems that external contractors so often are expected to deal with.

For this reason, the Norwegians were obviously particularly interested in the Austrian "all-in-one" system, which offers groundbreaking opportunities for simplification with achievable specifications up to H4b.

The first contact with Patrik Ekberg took place in the summer of 2021. And by the end of that year, the negotiating partners from the DELTABLOC International headquarters in Wöllersdorf had already reached a basic agreement on a framework contract with the Norwegians. Just before things got underway, however, the hostilities in Ukraine began and steel prices suddenly shot skyward!

The basis for a good relationship

In the context of the price explosion on the raw material markets, the new partnership had to go through a baptism of fire right away: With mutual trust, full transparency and quick decisions, the first quotas were fixed without further ado in the spring, and after the first orders arrived, a four-man team came to Wöllersdorf for two days for training. Since then, the STEELBLOC® system has been installed in various places along the Norwegian road network.

From the very beginning, the new customers were particularly enthusiastic about the excellent support provided by the Austrian development team, which means that even special solutions can be implemented quickly, easily and effectively at any time.

Rapid support, tested solutions

As a Business Development Manager, Steffen Lehmann is responsible for STEELBLOC® development at the "Home of Road Safety" in Wöllersdorf. Since the start of the new cooperation, he quickly implemented a number of development requests from Norway: "In addition to



special transitions to existing systems, we have also already carried out our own crash tests for the new customer," explains Lehmann. Together with the Head of product management Marco Pollok, he is the main contact for ongoing support.

Corten steel u-turn

After only a few months of experience with the new STEELBLOC® system, the Norwegians recently even started replacing some existing steel guardrails that had been erected only a few years before on a high-ranking road section. On the E6 between Kolomoen and Dal, built between 2009 and 2015, guardrails made of Corten steel were used as on many roads in Norway.

The special alloy, developed a century ago by US Steel, has been increasingly popular in modern architecture due to its elegant rust-brown surface. Unfortunately, rust did not remain confined to the surface: Due to water and salt accumulating in the C-profiles, the structure of the guard rails was already badly attacked.

That the professionally galvanized replacement solution now comes from Austria of all places is of course gratifying and a sensational success for the up and coming system. And it's no surprise either – after all, engineers in the Alpine Republic are well acquainted with ice, snow and de-icing salt. There is only one last unknown factor in the whole equation: The influence of the midnight sun ...



PHOTO COMPETITION "SAFETY IN FOCUS"

THE WINNERS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED!

With 424 votes and 26 entries from all divisions of the Kirchdorfer Group and many different countries, the "Safety in Focus" photo competition has raised awareness of the issue of safety among many employees.

Some thought about which safety aspect they could photograph. Others went in search of errors in the pictures submitted. This showed us how easy it is to overlook a safety aspect and how important it is, therefore, that we also keep an eye on our colleagues and their safety. Only all together – as Team LEO – can we manage to be **safe together.**

Congratulations to Salzburg to Lydia Dirnberger from PHONOBLÖC noise control competence center for winning the individual ranking. Pure adrenaline also prevailed in the group classification – with a white water part of the team technical planning at MABA's Wöllersdorf site.



MABA FTI / prevailed with 80 votes in the team ranking. Above: Award ceremony for the successful team, including cake with the winning photo.



2nd place (92 votes) for **Maximilian Horvath**
(Kirchdorfer Zementwerk)



1st place (139 votes) for **Lydia Dirnberger**
(DELTABLOC International / Oberndorf site)



3rd place (83 votes) for **Claudia Fessel**
(Kirchdorfer Zementwerk)



WE LOOK FORWARD TO **RECEIVING YOUR
FEEDBACK** ON THIS ISSUE OF KN:

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