

---

**HELMUT SCHLEWEIS**  
President of the German Savings Banks Association



“The economic damage caused by the Corona crisis has made comprehensive recovery necessary. This should be based on social, corporate and ecological sustainability.”

---

Berlin, July 2020

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

At the time of publication of this report on the Savings Banks Finance Group's 2019 business figures, we find ourselves in a completely new situation here in Germany and in many other countries.

The Corona pandemic has severely affected the financial health of many households, businesses and the self-employed. It has also triggered an enormous surge in digitalisation in public life. This demands a completely new way of thinking from all of us; everyone is called upon to review their own priorities in terms of what they do for the community.

Since their foundation, the Savings Banks' priorities have been based on socially and economically sustainable development. Our task is to organise people's financial participation for the long term. This also includes securing their digital self-determination and promoting ecological behaviour. We will focus on these areas in 2020.

---

MORE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAVINGS BANKS FINANCE GROUP  
Page 16–33

---

**“Together with the Landesbanken and other Group partners, the Savings Banks are playing their part in the economic recovery after the crisis and in sustainable development in Germany.”**

---

The economic damage caused by the Corona crisis has made a comprehensive recovery necessary. This should be based on social, corporate and ecological sustainability.

Throughout the exceptional situation that lasted for many weeks, the Savings Banks secured Germany's financial infrastructure, which is provided to a large extent by our institutions. They have also made a major contribution towards saving hundreds of thousands of companies and freelancers from economic collapse and providing them with additional liquidity. These are important prerequisites for the necessary recovery of our economy.

---

**“Sustainability will make the Savings Bank philosophy even more important in the future. It will give a boost to our fundamental beliefs.”**

---

The Savings Banks Finance Group's customer proximity, technical performance and economic substance have proven their worth in the crisis. All this was only possible because Savings Banks know their customers and are prepared to take responsibility. And it was possible because Savings Banks take a long-term view and they operated conservatively during the years of economic upswing – as was also the case in 2019.

Together with the Landesbanken and other Group partners, the Savings Banks are playing their part in the economic recovery after the crisis and in sustainable development in Germany.

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Hendrik...' followed by a stylized flourish.