

ESG at BLSK.

Regionally Rooted, Responsibly Positioned.

Status: 19 February 2026

Strategic Alignment

Braunschweigische Landessparkasse (BLSK), as a partially legally dependent institution of Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale (NORD/LB), is part of the Savings Banks Finance Group. As a public-law savings bank, BLSK has the mandate to strengthen competition within its business territory based on market and competitive requirements and to ensure the appropriate and sufficient provision of financial and credit services to all population groups – and in particular to SMEs – throughout the region.

Its business activities follow the regional principle: the business territory is limited to parts of Lower Saxony, and earnings generated benefit the region, for example through the Braunschweigische Sparkassenstiftung, donations or sponsorships (including sponsorship of the HarzForumZukunft).

This public mandate is embedded in the State Treaty between the State of Lower Saxony, the State of Saxony-Anhalt and the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania on NORD/LB, as well as in the Statute of BLSK, and is reflected in the bank's strategy ([Source 1](#); [Source 2](#)).

This includes accessible premises, transparent advisory services, fair products, and the promotion of economic self-reliance. At the same time, BLSK is comprehensively embedded in the governance, steering and control structures of NORD/LB. As a result, it combines the strengths of a systemically important Landesbank – regulatory depth, risk expertise and ESG professionalism – with the customer proximity and public-interest orientation of the Savings Banks sector ([Source 3](#)).

ESG Governance Structure and Responsibilities

NORD/LB has published an ESG Governance Framework that outlines the responsibilities of the Supervisory Board, the Managing Board and the individual divisions, the embedding into committees, as well as the scope of responsibilities of the ESG competence centres; this includes reporting structures and training concepts ([Source 4](#)).

The ESG Strategy of NORD/LB forms the overarching framework: it implements the mission, the double materiality approach and the integration of ESG into business segments (e.g. investment advisory, asset management), and it references the EU Taxonomy as well as the Transition Guidelines ([Source 5](#)).

Transition Guidelines in the Lending Business

The Transition Guidelines of NORD/LB define the binding ESG framework for the lending business. These set out minimum standards (e.g. for handling human rights, aligned with the UN Global Compact and OECD Guidelines), fundamental exclusions (e.g. controversial weapons), and sector principles for selected industries. They are regularly reviewed and refined. As an operational rulebook, these complement the NORD/LB ESG Strategy and implements its requirements in day-to-day business ([Source 5](#); [Source 6](#)).

The scope extends to all financing activities of NORD/LB. The guidelines explicitly take transition phases into account by accompanying customers on their transformation pathways. At the same time, they clearly define which activities are excluded and which can only be financed under certain additional requirements.

As a partially legally dependent institution of NORD/LB, BLSK applies this framework, including the sector-specific requirements (e.g. energy, industry, real estate), so that the criteria of the Transition Guidelines are assessed uniformly and consistently in lending decisions ([Source 6](#); [Source 1](#)).

In practice this means: in credit initiation and credit assessment, the minimum standards are systematically taken into account, exclusions are adhered to, and the sector principles are used as technical guidance; in the case of project financings outside the EU/OECD, additional review rules apply. In this way, the guidelines ensure that financings – whether in retail, corporate or project business – reliably reflect the strategic ESG requirements of the Group ([Source 6](#)).

Handling Overdue Payments and Socially Responsible Credit Management

BLSK naturally complies with the extensive legal requirements regarding consumer protection in the credit business, such as the EU Consumer Credit Directive (implemented in the German Civil Code and associated regulations) or the Mortgage Credit Directive, which the bank has fully implemented in its credit granting guidelines and processes. Accordingly, borrowers are informed in an understandable manner about all credit conditions, risks and costs, as required by law.

As part of the credit approval process, BLSK conducts a comprehensive assessment of the creditworthiness of borrowers. A loan is only granted if it is considered likely that customers will be able to meet their obligations arising from the loan agreement throughout the entire term. For ongoing credit and receivables management, BLSK has appropriate mechanisms in place for continuous risk monitoring and the identification of increased risks. Arrears are reviewed and processed on every banking day. When increased risks are identified, active outreach is initiated depending on the risk classification. If necessary, contact may be initiated by employees specially trained to handle risk-bearing exposures. Customers experiencing liquidity difficulties may proactively contact BLSK at any time. Employees support them in the structured assessment of their situation and in the development of viable solution options.

BLSK pursues a socially responsible and risk-adequate collections policy. Enforcement measures are generally used only as a last resort, once all opportunities for open and solution-oriented dialogue have been exhausted. Fees, deadlines, and procedural steps are presented transparently and comprehensibly and are part of the loan agreement. Particular consideration is given to vulnerable customer groups, such as in cases of illness, unemployment or signs of over-indebtedness, in order to avoid situations of excessive burden and at the same time support the financial stability of customers and maintain long-term customer relationships.

To bridge liquidity shortages and stabilise repayment, BLSK offers market-standard instruments — in particular temporary payment adjustments to repayment instalments, changes to loan terms, and individually structured restructuring solutions. All measures are applied under market-standard conditions. In un-terminated contractual relationships, the focus lies on the continuation or adjustment of the agreement and — if a viable solution is achieved — on the preservation of collateral (e.g. real estate collateralised by land charges). Receivables management is carried out through our service provider IBM.

All loan modifications are implemented on the basis of clear internal requirements and after careful assessment of the customer's financial circumstances, ensuring that both the customer's ability to pay and the bank's risk profile are adequately considered.

The governance of socially responsible credit and receivables management is ensured through clear responsibilities, binding internal requirements and effective controls:

- **Framework & Standards:** Defined internal guidelines, process descriptions and decision-making competencies apply to loan origination, intensified management, restructuring and collections (including documentation requirements, the four-eyes principle and escalation paths).
- **Roles & Qualifications:** The handling of risk-bearing exposures is carried out by specialised and trained employees; qualification and training measures are an integral part of our approach and ensure the consideration of social aspects (including dealing with vulnerable groups).
- **Daily Monitoring & Management:** Overdue payments and early warning indicators are reviewed and processed on every banking day; defined thresholds (e.g. level of arrears, number of days overdue) guide managing intensity and escalation.
- **Decision-Making & Control:** Restructuring and adjustment measures are examined and approved based on defined criteria (including liquidity, economic viability, risk profile, collateral); regular controls and reporting ensure compliance.
- **Oversight & Reporting:** Relevant circumstances are reported regularly to the responsible steering and control functions and used to further develop processes.

Social Inclusion & Financial Education

BLSK comprehensively fulfils its societal mandate to promote financial inclusion: through donations, sponsorships and the Braunschweigische Sparkassenstiftung, which it co-founded, the bank supports numerous projects each year in the areas of social, cultural, sports-related and financial education ([Source 7](#)).

Financial education is an important prerequisite for enabling people to make well-informed financial decisions and to align their lives in a financially sustainable way. BLSK is committed to its public mandate and promotes financial education both in school and extracurricular settings ([Source 1](#)).

Young people learn, for example, through competitions such as the Stock Market Simulation Game ("Planspiel Börse"), how to make financial decisions while also considering sustainability criteria.

This offering is award-winning, free from advertising and aligned with the curricula.

The Stock Market Simulation Game familiarises young people with how the economy and stock market function. The promotion of sustainable investments is addressed through an integrated sustainability competition in which participants put together investment portfolios based on sustainability criteria. The Stock Market Simulation Game takes place annually and is carried out in close coordination with local schools ([Source 8](#)).

The "Money and Household" advisory service of the Savings Banks Finance Group supports private households with a central offering on all questions relating to budgeting and financial matters.

With the help of guides, lectures and planning tools, customers can manage their finances in a solid and sustainable way. The offerings are free of advertising and cost and are available to all citizens as well as to non-profit institutions. The Savings Banks are committed to recognising and preventing the risks of unplanned debt at an early stage. As part of various cooperations, targeted and needs-based materials, information tools and lectures are therefore developed ([Source 9](#)).

Human Rights & Supply Chain

Respect for human rights and the condemnation of forced and child labour are part of the self-understanding of a savings bank. Its business activities are subject to German and European law. These laws contain comprehensive regulations and due-diligence obligations that firmly implement the respect of human rights. For savings banks, the numerous conventions and protocols ratified by the Federal Republic of Germany represent an equally self-evident commitment.

Neither the bank's own employees nor any other persons are discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way based on their age, gender, disability, skin colour, cultural or religious background or sexual orientation. Respect for human rights applies not only internally but also externally: adherence to fundamental values in the field of human rights and labour standards is also of central importance in procurement. BLSK increasingly ensures that its suppliers and service providers enter into binding commitments to comply with human rights. A publicly accessible complaint mechanism is established for employees, customers, business partners and the general public ([Source 10](#); [Source 11](#); [Source 12](#)).

The Savings Banks lead by example: they place great emphasis on a sustainable supply chain even in their own procurement activities and take measures to continuously improve. For example, the Savings Banks are working to cover their energy needs from an increasingly higher share of renewable energies. Procurement processes are also increasingly geared towards giving particular consideration to sustainable products and sustainability-oriented suppliers and service providers. Regional providers are also increasingly taken into account in order to contribute to strengthening the local economy. Cooperation with companies and service providers that violate human rights or environmental, labour or social standards is not compatible with the values and attitudes of BLSK. In addition, the aspiration of NORD/LB and BLSK is that all advertising and sales-related activities are carried out responsibly, transparently and in the spirit of fair competition. BLSK places particular emphasis on understandable and accessible customer communication — both in branches and through digital channels ([Source 13](#)).

Employees

BLSK is a fair and attractive employer. It offers young professionals as well as people already in working life the best possible opportunities for professional and personal development. The majority of Savings Banks employees and managers also live within the business territory. BLSK trains young talent locally, who continuously develop their skills and knowledge within the savings bank ([Source 7](#)).

The employees of BLSK contribute to the institution's success. Therefore, the savings bank creates an environment in which they can realise a meaningful and fulfilling professional life. It offers qualified specialists from different areas a demanding job and exciting prospects. BLSK promotes employees through further training in both technical and personal development areas and ensures

a healthy work-life balance, enabling them to combine professional ambitions with a harmonious family and leisure life. Health prevention and raising awareness for a healthy lifestyle also have a permanent place at BLSK, for example through a wide range of corporate health management offerings ([Source 13](#)).

“We can do more than money”: true to this motto, BLSK is committed to the community. It supports projects and initiatives not only through financial contributions but also by encouraging and sustainably motivating voluntary engagement among citizens and its own employees. Many employees, for example, contribute hands-on during project days and support non-profit initiatives in selected projects — such as during the NORD/LB-wide Social Day. These and similar “corporate volunteering” activities regularly attract significant public and media attention. A large proportion of staff engage in voluntary activities throughout the year in many areas. BLSK supports this commitment, as it strongly fosters regional expertise and identification with the local area. And it motivates civic engagement: for example, it supports customers who want to create long-term impact in setting up charitable foundations ([Source 14](#)).

Qualified and Responsible Advisory Services

The customer-oriented employees of BLSK have specialised training and receive regular further education to ensure competent, integrity-based and consumer-protection-oriented advisory services. More than 175 retail customer advisors have already completed the basic training for the “Private Financial Concept,” which guarantees a consistently high advisory quality and forms the basis for further qualification.

In addition, all advisors — for example in securities advisory or credit distribution — regularly participate in mandatory training sessions (e.g. e-learning modules, classroom training) that cover relevant legal and regulatory requirements. All employees who have securities expertise have therefore already completed corresponding training during their professional careers. This particularly includes training on the requirements of the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II) and the German Securities Trading Act (WpHG), which ensure investor- and investment-appropriate advice.

Furthermore, regular training requirements must be met in accordance with the Insurance Distribution Directive (IDD), under which all employees involved in insurance distribution must complete at least 15 hours of continuing education annually.

Additionally, internal codes of conduct and the NORD/LB “Code of Conduct” are trained to implement ethical standards such as anti-corruption, avoidance of conflicts of interest and fair treatment of customers in day-to-day operations. The bank ensures that these guidelines are not only present on paper but are actively lived by employees, thereby promoting and supporting a discrimination-free and open working environment for all staff. For example, all employees must regularly participate in behavioural and compliance training (including anti-fraud, anti-money-laundering and data-protection training) ([Source 13](#); [Source 15](#); [Source 16](#)).

Access to Finance

In order to enable access for all customer groups, BLSK offers its services both in person on site and through low-barrier digital channels. Across its entire business territory, it maintains a dense network of 33 branches and 50 self-service locations (as of January 2026). These are structurally

barrier-free (e.g. wheelchair-accessible entrances, aids for people with visual or hearing impairments, etc.), so that people with physical disabilities can also use banking services on site. The Bürgerpark branch in Braunschweig, for example, is indicated as “largely wheelchair-accessible”; additionally, ATMs with deposit/withdrawal functions and a self-service terminal are available ([Source 17](#)).

In parallel, BLSK has invested significant resources in recent years in the digitalisation and modernisation of its IT systems to provide innovative online and mobile banking services. Through BLSK’s multiple award-winning online banking portal (accessible via www.blsk.de), customers can access account information 24/7, execute transfers, use digital services (e.g. TAN procedures, inbox, limits), multilingual instructions and tutorials, and – if needed – make use of digital advisory services ([Source 18](#)).

BLSK’s objective is to design its internet branch, online banking platform and the Savings Banks apps to be accessible and to make them available to customers in accordance with the requirements of the Accessibility Strengthening Act (BFSG), the State Disability Equality Acts (L-BGG), and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (EN 301 549 / WCAG).

By combining modern technology with personal advice, BLSK once again follows the mandate embedded in its Statute: to ensure an appropriate and broad provision of banking services to all population groups. Furthermore, by offering low-threshold digital services (such as the easy-to-use online banking platform or the electronic inbox for account statements), BLSK helps ensure that customers can access their financial information as conveniently and securely as possible. The electronic provision of account statements via the online inbox is promoted through a corresponding account model, which not only increases convenience but also saves paper.

At the same time, BLSK ensures – in line with its sustainability strategy – that no one is left behind in the context of digital innovation: personal advice and support (e.g. for setting up online banking access or using banking apps) remain available, particularly for customer groups who are less familiar with technology ([Source 19](#); [Source 1](#)).

BLSK provides all population groups with access to financial services. Every person with lawful residence in the EU is granted a basic account with essential functions (transfers, direct debits, card payments) under the Payment Accounts Act. BLSK also offers different current account models – from youth and training accounts to models with extended inclusive services ([Source 20](#)).

Prepaid credit cards enable cashless payments and cash withdrawals based on prepaid credit – useful for customer groups who want to participate in payment transactions without overdraft risk ([Source 21](#)).

In the S-Corporate Portal, user rights can be managed, inboxes administered, and payment processes digitalised. The Digital Financial Statement (DiFin) allows the standardised transmission of annual financial statements and thus supports information obligations (e.g. § 18 KWG). The corporate customer service centre also contains instructions for the “Sparkasse Business” app, S-pushTAN, account alert functions (e.g. turnover, limit, real-time transfer alerts), as well as further online services ([Source 22](#)).

In addition, BLSK offers products with sustainability characteristics: these include sustainability-oriented investment opportunities from Deka with an ESG focus, as well as the Löwen+ funds. Additionally, the sustainability module in online banking helps make each private customer’s financial behaviour more transparent by analysing their individual CO₂ footprint based

on their personal current account, thereby enabling conclusions regarding future sustainability-oriented behaviour (Source 3).

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