

HALF-YEAR REPORT



EXPANSION AND CHANGE

Bachem is a leading, innovationdriven company specializing in the development and manufacture of peptides and oligonucleotides. The company, which has 50 years of experience and expertise, provides products for research, clinical development, and commercial application to pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies worldwide and offers a comprehensive range of services. Bachem operates internationally with headquarters in Switzerland and locations in Europe, the US and Asia. The company is listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange. For further information, see www.bachem.com.

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CHF 239.9 MILLION

SALES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR

Slight increase driven by commercial projects.

150 NEW POSITIONS

EXPANSION OF THE WORKFORCE

to 1926 full-time employees.

CHF 114.6 MILLION

INVESTMENTS

across all sites to expand manufacturing capacity.

LARGE-VOLUME CONTRACT

FOR PEPTIDES

in 2027–2031 with a minimum volume of CHF 500 million.

CAPITAL INCREASE

SECURES CHF 105.9 MILLION

to ensure future growth.

1ST HALF-YEAR 2023 IN BRIEF

SALES GROWTH in CHF million

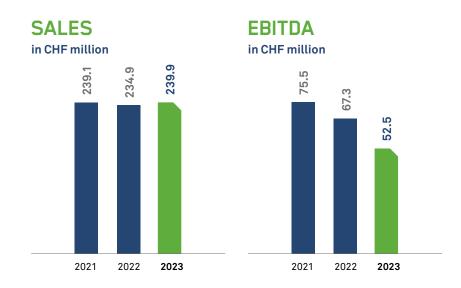
5.0

EBITDA MARGIN in percent

21.9

EARNINGS PER SHARE in CHF

0.46





2023	0000		
	2022	CHF	LC
239.9	234.9	+ 2.1%	+ 5.3%
52.5	67.3	- 22.0%	- 13.8%
21.9%	28.7%		
34.8	51.6	-32.5%	- 22.0%
14.5%	22.0%		
34.4	36.6	- 5.9%	
14.4%	15.6%		
0.46	0.50	-6.8%	
94.7	50.7	+86.9%	
1926	1 776¹		
	52.5 21.9% 34.8 14.5% 34.4 14.4% 0.46 94.7	239.9 234.9 52.5 67.3 21.9% 28.7% 34.8 51.6 14.5% 22.0% 34.4 36.6 14.4% 15.6% 0.46 0.50 94.7 50.7 1926 1776¹	239.9 234.9 +2.1% 52.5 67.3 -22.0% 21.9% 28.7% -32.5% 34.8 51.6 -32.5% 14.5% 22.0% -5.9% 34.4 36.6 -5.9% 14.4% 15.6% -6.8% 94.7 50.7 +86.9% 1926 1776¹

¹ Value as per December 31, 2022

COMMENT AND OUTLOOK

In the first half of 2023, Bachem increased sales slightly. A strong order volume is being processed with existing manufacturing capabilities, while new capacities are still being expanded. For the full year 2023, sales growth in the high single-digit percentage range is expected. Demand for Bachem's products and services continues to be high and can trigger a new growth spurt in the medium term thanks to new plants and a strong team.

Sales

The Bachem Group (SIX: BANB) achieved sales in Swiss francs of CHF 239.9 million in the first half of 2023 (+2.1% compared to the same period of the previous year). In local currencies, sales increased by 5.3%. Bachem started the year with a lot of orders, which are being processed on existing equipment. Given the order situation, Bachem expects a continued increase in its sales for the second half of 2023.

Profit

Operating income before depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) amounted to CHF 52.5 million (–22.0% compared to the same period of the previous year), and operating income (EBIT) was CHF 34.8 million (–32.5% compared to the same period of the previous year). As a result, the EBITDA margin was 21.9% (first half of 2022: 28.7%) and the EBIT margin was 14.5% (first half of 2022: 22.0%). Net income was CHF 34.4 million (–5.9% compared to the same period of the previous year) with a margin of 14.4% (first half of 2022: 15.6%).

The income statement shows one-off costs of CHF 1.5 million in the first half of 2023. This is due to efficiency measures at Bachem's US sites, in which the organizational structure and headcount were adjusted to the changed project portfolio in the future. Adjusted for these one-time costs, EBITDA is CHF 54.0 million and the EBITDA margin is 22.5%.

Staff recruitment for the expansion of the Bubendorf site was very successful in the first half of the year. As a result, the headcount rose by 15.8% compared with the first half of 2022 to now 1926 full-time positions. Some of the new employees are still undergoing onboarding and training processes until the first qualification work begins in the K building. This situation has a temporary negative impact on the margin.

Cost structure

With slightly higher sales and at the same time higher operating costs, gross profit was lower than in the same period of the previous year. Marketing and sales costs in the first half of the year amounted to CHF 9.0 million (first half of 2022: CHF 9.0 million) and thus were analogous to the prior reporting period at 3.8% of sales. Bachem continuously invests in its own process improvements and manufacturing technology. Expenditures for research and development amounted to CHF 5.5 million (first half of 2022: CHF 2.1 million), corresponding to 2.3% of sales (prior-year period: 0.9%). General administrative costs of CHF 9.6 million (first half of 2022: CHF 8.6 million) represent 4.0% of sales (first half of 2022: 3.7%). The ongoing expansion of functions to manage the grown organization is a significant factor here.

In the first half of the year, the financial result produced net income of CHF 2.1 million (first half of 2022: net expense of CHF 11.2 million). The financial result was significantly influenced by the securities on the one hand and the foreign exchange result on the other. Net income from securities amounted to CHF 2.9 million (first half of 2022: net loss of CHF 11.9 million). This net income is composed of realized and valuation gains and losses. Following a net foreign exchange gain of CHF 1.2 million in the prior year period, this reporting period shows a negative impact of CHF 0.9 million.

The foreign exchange loss was significantly influenced by the valuation at the balance sheet date of US dollar loans granted to subsidiaries by the holding company.

Income tax expenses amounted to CHF 2.5 million and resulted in a Group-wide tax rate of 6.7% (first half of 2022: CHF 3.7 million or 9.3%). The low tax rate in the reporting period is mainly due to higher profits in countries with lower tax rates than in the previous year. In the prior reporting period, the tax authorities made the final assessment of the tax treatment of new tax instruments related to the Swiss tax reform, which were claimed for the years 2020 and 2021. In the prior period, this led to a reduction in tax liabilities of CHF 1.9 million, which was recorded affecting net income.

In the future, expenses will evolve in line with the needs of long-term corporate growth. In particular, there will be disproportionate investment in research and development to further expand Bachem's technology lead.

Macroeconomic environment

Overall economic development showed some easing in the supply chains in the first half of 2023. In general, however, the macroeconomic and geopolitical situation remains more volatile than in previous years. Bachem is responding to this by, among other things, strengthening its risk management, including inflation protection clauses in new customer contracts, and focusing on a more sustainable energy mix.

Sales by product category

The Commercial API category achieved sales of CHF 146.9 million (first half of 2022: CHF 131.0 million, +12.2%), driven by patented peptide API and generics sales that more than offset expected lower oligonucleotide commercial sales. In the clinical drug development category (CMC Development), sales amounted to CHF 76.1 million (first half of 2022: CHF 79.3 million, -4.1%). In the comparative period, one-off services for a major customer project had led to a high comparative base, which should balance out over the year as a whole. The research chemicals and specialties business (Research & Specialties) was CHF 16.9 million (first half 2022: CHF 24.6 million, -31.6%). Non-medical projects with small peptide volumes in this category were not prioritized in the first half of the year due to limited production capacities.

Sales by region

Broken down by sales region, CHF 145.3 million were generated in the Europe/Asia region (first half of 2022: CHF 142.3 million, +2.2%). The North America region accounted for CHF 94.6 million in sales (first half of 2022: CHF 92.6 million, +2.1%).

Capacity expansion

In the first half of 2023, CHF 114.6 million was invested across all sites. The increase of CHF 76.0 million compared to the prior-year period reflects high customer expectations for a rapid expansion of production capacity. Bachem has started construction of the world's most advanced peptide and oligonucleotide production plant in 2021. The plant is scheduled to come on stream in 2024. The plant will be further expanded by 2026. A further Bachem production site is planned in Sisslerfeld in Eiken, Switzerland, and a second tranche of land was acquired for this purpose in the first half of 2023. Furthermore, Bachem continues to invest in the infrastructure of the entire site network. Bachem estimates the cost of expanding the Bubendorf and Sisslerfeld sites at over CHF 1 billion by the end of the decade.

Peptides update

In the first half of 2023, Bachem was able to announce a long-term cooperation agreement for the development and manufacture of peptides. The contract includes a total order volume of more than CHF 500 million for the period 2027-2031, with significant upside potential and is contingent on the completion of a joint development project. The contract diversifies the order backlog for Building K in Bubendorf, Bachem's largest production facility when completed. In addition, demand for services and products for peptides as a medicinal active ingredient remains high.

Oligonucleotides update

In the oligonucleotides business, Bachem anticipates a further reduction in commercial supply volumes. Bachem is working on a number of development projects in all phases of pharmaceutical development and the utilization of the current manufacturing capacities is good. Nevertheless, these development projects cannot compensate for the reduced commercial delivery volumes, so that the targeted sales volume of CHF 100 million cannot be achieved in the short term. In the field of oligonucleotides, Bachem has recently developed

technological innovations, such as the production of active ingredients in a patented "stirred bed" process.

Sustainability

Bachem has set long-term sustainability targets for the entire Group in the areas of occupational health and safety, diversity and equal opportunities, as well as energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Bachem's visibility of greenhouse gas emissions is thereby gradually being extended to include third-party consumption (so-called "Scope 3" emissions). Bachem has also been a member of the UN Global Compact since 2022 and submitted its first Communication of Progress in the first half of 2023.

Cash flow

In the first half of 2023, cash flow from operating activities amounted to CHF 94.7 million (first half of 2022: CHF 50.7 million). Thereby, net working capital had decreased by CHF 45.8 million (first half of 2022: increase of CHF 16.7 million). This change was positively influenced by the reduction of trade receivables in the amount of CHF 39.2 million, as well as net inflows of CHF 44.5 million from prepayments from customers. A counteracting effect was the growth-related inventory build-up of CHF 38.7 million, which will enable to ensure future production and timely deliveries to customers. In the course of the capacity expansion and for ongoing investments, cash and cash equivalents of CHF 126.7 million were used (first half of 2022: CHF 70.6 million).

A total gross dividend of CHF 56.2 million was distributed. Securities in the amount of CHF 58.0 million were sold in order to cover capital requirements. The increase in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period amounted to CHF 77.2 million (first half of 2022: decrease of CHF 54.7 million), and thus the balance as of June 30, 2023 amounts to CHF 108.7 million (December 31, 2022: CHF 31.5 million).

Equity and liabilities

On March 10, 2023, Bachem could secure a net cash inflow (after deduction of transaction costs) of CHF 105.9 million through a capital increase by means of an accelerated bookbuilding process. In the process, 1250 000 new shares with a nominal value of CHF 0.01 each were issued. Bachem's share capital is now CHF 750 000 (previously: CHF 737 500). The new shares were listed and admitted to trading on the SIX Swiss Exchange on March 13, 2023.

The equity ratio as of June 30, 2023 was 83.3% (December 31, 2022: 84.5%). As of June 30, 2023, there are still no loan liabilities.

Outlook

Bachem expects Group sales for the full year 2023 to grow in the high single-digit percentage range and expects an EBITDA margin around 30%. The K building in Bubendorf will significantly expand Bachem's production capacity from the start of operations in 2024 and will be further expanded by 2026. Until 2026, Bachem is targeting a sales volume over CHF 1 billion and an EBITDA margin over 30%.

CONSOLIDATED INTERIM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CONSOLIDATED INCOME STATEMENT

(Unaudited)

in CHF 1 000	Notes	First half-year 2023	First half-year 2022
Sales	5	239 859	234 883
Cost of goods sold		-181 330	- 164 102
Gross profit		58 529	70 781
Other income		414	506
Marketing and sales costs		-9 004	- 8 998
Research and development costs		- 5 494	- 2 138
General administrative costs		-9630	-8587
Operating income (EBIT)	5	34 815	51 564
Financial income	6	3 476	2 715
Financial expenses	7	-1374	-13924
Ordinary income before taxes		36 917	40 355
Income taxes	8	- 2 468	-3741
Net income ¹		34 449	36 614
Earnings per share (CHF) ²		0.46	0.50

¹ The net income is completely attributable to the equity holders of the parent.

 $^{^{\}rm 2}$ There are no options or similar that have a dilutive effect.

CONSOLIDATED INTERIM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

(Unaudited)

in CHF 1000 Notes	June 30, 2023	Dec. 31, 2022
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	108 677	31 451
Securities 9	180 333	236 976
Trade receivables	130 924	171 042
Other current receivables	6 001	5 069
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	6 441	4 688
Current income tax assets	2 529	3 148
Inventories	345 306	308 046
Total current assets	780 211	760 420
Property, plant and equipment	694 879	599 790
Intangible assets	13 168	13 819
Assets from employer contribution reserve	320	320
Deferred tax assets	13 507	9 520
Total non-current assets	721 874	623 449
Total assets	1 502 085	1 383 869
Liabilities and equity		
Trade payables	29 011	32 071
Other current liabilities 10	114 203	83 483
Accrued expenses and deferred income	45 586	37 753
Current income tax liabilities	11 364	11 134
Current financial liabilities	266	339
Total current liabilities	200 430	164 780
Non-current financial liabilities	268	352
Deferred tax liabilities	50 062	49 076
Total non-current liabilities	50 330	49 428
Total liabilities	250 760	214 208
Share capital 12	750	738
Retained earnings	632 913	626 957
Share premium	662 207	583 887
Own shares	- 1 235	-1959
Cumulative translation differences	- 43 310	-39 962
Total capital and reserves attributable to the equity holders of the company	1 251 325	1 169 661
Total liabilities and equity	1 502 085	1 383 869

CONSOLIDATED CASH FLOW STATEMENT

(Unaudited)

in CHF 1 000 Notes	First half-year 2023	First half-year 2022
Cash flow from operating activities		
Net income	34 449	36 614
Adjustments for:		
Income taxes 8	2 468	3 741
Depreciation and amortization	17 685	15 749
Financial income 6	-3 476	- 2 715
Financial expenses 7	1 374	13 924
Share based payments	707	280
Loss on sale/scrapping of property, plant and equipment	6	8
Income taxes paid	- 4 291	- 227
Cash flow from operating activities before changes in net working capital	48 922	67 374
Change in trade receivables	39 160	11 829
Change in other current receivables, prepaid expenses and accrued income	-3 095	-3 172
Change in inventories	-38 698	-34 616
Change in trade payables	- 2 899	-314
Change in other current liabilities, accrued expenses and deferred income	51 350	9 587
Cash flow from operating activities	94 740	50 688
Sales of property, plant and equipment Investments in intangible assets Acquisitions 11 Sales of securities 9	16 -1757 0 58 000	0 -2842 -21866 72000
Other financial payments and proceeds	2 050	289
Cash flow from investing activities	- 66 605	- 20 179
Cash flow from financing activities		
Capital increase 12	105 867	0
Dividends paid 4	- 56 236	-51 620
Repayment of financial liabilities	- 178	-33 683
Interest paid	- 17	- 58
Cash from financing activities	49 436	- 85 361
Net effect of currency translation on cash and cash equivalents	- 345	165
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	77 226	- 54 687
	31 451	89 191
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	31431	
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the half-year	108 677	34 504

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

(Unaudited)

2023 in CHF 1 000	Notes	Share capital	Retained earnings	Share premium	Own shares	Cumulative translation differences	Total
Balance at January 1		738	626 957	583 887	- 1 959	- 39 962	
Capital increase	12	12		108 113	•		108 125
Transaction costs of the capital increase (net of tax)	12			- 2 033			- 2 033
Net income according to income statement			34 449				34 449
Dividends	4		- 28 493	- 27 743			- 56 236
Transactions with own shares (net of tax)			***************************************	331	-331		0
Share based payments			***************************************	-348	1 055		707
Cumulative translation differences	•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••		***************************************	***************************************	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	-3348	-3 348
Balance at June 30	•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••	750	632 913	662 207	- 1 235	- 43 310	1 251 325

2022 in CHF 1 000	Notes	Share capital	Retained earnings	Share premium	Own shares	Cumulative translation differences	Total
Balance at January 1		738	552 135	609 597	-1169	- 40 303	1 120 998
Net income according to income statement		••••••••••	36 614	•••••	• ••••••	••••••	36 614
Dividends	4	••••••••••	- 25 810	- 25 810	• ••••••	••••••	-51 620
Offset goodwill	11	•••••••••••	-52	•••••	• ••••••	••••••	- 52
Transactions with own shares (net of tax)		••••••••••	***************************************	210	- 210		0
Share based payments		••••••••••	***************************************	-582	862		280
Cumulative translation differences	•••	••••••	***************************************	***************************************	• ••••••	4 767	4 767
Balance at June 30		738	562 887	583 415	- 517		1 110 987

As of June 30, 2023, goodwill in the amount of CHF 1404 thousand is offset in retained earnings (June 30, 2022: CHF 1404 thousand).

SELECTED EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE **CONSOLIDATED INTERIM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

1 Accounting policies

Principles of consolidation

These consolidated interim financial statements comprise the unaudited consolidated financial statements of Bachem Holding AG, a company registered in Switzerland, and its subsidiaries for the six-month period ended June 30, 2023.

The consolidated interim financial statements were prepared in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER 31 "Complementary recommendations for listed public companies." These consolidated interim financial statements do not include all the information and disclosures contained in the annual consolidated financial statements and should therefore be read in conjunction with the consolidated financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2022, which were prepared in accordance with the Swiss Accounting and Reporting Recommendations (Swiss GAAP FER).

Changes in accounting policies

For the reporting year 2023, no changes in accounting policies became effective. The accounting policies used are consistent with those used in the annual consolidated financial statements 2022.

Approval of the interim financial statements

The consolidated interim financial statements were approved for issue by the Board of Directors of Bachem Holding AG on July 24, 2023.

2 Foreign exchange rates

		ncome statement average rates	Balance sheet period-end ra		
in CHF	First half-year 2023	First half-year 2022	June 30, 2023	Dec. 31, 2022	
USD	0.91	0.94	0.90	0.92	
EUR	0.99	1.03	0.98	0.99	
GBP	1.12	1.23	1.14	1.12	
JPY (100)	0.68	0.77	0.62	0.71	

3 Seasonality

The operating income is subject to fluctuations having no seasonal origin.

4 Dividend distribution

On April 25, 2023, a dividend of CHF 56.2 million, respectively CHF 0.75 per share was distributed for the year 2022 (previous year: CHF 51.6 million, respectively CHF 0.70 per share).

5 Segment information

The presented values are based on the same valuation principles according to Swiss GAAP FER as used for the whole interim financial statements.

in CHF 1 000	Europe/ Asia	North America	Total segments	Corporate and eliminations	Consolidated values
Sales information first half-year 2023					
Sales third parties	145 322	94 537	239 859	0	239 859
Sales intersegment	60 664	2 110	62 774	- 62 774	0
Total sales	205 986	96 647	302 633	- 62 774	239 859
Income information first half-year 2023					
Operating income (EBIT)	40 034	-3 632	36 402	- 1 587 ¹	34 815
Other information first half-year 2023					
Additions in property, plant and equipment and intangible assets	96 351	8 881	105 232	9 420	114 652
Depreciation and amortization		-2811	- 17 678	-7	- 17 685
Total assets	1 042 578	218 141	1 260 719	241 366²	1 502 085
Total liabilities	755 261	101 665	856 926	-606 166 ³	250 760

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ The amount consists of the operating income from corporate activities of CHF –1.1 million and of eliminations in the value of CHF - 0.5 million.

³ The amount consists of corporate liabilities of CHF 17.1 million and of eliminations in the value of CHF -623.3 million.

in CHF 1 000	Europe/ Asia	North America	Total segments	Corporate and eliminations	Consolidated values
Sales information first half-year 2022	•••••	••••		······································	
Sales third parties	142 255	92 628	234 883	0	234 883
Sales intersegment	49 434		53 276	- 53 276	0
Total sales	191 689	96 470	288 159	- 53 276	234 883
Income information first half-year 2022					
Operating income (EBIT)	44 897	10 147	55 044	-3 480 ¹	51 564
Other information first half-year 2022					
Additions in property, plant and equipment and intangible assets	36 071	2 592	38 663	0	38 663
Depreciation and amortization	-12964	- 2 779	- 15 743	-6	- 15 749
Total assets	815 406	197 542	1 012 948	247 224 ²	1 260 172
Total liabilities	544 858	74 420	619 278	- 470 093³	149 185

 $^{^{\}mbox{\tiny 1}}$ The amount corresponds to the operating income from corporate activities.

² The amount consists of corporate assets as for example cash and cash equivalents and loans to Group companies in the total of CHF 867.6 million and of eliminations in the value of CHF -626.2 million.

² The amount consists of corporate assets as for example cash and cash equivalents and loans to Group companies in the total of CHF 724.9 million and of eliminations in the value of CHF -477.7 million.

 $^{^{3}}$ The amount consists of corporate liabilities of CHF 4.6 million and of eliminations in the value of CHF-474.7 million.

6 Financial income

in CHF 1000	First half-year 2023	First half-year 2022
Interest income	335	5
Gains on securities	3 137	1 536
Other financial income	4	4
Foreign exchange result	0	1 170
Total financial income	3 476	2 715

7 Financial expenses

in CHF 1 000	First half-year 2023	First half-year 2022
Interest expenses	-17	- 58
Losses on securities	- 220	- 13 450
Other financial expenses	- 201	-416
Foreign exchange result	-936	0
Total financial expenses	- 1 374	- 13 924

8 Income taxes

The low income taxes in the reporting period are mainly due to higher profits in countries with lower tax rates than in the previous year.

In the first half of 2022, the tax authorities made the final assessment of the tax treatment of new tax instruments related to the Swiss tax reform, which were claimed for the years 2020 and 2021. In the prior period, this led to a reduction in tax liabilities of CHF 1.9 million, which was recorded affecting net income.

9 Securities

in CHF 1 0 0 0	June 30, 2023	Dec. 31, 2022
Money market	18 660	26 637
Bonds	118 121	166 973
Shares	43 552	43 366
Total securities	180 333	236 976

The securities consist of direct and indirect investments in marketable, easily realizable securities. They are valued at market values, stock exchange prices, on the balance sheet date.

10 Other current liabilities

As of June 30, 2023, other current liabilities include, besides various other liabilities, prepayments from customers in the amount of CHF 82.6 million (December 31, 2022: CHF 38.2 million).

11 Acquisitions

As of April 25, 2022, Bachem AG has taken over all shares of Ingro Immobilien AG in Hergiswil (NW), Switzerland, including the 100% investment in Breiten Immobilien AG in Bubendorf (BL), Switzerland, from the related party Ingro Finanz AG. Neither Ingro Immobilien AG nor Breiten Immobilien AG had any employees. Before the takeover, Bachem AG rented various properties on the site of Breiten Immobilien AG. Both acquired companies were merged into Bachem AG after the takeover was completed.

The purchase price paid was CHF 23.8 million and the fair value of the net assets acquired amounted to CHF 23.7 million. The main balance sheet items at the time of acquisition are: cash of CHF 1.9 million, receivables of CHF 1.1 million, property, plant and equipment including assets under construction of CHF 44.9 million, currrent liabilities of CHF 8.4 million, loans from the related party Ingro Finanz AG in the amount of CHF 13.5 million and deferred tax liabilities of CHF 2.3 million.

The goodwill from this transaction in the amount of CHF 0.1 million was offset against equity.

The impact of the acquisition on the net income for the prior period is not material.

12 Capital increase

On March 10, 2023, the share capital was increased by 1250 000 registered shares with a nominal value of CHF 0.01 per share. The placement price per share was CHF 86.50. The transaction costs of the capital increase amounted to CHF 2.3 million (before taxes).

13 Contingent liabilities and other commitments

There are no material contingent liabilities or other commitments at the balance sheet date.

14 Events after the balance sheet date

There have been no material events after the balance sheet date.

FINANCIAL CALENDAR

IMPRINT

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

March 7, 2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (BUSINESS YEAR 2023)

April 24, 2024

HALF-YEAR REPORT 2024

July 25, 2024

This Half-Year Report is published in German and English. The German language version is binding.

Publisher Bachem Holding AG, Bubendorf, Switzerland

Conception/Design Linkgroup AG, Zurich

Prepress/Print Printlink AG, Zurich

This Half-Year Report is printed on FSC-certified paper.



MIX Paper | Supporting responsible forestry FSC® C007616

Forward-looking statements

Forward-looking statements contained herein are qualified in their entirety and are of only limited validity. Investors are cautioned that all forwardlooking statements involve risks and uncertainty. There are certain factors that could cause results to differ materially from those anticipated. This includes as well the timing and strength of new product offerings, pricing strategies of competitors, the Group's ability to continue to receive adequate products from its vendors on acceptable terms, or at all, and to continue to obtain sufficient financing to meet its liquidity needs, and changes in the political, social and regulatory framework in which the Group operates, or in economic or technological trends or conditions, including currency fluctuations, inflation and consumer confidence, on a global, regional or national basis.

BACHEM

Switzerland

Investor Relations
Bachem Holding AG
Dr. Daniel Grotzky
Head Group Communications
Hauptstrasse 144
4416 Bubendorf
Switzerland
Tel +41 58 595 2021
Fax +41 58 595 2043
ir@bachem.com
www.bachem.com

Bachem Holding AG
Bachem AG
Hauptstrasse 144
4416 Bubendorf
Switzerland
Tel +41 58 595 2021
Fax +41 58 595 2041
sales.ch@bachem.com

Bachem SA
Succursale Vionnaz
Route du Simplon 22
1895 Vionnaz
Switzerland
Tel +41 58 595 3990
Fax +41 58 595 3991
info.bvi@bachem.com

Great Britain

Bachem (UK) Ltd.
Delph Court
Sullivans Way, St. Helens
Merseyside WA9 5GL
England
Tel +44 1744 61 2108
Fax +44 1744 73 0064
sales.uk@bachem.com

Japan

Bachem Japan K.K.
Nihonbashi Life Science
Building 7, 8F
1-9-10 Nihonbashi
Horidome-cho, Chuo-ku
Tokyo 103-0012
Japan
Tel +81 3 6661 0774
sales.jp@bachem.com

USA

3132 Kashiwa Street
Torrance, CA 90505
USA
Tel +1 310 539 4171
Fax +1 310 539 9428
US toll-free number:
1-888-4-BACHEM
sales.us@bachem.com

Bachem Americas, Inc.

1271 Avenida Chelsea Vista, CA 92081 USA Tel +1 310 539 4171 Fax +1 310 539 9428 US toll-free number: 1-888-4-BACHEM sales.us@bachem.com

Bachem Americas, Inc.