

NovaTech Solutions — Employee Handbook

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Table of Contents

1. Welcome and Company Overview
 2. Mission, Vision, and Values
 3. Office Locations and Working Hours
 4. Remote and Hybrid Work Policy
 5. Leave and Time-Off Policy
 6. Expense and Travel Policy
 7. Onboarding Process
 8. Performance Management
 9. Professional Development
 10. Code of Conduct
 11. Information Technology Policies
 12. Data Protection and Confidentiality
 13. Health and Safety
 14. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
 15. Handbook Acknowledgment
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1. Welcome and Company Overview

Welcome to NovaTech Solutions. Founded in 2017 in Munich, Germany, NovaTech Solutions has grown from a small startup into a mid-size B2B SaaS company with approximately 400 employees across three offices. We build project management and analytics tools that help over 800 customers streamline their operations and make data-driven decisions.

Our flagship products — **NovaTech ProjectHub** (project and portfolio management) and **NovaTech Insight** (business analytics and reporting) — serve clients in manufacturing, financial services, logistics, and the public sector. In

fiscal year 2025, NovaTech Solutions achieved annual recurring revenue of approximately €17 million.

This handbook outlines the policies, benefits, and expectations that apply to all NovaTech Solutions employees regardless of location or role. It supplements but does not replace your individual employment contract. In the event of a conflict between this handbook and your employment contract, the terms of the employment contract shall prevail.

Please read this handbook carefully and direct any questions to your manager or to the Human Resources team at hr@novatech-solutions.com.

2. Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

To empower organizations with intelligent project management and analytics tools that turn complexity into clarity.

Vision

By 2030, NovaTech Solutions aims to be the leading European B2B SaaS provider for integrated project intelligence, serving 10,000 enterprise customers worldwide.

Core Values

Value	Description
Customer Obsession	We start with the customer problem and work backwards. Every feature, process, and decision is measured against customer value.
Radical Transparency	We share context openly — roadmaps, financials, challenges. Information asymmetry slows teams down.
Engineering Excellence	We write code we are proud of. We invest in testing, documentation, and code review because sustainable velocity matters more than speed.
Inclusive Collaboration	Diverse teams build better products. We actively seek perspectives different from our own and create an environment where everyone can contribute fully.

Value	Description
Ownership Mentality	We act like owners, not renters. If something is broken, we fix it — even if it is not in our job description.

All employees are expected to embody these values in their daily work. Values alignment is a formal component of performance evaluations (see Section 8).

3. Office Locations and Working Hours

Office Locations

NovaTech Solutions operates from three offices:

Location	Address	Function	Employees
Munich, Germany (HQ)	Leopoldstraße 120, 80802 Munich	Headquarters, Engineering, Product, Finance, HR	~220
Lisbon, Portugal	Avenida da Liberdade 245, 1250-143 Lisbon	Engineering, Customer Success, Design	~110
Austin, Texas, USA	401 Congress Avenue, Suite 1400, Austin, TX 78701	Sales, Marketing, Customer Success (Americas)	~70

Standard Working Hours

NovaTech Solutions operates on a flexible schedule model. The standard work week is 40 hours (38.5 hours for employees on German contracts). All employees must be available during the **core collaboration window of 10:00–15:00 CET** (Central European Time) on working days, unless otherwise agreed with their manager. Outside these core hours, employees may arrange their schedule to suit personal preferences and local requirements.

Employees in the Austin office should note that 10:00–15:00 CET corresponds to 03:00–08:00 CST. A modified core window of **09:00–14:00 CST** applies to Austin-based employees who do not regularly collaborate with European teams. Austin employees on cross-regional teams should negotiate availability with their manager.

4. Remote and Hybrid Work Policy

NovaTech Solutions supports hybrid work arrangements. Employees in eligible roles may work remotely for **up to three (3) days per week**, subject to manager approval.

Eligibility

All employees who have completed their probationary period (six months) are eligible for hybrid work unless their role requires physical presence (e.g., office management, facilities, on-site IT support). Employees still within their probationary period may work remotely for up to one (1) day per week with manager approval.

Approval Process

1. The employee submits a hybrid work request through the NovaHR portal, specifying their preferred remote days.
2. The manager reviews the request within five (5) business days, considering team coverage needs, collaboration requirements, and role suitability.
3. Approved arrangements are documented in NovaHR and reviewed quarterly.

Requirements for Remote Work

- Employees must have a stable internet connection (minimum 25 Mbps download, 5 Mbps upload).
- A dedicated, ergonomic workspace is recommended. NovaTech offers a one-time home office setup allowance of **€500** for employees approved for regular remote work (see Section 6).
- Employees must be reachable via Slack and email during core collaboration hours.
- All remote work must comply with IT security policies (see Section 11), including the use of the company VPN for accessing internal systems.

Location Restrictions

Remote work must be performed from the employee's registered country of employment. Working from a different country for more than **five (5) consecutive business days** requires prior approval from HR due to tax and social security implications. Requests for extended cross-border remote work must be submitted at least four (4) weeks in advance.

Team Days

Each team must designate at least **one (1) mandatory in-office day per week** for collaborative work. These team days are set by the team lead and communicated at the start of each quarter.

5. Leave and Time-Off Policy

Annual Leave (Paid Time Off)

All full-time employees receive **twenty-five (25) days** of paid time off (PTO) per calendar year, in addition to public holidays observed at their respective office location. Part-time employees receive PTO on a pro-rata basis.

PTO accrues monthly (2.083 days per month). Employees may use PTO before it has fully accrued, subject to manager approval. The maximum negative PTO balance permitted is five (5) days.

Carryover: Unused PTO may be carried over to the following calendar year, up to a **maximum of five (5) days**. Carried-over days must be used by **March 31** of the following year. Any unused carried-over days beyond this date will be forfeited unless prohibited by local employment law.

PTO requests should be submitted via NovaHR at least **two (2) weeks** in advance for absences of three (3) or more consecutive days, and at least **three (3) business days** in advance for shorter absences. Managers may decline requests during critical business periods, provided reasonable alternative dates are offered.

Sick Leave

Employees are entitled to **ten (10) paid sick days** per calendar year. A medical certificate is required for absences exceeding **three (3) consecutive working days**. Sick days do not carry over between calendar years.

In Germany, statutory sick pay provisions apply after the company sick leave entitlement is exhausted. Employees in Portugal and the United States should refer to the country-specific addendum for details on statutory sick leave provisions.

Additional Leave Types

Leave Type	Duration	Conditions
Parental Leave	Per local statutory requirements	Notify HR at least 8 weeks before expected start
Marriage Leave	3 days	Must be taken within 30 days of the ceremony
Bereavement Leave	5 days (immediate family) / 2 days (extended family)	Immediate family: spouse, partner, parent, child, sibling
Jury Duty	As required by law	Provide summons documentation to HR
Volunteer Leave	2 days per year	Pre-approved volunteer activities aligned with company CSR goals
Sabbatical	Up to 3 months unpaid	Available after 5 years of continuous employment; requires VP-level approval

6. Expense and Travel Policy

NovaTech Solutions reimburses reasonable business expenses incurred in the course of employment. All expenses must be submitted through the **NovaExpense** platform within **thirty (30) calendar days** of being incurred. Expenses submitted after this deadline may not be reimbursed.

Meals and Incidentals

Category	Daily Limit
Domestic travel (within country of employment)	€25 per day
International travel	€40 per day

Meal expenses include breakfast, lunch, dinner, and non-alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable except during approved client entertainment (see below). Tips are reimbursable up to 15% of the meal cost.

Travel

Flights: All flight bookings must be made through the company's preferred travel platform (currently TravelPerk). Economy class is the standard for flights under six (6) hours. Premium economy may be booked for flights exceeding six (6) hours. Business class requires VP-level pre-approval and is generally reserved for C-level executives and client-facing travel where the flight exceeds eight (8) hours.

Pre-approval requirement: Any single flight booking exceeding **€500** requires pre-approval from the employee's manager via NovaExpense before booking. Flights exceeding **€2,000** require additional approval from the Finance department.

Rail travel: Rail is preferred over air travel for journeys under four (4) hours. First-class rail tickets are permitted for journeys exceeding two (2) hours.

Hotels: The maximum nightly rate for hotel accommodation is **€150** for domestic travel and **€200** for international travel. Exceptions for high-cost cities (e.g., London, San Francisco, Zurich) may be approved by the Finance team on a case-by-case basis.

Ground transportation: Taxi and ride-share services are reimbursable for business travel. Rental cars require prior manager approval and must include comprehensive insurance coverage.

Client Entertainment

Client entertainment expenses (meals, events, gifts) must be pre-approved by a director-level manager. The maximum per-person spend for client entertainment is **€100**. Gifts to clients must not exceed **€50 per recipient per calendar year** and must comply with the recipient's organization's gift policies.

Home Office Setup Allowance

Employees approved for regular remote work (minimum two days per week) are eligible for a one-time home office setup allowance of **€500**. This covers ergonomic furniture, monitors, keyboards, and similar equipment. Receipts must be submitted within sixty (60) days of purchase. This allowance is available once per employee and does not renew.

Expense Policy Violations

Repeated violations of the expense policy, including late submissions, missing receipts, or exceeding limits without pre-approval, may result in suspension of the employee's corporate credit card and disciplinary action in accordance with Section 14.

7. Onboarding Process

NovaTech Solutions is committed to providing every new employee with a structured, supportive onboarding experience. Our onboarding program runs for the first **ninety (90) calendar days** of employment and consists of three phases.

Phase 1: Pre-Boarding (Before Day 1)

Before the new employee's start date, the following steps are completed:

- HR sends the welcome package (contract, handbook, IT equipment request form) at least **ten (10) business days** before the start date.
- IT provisions equipment (laptop, monitors, peripherals) and creates accounts (email, Slack, NovaHR, Jira, GitHub).
- The employee's manager assigns an **onboarding buddy** — a peer-level colleague who will serve as the new employee's primary informal point of contact during the first 90 days.

Phase 2: First Two Weeks

Day	Activity
Day 1	Welcome session with HR (benefits enrollment, handbook review, office tour or virtual equivalent)
Day 1	Meet with manager to review role expectations, first-month goals, and team structure
Day 1	Lunch with onboarding buddy
Day 2-3	IT orientation: development environment setup, security training, tool walkthroughs
Day 3-5	Product deep-dive sessions (NovaTech ProjectHub and NovaTech Insight demos, architecture overview)

Day	Activity
Week 2	Shadow sessions with team members; first small task or ticket assigned

Phase 3: Months 1-3

During the first three months, the new employee works closely with their manager and onboarding buddy to ramp up on their role responsibilities. Key milestones include:

- **30-day check-in:** Informal conversation between the employee, their manager, and their buddy to assess how the onboarding is progressing and address any concerns.
- **60-day check-in:** The employee presents a brief summary of what they have learned and identifies areas where they need additional support.
- **90-day review:** A formal review meeting with the employee's manager and an HR representative. The purpose of this review is to evaluate whether the employee has successfully completed the probationary period. The review covers role competency, cultural fit, and values alignment. The outcome is documented in NovaHR.

The Buddy System

The onboarding buddy plays a critical role in the new employee's integration into NovaTech Solutions. Buddies are selected by the hiring manager based on the following criteria: they should be in the same team or a closely collaborating team, have been at NovaTech for at least twelve (12) months, and have volunteered for the buddy program.

Buddies are expected to be available for at least **thirty (30) minutes per day** during the new employee's first two weeks and at least **one (1) hour per week** during months two and three. Buddies are recognized for their contribution in their own performance reviews, and exceptional buddies are eligible for the quarterly **NovaStar Award** (see Section 8).

It is important to understand that the buddy relationship is distinct from the manager relationship. The buddy provides informal guidance on team norms, company culture, tooling, and day-to-day workflow. The buddy is not responsible for performance management, goal setting, or disciplinary matters. New employees should feel comfortable asking their buddy questions they might hesitate to raise with their manager, and buddies are expected to maintain confidentiality within the bounds of company policy. This informal support

structure has been shown to reduce new-hire attrition at NovaTech by 34% since the program was formalized in 2022, and post-onboarding surveys consistently rate the buddy program as the single most valuable element of the onboarding experience. For these reasons, NovaTech considers buddy participation a serious commitment, and managers should ensure that employees serving as buddies have sufficient bandwidth to fulfill this responsibility without compromising their own deliverables.

8. Performance Management

NovaTech Solutions uses a continuous performance management model built on regular feedback, clear goals, and transparent evaluation criteria.

Quarterly Check-Ins

Every employee participates in a **quarterly check-in** with their direct manager. These check-ins are scheduled in the first two weeks of January, April, July, and October. The check-in covers:

1. **Progress against OKRs (Objectives and Key Results):** Each employee sets 3–5 OKRs per quarter in collaboration with their manager.
2. **Values alignment:** A brief discussion of how the employee has demonstrated NovaTech's core values.
3. **Development goals:** Review of professional development activities and skills growth.
4. **Feedback exchange:** Bidirectional feedback — the employee also provides feedback on management and team dynamics.

Quarterly check-ins are documented in NovaHR. They are developmental in nature and do not directly determine compensation changes.

Annual Formal Review

The annual formal review takes place in **December** of each calendar year. It synthesizes the four quarterly check-ins and produces an overall performance rating on the following scale:

Rating	Description
Exceptional (5)	Consistently exceeds expectations; recognized impact beyond immediate role

Rating	Description
Strong (4)	Frequently exceeds expectations; reliable high performer
Meets Expectations (3)	Delivers on commitments and demonstrates values alignment
Developing (2)	Partially meets expectations; improvement plan required
Below Expectations (1)	Does not meet role requirements; subject to performance improvement plan (PIP)

The annual review directly informs **compensation adjustments** (effective March 1 of the following year) and **promotion decisions**. Employees rated "Developing" or below are placed on a structured Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) lasting sixty (60) to ninety (90) days, with bi-weekly progress reviews.

NovaStar Awards

Each quarter, teams may nominate colleagues for the **NovaStar Award**, which recognizes outstanding contributions to customer impact, cross-team collaboration, or innovation. Winners receive a **€250 bonus** and are featured in the company all-hands meeting.

9. Professional Development

NovaTech Solutions invests in the continuous growth of its employees. We believe that learning is both an individual responsibility and a company priority.

Learning Budget

Every full-time employee receives an annual professional development budget of **€2,000**. This budget may be used for:

- Online courses and certifications (e.g., Coursera, Udemy, AWS certifications)
- Conferences and workshops (registration fees; travel expenses are covered separately under the travel policy)
- Books and subscriptions (technical and professional publications)
- Language courses relevant to business needs

The learning budget resets on **January 1** each year and does not carry over. Expenses must be pre-approved by the employee's manager through the

NovaLearn portal. Approval is generally granted for any learning activity that is relevant to the employee's current role or a realistic future role within NovaTech.

Internal Learning

NovaTech organizes the following internal learning activities:

- **Tech Talks (bi-weekly):** 30-minute presentations by employees on technical topics, held on alternating Wednesdays at 16:00 CET.
- **Product Academy (monthly):** Deep-dive sessions on NovaTech ProjectHub and NovaTech Insight features, led by product managers.
- **Leadership Development Program:** A six-month program for employees transitioning into management roles. Cohorts of 8-12 participants are selected annually in March. The program includes workshops, executive mentoring, and a capstone project.

Conference Attendance

Employees may attend up to **two (2) external conferences per year** using their learning budget (for registration) and the travel policy (for travel and accommodation). Attending additional conferences requires director-level approval. Employees who speak at conferences may request additional budget from HR.

10. Code of Conduct

All NovaTech Solutions employees, contractors, and partners are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional and ethical behavior.

Anti-Discrimination and Harassment

NovaTech Solutions prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, political opinion, marital status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. This applies to all aspects of employment, including hiring, promotion, compensation, and termination.

Employees who experience or witness discrimination or harassment should report it to their manager, HR, or through the anonymous **NovaTrust Reporting Line** (accessible via the company intranet or by email at trust@novatech-solutions.com). All reports are investigated promptly and confidentially.

Retaliation against employees who report concerns in good faith is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Conflicts of Interest

Employees must disclose any personal, financial, or familial relationships that could create a conflict of interest with their NovaTech responsibilities. This includes but is not limited to: outside employment with competitors or customers, significant financial interests in companies that do business with NovaTech, and personal relationships with individuals who report to or are managed by the employee.

Disclosures should be submitted to HR using the Conflict of Interest Declaration form in NovaHR. Disclosures are reviewed by the Legal department, which will advise on any necessary mitigations.

Use of Company Resources

Company resources — including equipment, software licenses, email, and internet access — are provided for business purposes. Limited personal use is permitted provided it does not interfere with job performance, violate any company policy, or create legal liability for NovaTech. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using company-owned devices and systems.

Social Media

Employees are welcome to discuss their work at NovaTech on social media, provided they do not disclose confidential information (see Section 12), clearly state that opinions are their own, and comply with the Social Media Guidelines published on the company intranet.

11. Information Technology Policies

The IT policies outlined below are mandatory for all employees and contractors with access to NovaTech systems. Compliance is monitored by the IT Security team, and violations may result in disciplinary action.

Access and Authentication

- All NovaTech accounts must be protected by **two-factor authentication (2FA)**. 2FA is mandatory — no exceptions. Hardware security keys (YubiKey)

are the preferred second factor; authenticator apps (Google Authenticator, Authy) are also acceptable. SMS-based 2FA is not permitted.

- Passwords must meet the following requirements: minimum **fourteen (14) characters**, at least one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter, one digit, and one special character. Passwords must not contain the user's name, email address, or common dictionary words.
- Password rotation is required every **ninety (90) days**. Employees receive automated reminders starting fourteen (14) days before expiration. Accounts with expired passwords are locked after a **forty-eight (48) hour** grace period.
- Employees must not share credentials with any other person, including colleagues, managers, and IT staff. IT will never ask for your password.

Device Management

- All company-issued devices must be enrolled in the Mobile Device Management (MDM) system (currently Microsoft Intune).
- **Personal devices may not be used to access production systems, source code repositories, or customer data.** Personal devices may be used to access email and Slack via the approved mobile applications, provided the device meets the minimum security requirements (OS version no more than two major versions behind current, device encryption enabled, screen lock enabled).
- Company-issued devices must have full-disk encryption enabled (BitLocker for Windows, FileVault for macOS). This is configured automatically by IT.
- Lost or stolen devices must be reported to IT within **four (4) hours** of discovery via the IT emergency hotline (+49 89 555 0199) or it-security@novatech-solutions.com.

Software and Development Practices

- Only software approved by IT may be installed on company devices. Software requests are submitted through the IT Service Portal and are typically processed within **three (3) business days**.
- Source code must be stored exclusively in the company's GitHub Enterprise instance. Personal GitHub accounts may not be used for company code.
- All code changes to production branches require peer review by at least **one (1) other engineer** before merging.
- Secrets (API keys, database credentials, certificates) must be stored in the company's secrets management system (HashiCorp Vault) and must never be committed to version control.

Network Security

- The company VPN must be used when accessing internal systems from outside the office network. The VPN client (WireGuard) is pre-installed on all company devices.
 - Employees must not connect company devices to untrusted public Wi-Fi networks without the VPN active.
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12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

NovaTech Solutions processes personal data in compliance with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, the **California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)**, and other applicable data protection laws. Our Data Protection Officer (DPO) can be reached at dpo@novatech-solutions.com.

Confidential Information

Employees have access to confidential information including but not limited to: customer data, source code, product roadmaps, financial results, pricing strategies, and employee data. This information must not be disclosed to unauthorized persons, whether inside or outside the company, except as required to perform job duties.

The obligation of confidentiality survives the termination of employment and remains in effect for **twenty-four (24) months** after the employee's last day of work, unless a longer period is specified in the employment contract.

Data Classification

Classification	Description	Examples	Handling
Public	Information intended for public distribution	Marketing materials, blog posts	No restrictions
Internal	Information for NovaTech employees only	Org charts, internal announcements	Do not share externally
Confidential	Sensitive business information	Financial data, product roadmap, customer lists	Need-to-know basis; encrypted storage

Classification	Description	Examples	Handling
Restricted	Highly sensitive data	Customer PII, credentials, security audits	Strict access controls; encrypted at rest and in transit; audit logging

All employees must complete the **annual data protection training** (administered via NovaLearn in February each year) to maintain access to Confidential and Restricted data.

13. Health and Safety

NovaTech Solutions is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment in all of our offices. Office-specific health and safety information, including evacuation routes, first-aid stations, and emergency contacts, is posted on each floor and available on the company intranet.

Ergonomics

Employees may request an ergonomic assessment of their workstation at any time by submitting a request through the IT Service Portal. Assessments are conducted by certified ergonomics consultants and are available for both office and home workstations.

Mental Health Support

NovaTech provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through our partner, **Workplace Options**, offering confidential counseling and support services.

Employees and their immediate family members may access up to **eight (8) free counseling sessions per year**. The EAP can be reached 24/7 at +49 800 700 2424 (Germany), +351 800 500 345 (Portugal), or +1 800 555 0147 (USA).

14. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

Raising a Grievance

Employees who have a concern about their treatment at work, their working conditions, or a colleague's behavior should first attempt to resolve the matter informally with their manager. If the concern involves the manager, or if informal

resolution is not possible, the employee may submit a formal grievance to HR via the NovaHR portal or the NovaTrust Reporting Line.

HR will acknowledge receipt of a formal grievance within **two (2) business days** and will complete an investigation within **twenty (20) business days**, unless the complexity of the matter requires an extension (in which case the employee will be informed).

Disciplinary Process

NovaTech follows a progressive disciplinary process for policy violations or performance issues:

1. **Verbal warning** — documented in NovaHR.
2. **Written warning** — formal letter outlining the issue and expected improvements, with a review date within thirty (30) days.
3. **Final written warning** — formal letter with a clear statement that further violations may result in termination.
4. **Termination** — for persistent violations or a single act of gross misconduct.

Acts of **gross misconduct** — including theft, fraud, violence, harassment, deliberate data breaches, and severe safety violations — may result in immediate termination without prior warnings.

15. Handbook Acknowledgment

By continuing employment with NovaTech Solutions, employees acknowledge that they have received, read, and understood this handbook. A digital acknowledgment is recorded in NovaHR during onboarding and each time the handbook is updated.

This handbook does not constitute an employment contract or a guarantee of employment. NovaTech Solutions reserves the right to modify, revise, or discontinue any policy in this handbook at any time, with reasonable notice to employees. Material changes will be communicated via company-wide email and posted on the intranet.

NovaTech Solutions GmbH Leopoldstraße 120, 80802 Munich, Germany
Handelsregister: HRB 231847 (Amtsgericht Munich) Geschäftsführer: Sarah Chen (CEO), Marcus Weber (CTO), Priya Anand (CFO)

For questions about this handbook, contact: **hr@novatech-solutions.com**