Sustainability Strategy

dkfz.

GERMAN
CANCER RESEARCH CENTER
IN THE HELMHOLTZ ASSOCIATION

DKFZ Research and Development Center for Imaging and Radiation Oncology | © Brigida González/DKFZ

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Mission Statement

The German Cancer Research Center is committed to conducting groundbreaking cancer research at the highest international level. Our work aims to save lives and improve the well-being of those affected by cancer. We strive to provide our employees with an environmentally sound and socially just workplace while practicing outstanding research in a responsible, sustainable, and climate-friendly manner.

Foreward

Management Board

Ursula Weyrich, Administrative Director
Jutta Jung/DKFZ

Prof. Michael Baumann, Chairmann and Scientific Director
Uwe Anspach/DKFZ

The contribution to society that the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) provides is important for reaching the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Good Health and Well-being. Over 3,000 employees in more than 90 departments and junior research groups are investigating how cancer develops and which factors influence cancer risk. We celebrate the success of the DKFZ in contributing to healthy lives on a global scale while recognizing that conducting our research takes a great amount of energy and resources. To take responsibility for our environmental and social impact the DKFZ has developed a sustainability strategy, which will be followed by a sustainability action plan and sustainability reporting, to keep us on track to achieve our goals.

Sustainability Coordinator

Hollyn Hartlep, Sustainability Coordinator
Jutta Jung/DKFZ

We are living in a critical time to act on climate change and biodiversity loss. The negative impacts of climate change are mounting faster than scientists had predicted less than a decade ago. While addressing climate change is one of the most pressing aspects of our sustainability strategy, we have ensured that the strategy takes a holistic approach, also addressing the other important ecological, social, and economic aspects of sustainability. I deeply appreciate the dedication of every DKFZ employee, as well as the invaluable support from the Helmholtz Association, the German federal, regional, and local governments, and our trusted networks in helping us achieve our goals. Your contributions are instrumental in driving our sustainable development and empowering us to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality by 2035. This journey would not be possible without you, and your support remains the key to our success.

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Introduction

The German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) recognizes the importance of sustainability and the urgency of climate action in today's world. As the largest biomedical research institute in Germany and a member of the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centers[1], the DKFZ is committed to excellence in research and to setting an example by sustainably conducting research. We believe that groundbreaking cancer research that saves lives and improves well-being must go hand in hand with a strong commitment to ensuring a healthy and liveable environment. The DKFZ aspires to conduct environmentally and socially conscious research and provide employees with an environmentally friendly workplace.

To conduct research in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, the DKFZ has outlined a sustainability strategy guided by the LeNa Handbook[2] and in line with the Helmholtz Sustainability Guideline[3]. This document outlines the goals, achievements, and plans for the DKFZ in the following areas: (1) Climate protection, (2) biodiversity, (3) organizational development, (4) research, (5) human resources, (6) construction and infrastructure, (7) procurement, and (8) mobility management.

The DKFZ Sustainability Strategy is a living document that is regularly updated according to the latest sustainability developments at the institute. The Strategy is the basic document on which the other implementation documents can be based.

The Strategy and its subsequent amendments will be presented at meetings of the administrative and scientific department heads and at general internal events for all employees. In addition, the document will be made available to all DKFZ employees on the intranet, and the latest developments concerning this subject area will be published internally as news. In addition, the Strategy will also be publicly accessible on the DKFZ website, and the content will be continually incorporated into the DKFZ's social media strategy.

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[1] The Helmholtz Association is Germany's largest research organization, with approximately 46,000 employees at 18 research centers. The Association develops solutions and technologies in the following research fields: Energy, Earth and Environment, Health, Information, Aeronautics, Space and Transport, and Matter. More information about the Association can be found here: https://www.helmholtz.de/en/.

[2] The LeNa Handbook (German: Leitfaden Nachhaltigkeitsmanagement in außeruniversitären Forschungsorganisationen; English: Handbook on sustainability management in non-university research organizations) is a guide developed by three leading research organizations in Germany: the Fraunhofer Society, the Leibniz Association and the Helmholtz Association. The Handbook serves as a guide for the operationalization and integration of sustainable development specific to non-university research organizations. The LeNa Handbook is currently only available in German here: https://www.nachhaltig-forschen.de/startseite/.

[3] https://www.dkfz.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Nachhaltigkeit/Dateien/HGF_Leitlinie_Nachhaltigkeit_2021.pdf (German)

Governance and Management

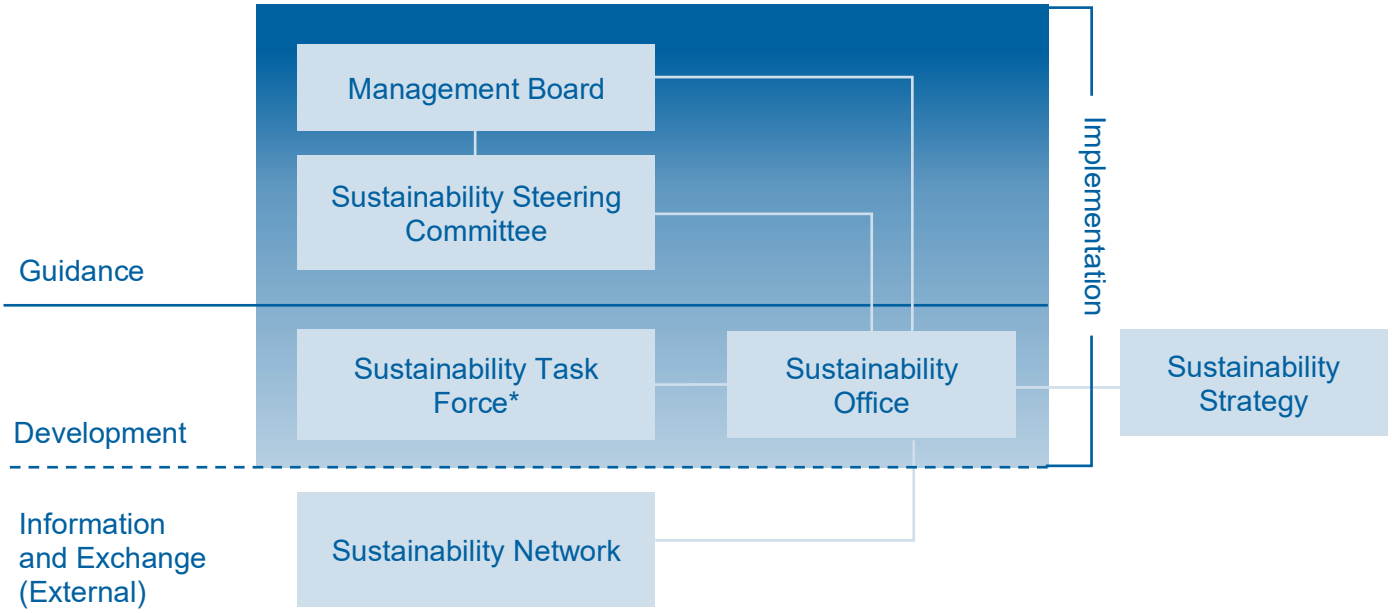
The DKFZ Sustainability Strategy was commissioned by the Administrative Board in 2021, and a sustainability coordinator was hired in May 2021 to develop and implement the Strategy. The Strategy will be developed and implemented in close collaboration with the Management Board, and two bodies yet to be formed: a Sustainability Steering Committee and a Sustainability Task Force.

The Sustainability Steering Committee will provide input and advice on the development of, identify potential risks, and monitor the quality of the Sustainability Strategy. The Committee will be made up of one representative from the Scientific Council, the Staff Council, the Construction, Technical Infrastructure, Infrastructure Projects and Operations Management, Strategic Communication and Public Relations, Safety, Human Resources, and Procurement Departments, and each DKFZ site. Its meetings will be attended by the Management Board.

The Sustainability Task Force serves to set goals, assign and carry out tasks, discuss challenges, and evaluate the progress of the Sustainability Strategy. Plans proposed by the Task Force will be assessed and approved by the Sustainability Steering Committee and the Management Board, forming a sustainability action plan. The Task Force will be a group made up of Sustainability Officers from DKFZ departments ranging across disciplines, responsibilities, and locations. The Task Force will include representation from the DKFZ Headquarters in Heidelberg and the various locations. Heads of the Core Facilities, the administrative departments, and the research programs will be invited to nominate a sustainability officer to participate. The Sustainability Officers will serve as the direct point of contact between their respective departments or research programs and the Sustainability Office. In addition to the Sustainability Task Force, the DKFZ has an official working group called the DKFZ Sustainability Group, which began in 2021 to raise awareness about and promote sustainability at the DKFZ through projects and campaigns. Members of the DKFZ Sustainability Group will also be invited to participate in the Sustainability Task Force.

The DKFZ is currently involved in several sustainability networks, including the Helmholtz Sustainability Working Group Forum, the Heidelberg Research Institutions Sustainability Forum, and the "*Netzwerk Nachhaltigkeit*" (Sustainability Network). The Helmholtz Sustainability Working Group Forum is made up of sustainability officers from the eighteen Helmholtz Research Centers. The Heidelberg Research Institutions Sustainability Forum includes members from the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), the Max Planck School Matter to Life, the University of Heidelberg, and the Heidelberg University Hospital (UKHD). The Netzwerk Nachhaltigkeit is led by the Heidelberg UKHD and includes members from Salem Hospital and the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (ifeu). These networks serve as important sources of information and exchange in the field of sustainability and for our Sustainability Strategy.

Governance and Management Structure



*Members of the DKFZ Sustainability Group, an employee volunteer initiative, are included in the Sustainability Task Force.

Climate Protection

DKFZ Research and Development Center for Imaging and Radiation Oncology | Peter Sauer/DKFZ

Increases in the frequency and intensity of climate and weather extremes have led to widespread, pervasive impacts on ecosystems, people, and infrastructure[4]. Climate change has adversely affected the physical health of people globally, including but not limited to mortality and morbidity due to extreme heat events, the emergence of animal and human diseases in new areas, and an increase in food-borne and water-borne diseases[5]. The impacts of climate change threaten public health and contribute to predicted higher cancer rates[6].

[4] IPCC, 2022: Summary for Policymakers [H.-O.Pörtner, D.C.Roberts, E.S.Poloczanska, K.Mintenbeck, M.Tignor, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem (eds.)]. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O.Pörtner, D.C.Roberts, M.Tignor, E.S.Poloczanska, K.Mintenbeck, A.Alegría, M.Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 3–33, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.001.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Hiatt, Robert A. and Beyeler, Naomi. “Cancer and climate change.” *Lancet Oncology* 21 (2020): e519-27. doi: 10.1016/S1470-2045(20)30448-4

The links between cancer and climate change are clear. Air pollution, ultraviolet radiation, disruptions in food and water supply, and exposure to industrial toxicants are likely to affect cancer control[7][8]. Numerous additional impacts of climate change threaten public health and contribute to predicted higher cancer rates. Lung cancer is the primary cause of cancer mortality worldwide. Despite some progress in reducing tobacco consumption, there is a possibility that air pollution will gradually gain importance as one of the main causes of lung cancer.

We acknowledge that over 25% of the energy that we use to conduct our research is currently sourced from the combustion of fossil fuels, which releases particulate air pollution into the atmosphere and is the main contributor to climate change. Our goal is to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels as quickly as feasible.

At the DKFZ, we see climate action as our responsibility and aligned with our mission for a life without cancer. We strive to take actions to mitigate climate change and to contribute to research on the impact of climate change on cancer risk and care. The co-benefits that climate action offers are necessary to achieve a world without cancer.

The German government has set the goal to reach climate neutrality by 2045. Considering the special responsibility and exemplary role of science institutions, the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany, to which the Helmholtz Association, and thus, the DKFZ belongs, has set the very ambitious goal to achieve climate neutrality in its working methods and research processes by 2035 at the latest. Accordingly, the DKFZ is pursuing the goal of achieving greenhouse gas neutrality by 2035, knowing full well that there are numerous major challenges to overcome.

In order to meet this goal, a greenhouse gas inventory will be conducted in future in accordance with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol[9] and externally verified. Based upon these results, a climate protection concept will be developed in consultation with third-party expertise and in line with science-based targets[10] for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Climate protection measures will be implemented in accordance with targets and unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions will be compensated.

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Cancer control aims to lessen the burden of cancer on countries and communities. It includes cancer prevention, early detection, and diagnosis, treatment, and palliative care.

[9] The Greenhouse Gas Protocol is a joint initiative of the World Resources Institute and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development that establishes comprehensive global standardized frameworks to measure and manage greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from private and public sector operations, value chains, and mitigation actions. More information can be found here: https://ghgprotocol.org/

[10] Targets are considered ‘science-based’ if they are in line with what the latest climate science deems necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

Biodiversity

DKFZ Main Building Courtyard Heidelberg | Hollyn Hartlep/DKFZ

Nature is in the midst of a dangerous decline, which threatens the economy, livelihoods, food security, and people's quality of life[11]. The population sizes of mammal, bird, fish, reptile, and amphibian populations have decreased by 68% since 1970 and the number of plant extinctions is twice as many as for mammals, birds, and amphibians combined, at a rate of up to 500 times faster than in pre-industrial times[12]. In Germany, insect abundance decreased by 76% between 1989 and 2016. One of the largest reservoirs of biodiversity on Earth is hosted in soil, providing a vast range of ecosystem services to keep terrestrial ecosystems intact.

Biodiversity loss over the past several decades has been caused primarily by land-use change, largely due to the conversion of native habitats into agricultural systems, but climate change is projected to become the most significant driver of biodiversity loss in coming decades. Loss of biodiversity, such as through deforestation, also adversely affects the climate.

The global decline in biodiversity also threatens the source of anticancer agents, as approximately 74% of anticancer agents are either natural products or natural product-derived agents[13]. The

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[11] IPBES (2019): Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. E. S. Brondizio, J. Settele, S. Díaz, and H. T. Ngo (editors). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 1148 pages. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3831673

[12] WWF (2020) *Living Planet Report 2020 - Bending the curve of biodiversity loss*. Almond, R.E.A., Grooten M. and Petersen, T. (Eds). WWF, Gland, Switzerland.

[13] Tan, G., Gyllenhaal, C., and Soejarto, D. D. (2006). “Biodiversity as a source of anticancer drugs.” *Curr Drug Targets* 7 (3): 266-77 doi: 10.2174/138945006776054942.

bioactive compounds present in nature are a valuable source for discovering novel chemopreventive compounds and developing new and more potent anticancer drugs[14].

In order to protect biodiversity and preserve ecosystems, the DKFZ will manage its indirect impact by (1) engaging with suppliers and including environmental standards for tender agreements in contracts, mentioned in Chapter 7: Procurement, (2) incorporating nature-oriented design into the land used and rented by the DKFZ and (3) hosting events on the topic of biodiversity.

The DKFZ has intentionally used primarily native plants in its landscape, which are vital to supporting native insects and birds, among other animals. In 2021 a native flower bed was planted in the area surrounding the 7 TESLA building to support the local ecosystem. Plans are underway to increase the number of shrubs and birdhouses on the DKFZ campus in Heidelberg to provide more coverage and shelter for animal species. The DKFZ also hosts seminars on biodiversity given by external experts and includes activities supporting biodiversity in its Earth Week activities.

[14] Justo, G. Z., Souza, A. C., Fátima, Â., Pedrosa, M. F., Ferreira, C.V. and Rocha, H. A., (2011). The Medicinal Value of Biodiversity: New Hits to Fight Cancer. In Grillo, O. (Ed.) and Venora, G. (Ed.). *Biological Diversity and Sustainable Resource Use*. (pp. 121-144) doi:10.5772/1834

Organizational Leadership

Jan Krukau/Pexels

In line with the LeNa Handbook, the DKFZ aims to create a governance framework at the management level in which sustainability is integrated into the organization in the following areas: (1) integrative strategic planning, (2) participative organizational development, (3) compliance, and (4) transfer and exchange. How the DKFZ intends to do so is described below.

Integrative Strategic Planning

Sustainability will be integrated into a consistent overall strategy for the development of the DKFZ. The development strategies and competing interests for each management area will be considered and managed as a part of the overall strategy leading to a consensus on a common set of values and principles in order to set the framework for sustainable long-term decisions. The development of this strategy and framework is being driven forward by the Management Board.

Participative Organizational Development

The involvement of employees in current developments is highly valued at the DKFZ. To ensure that this is done, employees are invited to a General Staff Assembly twice a year at which staff members ask questions to the Management Board and other speakers. Employee surveys are carried out when changes are intended to be made, such as before the development of the DKFZ Mobile Work Agreement and the corporate mobility management concept. Moreover, users are involved in the planning process, e.g., for new construction projects.

To further advance participative organizational development at the DKFZ, task force membership will be reviewed to ensure that groups are built with employees from different hierarchical levels and functional areas.

Compliance

The DKFZ aims to promote a culture of compliance. To do so, the DKFZ hired a Compliance Officer in June 2021, who is designing a strategy to ensure compliance with legal regulations and organization-specific standards. Compliance with these standards strengthens the ability of the DKFZ to make a deliberate, forward-looking, and beneficial impact on society, the economy, and the environment.

Compliance has been on the DKFZ agenda for decades and has included the development of an Ombuds Committee, to offer consultation on good scientific practice, as well as mandatory training courses for employees in Corruption Prevention, Good Scientific Practice, and IT Security.

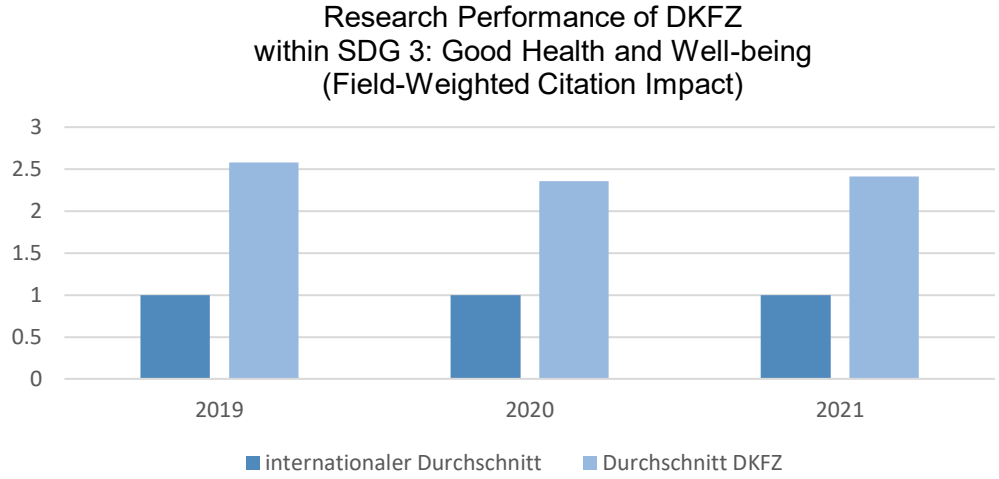
Transfer and Exchange

The DKFZ is pursuing a comprehensive transfer strategy to effectively translate findings from cancer research into society and medical practice. Key priorities include expanding partnerships, establishing the National Cancer Prevention Center, and strengthening the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT). The strategy includes digital innovations, patient-oriented research, the training of early-career professionals, and close collaborations with industry partners. The goal is to sustainably accelerate medical progress and improve healthcare and resilience in Germany and beyond through systematic knowledge transfer, technology-driven spin-offs, and the development of appropriate success indicators.

Research

Scientist carrying out cancer research using a pipette | Jutta Jung/DKFZ

The DKFZ contributes significantly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: Good Health and Well-being[15] through excellence in cancer research. In an international comparison of average publication performance in this field, the DKFZ continuously shows above-average performance (see Fig. 1).



Data source:
Scopus up to 03.08.2022.
With kind permission from Elsevier

[15] United Nations. (n.d.). *Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*. United Nations. https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3

In order to establish and implement sustainable work in everyday research, various approaches and concepts have been developed at the DKFZ to enable employees to conduct innovative research at the highest international level in a socially and environmentally responsible working environment.

Good Scientific Practice

For a research institute like the DKFZ, the trust of the scientific community, politicians and the public at large in the quality of the research conducted is of fundamental importance for sustainability. Only if the scientific competence, the quality of the obtained results, and the relevance to society can be continuously documented, consistent societal and financial support can be expected, which are essential for performing research at the DKFZ.

To this end, it is imperative that research be conducted without exception in accordance with the principles of good scientific practice, which are recognized both nationally and internationally. In Germany, the German Research Foundation (DFG) has laid down these principles in detail. On this basis, the Helmholtz Association as well as the DKFZ have formulated and implemented clear rules and processes for the lasting assurance of good scientific practice.

One of the most important aspects is the prevention of any misconduct, even out of ignorance. Participation in courses on the rules of good scientific practice is mandatory at the DKFZ and must be attended regularly and documented by all employees.

In order to identify any possible misconduct, a clearly regulated ombuds system has been established, through which suspected cases can be named – confidentially in any case, but anonymous reports are also pursued – and investigated independently, impartially, and objectively. In addition to the ombudspersons, who are appointed by mutual agreement between the Scientific Council and the DKFZ Management Board, other offices at the DKFZ, such as the Human Resources Department, the Staff Council, and the Graduate Program, also serve as informal points of contact and pass cases on to the ombudspersons.

Any violations of the rules are investigated by one or more ombudspersons and, in confirmed cases of suspicion, are followed up by a commission. This commission is also appointed by mutual agreement between the DKFZ Scientific Council and the Management Board and works independently. In the event of confirmed misconduct, the commission would propose how it should be corrected and possibly sanctioned. The implementation of any sanctions is the responsibility of the DKFZ Management Board.

At the DKFZ, additional topics such as corruption prevention are addressed. All group and department heads complete a course on this topic with a final examination, which must be repeated at certain intervals. They are responsible for making this and other aspects known and implementing them in their respective organizational units.

The aim of all good scientific practice measures is, above all, prevention. At the same time, measures are intended to sensitize the attention of every person at the DKFZ to processes that could potentially compromise good scientific practice, in order to avoid misconduct as far as possible, or, if it has already occurred, to correct it promptly.

Social Responsibility in Research

Energy efficiency and resource use

Laboratories consume up to ten times the energy and four times the water of a typical office space[16] and generate an estimated 5.5 million tonnes of plastic waste per year[17]. The DKFZ acknowledges the special responsibility of the biomedical industry to reduce this staggering environmental footprint and is committed to increasing the energy efficiency of its laboratory operations and reducing resource use. To do so, the DKFZ has organized and participated in energy-efficiency and laboratory sustainability challenges, such as the My Green Lab and International Institute for Sustainable Laboratories Freezer Challenge, resulting in an estimated 350.35 kWh/day saved in 2023. In addition, since 2013, the DKFZ has been voluntarily certifying its laboratories via the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF). The LEAF program offers a framework that supports laboratories in saving plastics, water, energy, and other resources, measuring their carbon impact, and making more sustainable equipment and consumables purchases.

The DKFZ aims to increase participation in the LEAF program on a yearly basis, issue a DKFZ-specific laboratory sustainability guideline, and continue education campaigns to raise awareness about and encourage the adoption of laboratory sustainability best practices.

Animal testing

Animal experiments for cancer research are currently unavoidable. The DKFZ attaches great importance to ensuring that such animal experiments are carried out to the highest standards. Sustainability is also an important approach here. The 3R concept (replace = replace animal experiments, reduce = reduce animal experiments, refine = improve animal experiments) by Russell and Burch from 1959, which is recognized worldwide in laboratory animal science, can also be regarded as a sustainability strategy. Animal experiments consume considerable resources (e.g., costs, personnel, materials, and building equipment). For this reason, they are only carried out if they are unavoidable. At the DKFZ, these resources are used responsibly with regard to animal welfare and sustainability.

All procedures within the DKFZ Center for Preclinical Research (ZPF) are uniformly regulated by standard operating procedures (SOPs). Users and staff are instructed annually on the most important SOPs and sensitized to important issues. This instruction is crucial for making work procedures uniform and, thus, saving resources, conducting reproducible science, and ensuring the best possible animal welfare.

Inhalation anesthetics such as isoflurane have a high global warming potential. Reducing the emissions of such anesthetics represents an important contribution to environmental protection and the sustainability of animal research facilities. The DKFZ strives to reduce the consumption of inhalation gases to a minimum. To this end, all anesthesia devices have been retrofitted with carbon filters, which filter out the ozone-damaging anesthetic gases before they are released into the environment. Thorough training of users should also contribute to the careful use of anesthetic gases.

Rodent husbandry takes place exclusively in individually ventilated cages (IVCs). IVC housing provides maximum hygiene protection for the animals, thus increasing the validity of scientific experiments, and preventing dust formation and odor nuisance, resulting in improved indoor air quality

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[16] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2008). Laboratories for the 21st Century: An Introduction to Low-Energy Design. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Energy. https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy08osti/29413.pdf

[17] Urbina, M., Watts, A. & Reardon, E. (2015). Labs should cut plastic waste too. *Nature 528*, 479. https://doi.org/10.1038/528479c

for employees. The innovative ventilation concept used in the animal husbandry rooms improves the working environment for employees and considerably reduces the energy consumption and operating costs of the facility, thus improving its ecological balance.

Animal testing is viewed very ambivalently in society. Transparent communication on this topic, both internally and externally, is an important aspect of sustainability. Talking openly about animal experiments will raise awareness and foster acceptance of the topic among scientists and technicians, including DKFZ employees, and society at large. In order to engage with the broader public, the DKFZ talked openly with visitors about animal testing in a so-called pop-up store in Heidelberg's old town in 2022. On the worldwide "Day of the Laboratory Animal" on April 24, 2022, the DKFZ allowed the press to visit the animal facility. The DKFZ would also like to intensify internal communication about animal experiments in order to establish a culture of care, not only for the animals but also for the animal husbandry and scientific staff at the DKFZ.

Open Science and Sustainability

Open Science is an essential prerequisite for sustainable research processes. The main aspect in this context is free access to research results, such as data/datasets, scientific software and publications, and metadata. In addition to accessibility via suitable infrastructure, data must be prepared according to discipline-specific standards, made accessible, and archived in certified repositories over the long term. If these criteria are met, subsequent use of research results is guaranteed. In this way, data can be reused for other or further research projects. This reusability contributes to resource-efficient research.

The DKFZ recognizes the fundamental importance of sustainable management of research data for maintaining research excellence and supports its scientists in implementing the guidelines on research data management[18]. Concerning research results, action must be taken in accordance with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable)[19]. It should be noted that legal and contractual framework conditions must be taken into account, especially when disclosing data. This applies in particular to sensitive data, for which data protection regulations must be observed. Here, the principle of the European Commission for Open Data ("as open as possible, as closed as necessary") must be followed.

The DKFZ provides its researchers with suitable infrastructure to adequately meet the requirements of research data management. This infrastructure is continuously expanded and adapted to the latest developments. Due to the great complexity of the topic, extensive consulting services are also necessary to support scientists individually in managing their data. At present, requirements are being identified for the development of a corresponding service offer. The DKFZ aims to be able to offer researchers solutions tailored to their needs for all issues (legal, organizational, or technical).

Contributions to Solutions for Societal Challenges

Making scientific findings accessible

In order to ensure that the research that the DKFZ conducts reaches the general public, the DKFZ puts great effort into communicating its research activities to target groups outside the scientific community.

[18] See the DKFZ Guidelines for Research Data Management here: https://www.dkfz.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Abteilungen/W510/PDFs/Forschungsdatenmanagement/DKFZ-FDM-Leitlinien.pdf (German)
[19] See more information on the FAIR principles here: https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/

To make the DKFZ's findings accessible and engaging, the Strategic Communications and Public Relations Department informs the press about the results of the DKFZ's research, distributes content on various social media platforms, and publishes the DKFZ magazine *einblick*, which shares the latest science and information on cancer free of charge. The DKFZ also considers direct engagement with the public important, and therefore, participates in and hosts science communication events such as the Heidelberg Science Night, Science in the City, and Open House Days.

In order to engage with and support middle- and high school students interested in mathematics and science, the DKFZ has developed and been running the Life Science Lab since 1999, offering hands-on work on scientific problems for students starting from the 8th grade.

To support cancer patients and their family members, the DKFZ's Cancer Information Service provides free information based on the latest available evidence.

Climate change and sustainability research

The DKFZ is participating together with Helmholtz Munich, the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC), the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE), and the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) on the Helmholtz Climate Initiative climate change adaptation study, *Impacts on health in NAKO and Rhineland*, focused on the impact that weather has on cardiovascular diseases, metabolic and cognitive functions, as well as mental health. The study assesses the health of more than 210,000 adults over the years, observing the prevalence of Lyme disease in the cohort and assessing the joint impact of temperature and UV radiation on antibodies to fight infectious diseases, especially cutaneous human papillomaviruses (HPV), to monitor exacerbations and the effects on the risk of nonmelanoma skin cancer. The DKFZ is currently conducting a separate study on the link between increased UV exposure and skin cancer.

Where possible, the DKFZ will continue to contribute to research on the impacts of climate change on health, in particular, on cancer. Proposals have been submitted on the nexus between increased air pollution and lung cancer and reduced food safety and increased dependency on processed and inflammation-inducing food and gastrointestinal cancers.

In an innovative bioeconomy Helmholtz spin-off project, DKFZ scientists are producing a sustainable source of animal protein and raw materials for bioplastics from the marbled crayfish, a model organism used for their epigenetic cancer research. The researchers produce the animals in a closed-loop aquaculture system and use a biorefinery to break the marbled crayfish down into its components of meat, chitin, astaxanthin, protein residues, and minerals. The customized vertical aquaculture system uses significantly less water and electricity than conventional systems for shrimp and does not require the use of antibiotics, resulting in a more ecologically sustainable end product.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Visual Generation – stock.adobe.com

Excellent research depends on a working culture shaped by mutual respect, critical thinking, and fair structures. At the DKFZ, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are not additional topics but core prerequisites for scientific excellence and institutional integrity. As a signatory of the Diversity Charter (Charta der Vielfalt) and a research center with staff from more than 94 countries, the DKFZ is committed to a global research culture that understands diversity as both a strength and a shared responsibility. These values are closely linked to our vision: Research for a life without cancer.

The DKFZ follows an intersectional and discrimination-aware DEI approach that goes beyond naming structural barriers and focuses on actively changing them. This includes addressing discriminatory systems, creating fair and accessible pathways, involving staff in shaping processes, and strengthening workplace inclusion. In a complex organization with diverse cultural, social, and academic backgrounds, clear and effective measures are essential to ensure equal access to opportunities, recognition, and participation.

The strategic framework for this work is the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (GEDIP), launched in 2021. To support its implementation, the Equal Opportunities Office and the Equal Opportunities Officer are provided with dedicated funding and staff. In 2023, the DIVERSUM project was initiated to develop fairer recruitment processes and establish a sustainable DEI structure. In October 2024, a professional DEI Management position was created within the Equal Opportunities Office to coordinate and further develop this work. In addition, internal DEI monitoring tools, regular pulse surveys, and external process support are being developed to enable continuous organizational learning.

A central DEI challenge in the research sector is how to foster belonging, fairness, and integrity in institutions shaped by global mobility and power dynamics. As research environments become increasingly diverse, it is necessary to examine structural conditions that affect access, participation, and career development. A holistic and intersectional DEI approach helps create systems that reflect different lived realities and ensure equal participation. In this sense, DEI contributes not only to scientific quality but also to social sustainability by supporting fair, inclusive, and respectful working conditions in the long term.

DEI work at the DKFZ addresses both structural and cultural change. Measures include discrimination-sensitive job postings, awareness initiatives such as Diversity Month and the Weeks Against Racism, as well as internal support structures, platforms for marginalized perspectives, and empowerment programs for underrepresented groups.

Our understanding of DEI is grounded in current academic, political, and social debates and is based on a structural perspective that emphasizes institutional responsibility rather than individual attitudes. Diversity refers to socially produced differences—such as background, gender, ability, or identity—that can lead to unequal treatment and access. Recognizing diversity means making exclusions visible, addressing power relations, and removing barriers, particularly for those facing multiple forms of disadvantage.

Equity focuses on actively reducing structural inequalities by providing resources, rights, and opportunities according to different needs and starting points. Treating everyone the same is insufficient; instead, systems must be designed to ensure fair chances, especially for those historically excluded. Gender equity is one example and includes measures such as promoting women in underrepresented fields, encouraging fathers to take parental leave, and ensuring performance-based pay structures.

Inclusion means creating a working environment in which all people feel valued, respected, and able to contribute their full potential. It requires participation, representation, and a culture that listens and responds to difference.

The DKFZ has made significant progress in gender equality and has been committed to equal opportunities for women and men since 1995. To address unconscious bias, leaders at all levels are strongly encouraged to participate in unconscious bias training. Recruitment procedures for international PhD candidates, PostDocs, and Clinician Scientists include clear standards for recognizing and addressing bias, which are recommended for all staff involved in hiring processes.

A key objective of current DEI efforts is to further improve fair and inclusive recruitment and selection procedures, particularly with regard to access to leadership roles. Within the DIVERSUM project, job advertisements are being reviewed, reflective standards for selection committees are being developed, and awareness-raising workshops are being offered. This work follows an intersectional and multi-dimensional approach and will continue to evolve.

The institutional DEI strategy is being developed by the DEI Manager in close collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Officer and relevant stakeholders. It aims to address structural discrimination, support organizational change, and link equality work to a broader understanding of diversity. The Executive Board plays a key role in embedding DEI at the leadership level. Discrimination-sensitive data collection and accompanying guidance on related processes form a central foundation for a sustainable and effective DEI strategy by making inequalities visible, integrating lived experiences, and enabling evidence-based action.

DEI is an integral part of the DKFZ's Sustainability Strategy and will continue to develop alongside the overall strategic process. This version reflects the current state and will be updated based on data collection, staff involvement, and the outcomes of the DIVERSUM project.

Human Resources

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Office and Administrative Board celebrate recertification of the audit *Beruf und Familie* (Career and Family) | Jutta Jung/DKFZ

The DKFZ Human Resources Department contributes to sustainable human resources management through its working groups Human Resources Service, Training and Continuing Education, Career Service, International Staff Service, and Corporate Health Management. The Equal Opportunities and Diversity Office supports the development of measures to promote work-life balance, equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion within the DKFZ corporate culture.

Qualified Personnel Support

The Personnel Service working group in the Human Resources Department provides "classic" personnel support and accompanies employees and managers from the time they are hired to the time they leave. It provides expert advice on all issues relating to labor law, contractual law, and collective bargaining law and supports and advises managers on issues relating to personnel law. To ensure the compatibility of work and family, suitable working time models are found for the respective personal situations wherever possible. Many processes have been digitized (e.g., the electronic applicant portal, digital personnel file, digital employee portal with employee self-service for various functionalities such as vacation application, travel application, and accounting), thus increasing efficiency and reducing paper usage.

Sound Training

The DKFZ is a leading training company in the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region. Each year, between approximately 30 and 40 people (during the COVID-19 pandemic, recruitment had to be reduced) start an apprenticeship or dual study program at the DKFZ. The aim is to secure the next generation of staff in the scientific-technical and administrative areas and IT. To this end, training is offered for laboratory professions (biology laboratory technician (m/f/d) and animal caretaker (m/f/d) (here the DKFZ is also a Chamber of Commerce (IHK) testing facility), as well as administrative professions (business management assistant (m/f/d) for office management, IT application developer (m/f/d) and system integration specialist (m/f/d)). Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW) students graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration-Industry, or a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Medical Informatics, or Operational Security.

Full-time instructors, based in the Human Resources Department, are responsible for the selection and supervision of trainees and dual students, whereby the technical training takes place predominantly in the specialist departments, thus ensuring that up-to-date skills and techniques are taught. In this way, sustainable, high-quality training is ensured at the DKFZ, and so far, all training positions have been filled.

Graduates in a wide range of professions at the DKFZ regularly complete their training as chamber- or state-top performers. The vast majority of trainees are offered a job at the DKFZ. The main reason for not remaining at the DKFZ is often a desire to study. In this respect, the path already taken of supporting studies parallel to work is a targeted measure to promote and secure young talent.

Versatile Education

The DKFZ has long established a positive learning climate among its staff with a diverse and challenging range of internal and external continuing education programs. There are ongoing internal and external offerings for all target groups that enable and promote lifelong learning. Both classroom and online learning formats are offered and very well received. This ensures that employees are well-qualified for their current tasks and future tasks.

Another focus in continuing education is on team-oriented learning formats, e.g., accompanying scientific retreats or targeted continuing education for administrative or infrastructure departments and work groups. Here, the quality control and assurance of the transfer lies with the executives and is accompanied and supported by the Training and Further Education working group.

Sustainability Through Personnel and Management Development

Annual appraisals between employees and managers have been well-established at the DKFZ for more than 15 years. Based on guidelines, the work situation and goals are discussed and further training is agreed upon. For personnel development, in-service courses of study and further training that are necessary for the job are promoted and in demand.

In the area of junior managers, the DKFZ relies on proven formats such as those of the Helmholtz Academy, EMBO training for junior group leaders, or those of the Center for Science Management in Speyer. In addition, targeted formats are offered to promote internally developed managers (from colleagues to managers), and junior, as well as experienced managers, are effectively supported in challenging management situations through targeted coaching (with predominantly external coaches). The "Collegial Coaching" and "Collegial Leadership Coaching" tools enable employees and managers to deal with and master challenging work situations and leadership issues in the long term. The Training and Continuing Education Program also provides targeted support for the Advanced Mentoring Program, which serves to identify and sustainably develop the talents and potential of employees in science and administration.

Maintenance and Promotion of Employee Health

In 2014, the DKFZ introduced a corporate health management (BGM) program called "*DKFZ aktiv!*". The aim of the program is to strengthen and maintain the health of employees in the long term. It is also intended to strengthen employee motivation, employee loyalty, and the attractiveness of the DKFZ as an employer. To this end, a concept was developed and adopted by various health players in the organization, and a permanent coordinator position was created. This is anchored in the Human Resources department. Today, the *DKFZ aktiv!* team consists of two employees with a total of 160 percent. The central fixed BGM body consisting of representatives from scientific research programs, including but not limited to the Cancer Prevention Unit, as well as the Human Resources Department, Occupational Medicine, Occupational Safety, the Staff Council, and BGM, meets twice a year to inform each other on latest developments and to coordinate strategy, goals, and activities. Targeted working groups are set up to implement specific campaigns and projects.

In terms of content, one thematic focus is on cancer prevention. To address this, a specific program was introduced in 2016, which motivates and invites employees to take care of their own cancer prevention and early detection in regularly recurring campaigns with low-threshold offers (e.g., skin cancer and colorectal cancer screening). In addition to the cancer prevention and early detection program, which is very popular, employees at all sites have access to a range of behavioral and situational prevention programs covering topics such as mental health, relaxation and exercise, ergonomics, nutrition, addiction, non-smoker protection, home office, Long Covid and many more. An important focus here is on the mental health of employees. In addition to the services offered by two external psychological service providers, who can be contacted confidentially by employees, the DKFZ, together with the Central Institute for Mental Health, has trained central contact persons (e.g., Human Resources Department and Graduate School staff, Staff Council members, Ombudspersons, company physicians) as "Mental Health First Aiders" in order to enable them to act competently and provide support in the event of psychological problems and crises among employees. Information about the specific offer is provided via a regularly updated intranet page on occupational health management, a regular newsletter sent by e-mail, articles on the intranet homepage, and targeted information for the respective target group. An appropriate communication concept has been drawn up for this purpose.

In addition to long-standing and active internal networking, *DKFZ aktiv!* is also well and actively networked locally, regionally, and throughout Germany, for example, within the Helmholtz Association.

Integration of International Employees

The International Staff Services of the Human Resources Department supports the scientific departments. Even before arrival from abroad, active support is provided for relocation issues, including visa procedures.

Career Planning and Networking with Alumni

The Career Service & Alumni Relations Group of the Human Resources Department supports early-career scientists in their individual career planning, their professional and personal development, and the establishment of sustainable personal and scientific relationships with former DKFZ employees on a national and international level. Career Service & Alumni Relations works closely with other stakeholders to offer continuous support to scientists for whom special programs already exist (the Graduate School, Postdoc Program, and Clinician Scientist Program).

The goal is to provide highly qualified scientists with professional perspectives and career paths within and outside of science and to focus on individual biographies and preferences in addition to professional qualifications. The concept includes a comprehensive evaluation of individual skills,

interests, and values, the exploration of career opportunities, the definition of career goals, and the development of a plan to achieve these goals. The DKFZ Career Service plays a central role in this process with individual career counseling and interactive workshop formats. The online career development platform CareerCheck, developed at the DKFZ in 2020 and based on alumni data is specially adapted to the needs of international scientists in Germany and Europe. The self-assessments integrated into the platform actively promote awareness of users' personal competencies, interests, and values and, thus, an informed decision about their next career step. In addition to individual counseling, an important part of joint career planning for scientists is the involvement of their managers or principal investigators.

Networking and cooperation with former DKFZ employees play a central role in the sustainable career development of scientists. In 2016, the online alumni platform DKFZ Connect was launched. This infrastructure makes it possible for staff to stay in contact with more than 2,300 former DKFZ scientists. Alumni act as multipliers for the DKFZ worldwide and play an important role in raising DKFZ's profile. In addition, alumni act as important role models for scientists and as mentors. These alumni and their network, which includes members from both national and international research institutions and the biomedical research industry, can open career opportunities as well as doors for new research collaborations. In order to encourage scientists' direct contact with alumni as early as possible, the Career Service & Alumni Relations Group actively involves them as volunteers in the organization of career events. This commitment, in turn, also promotes the willingness to support the interests of the DKFZ and the career advancement of early-career scientists in the future, then as alumni.

Construction and Infrastructure

Dieter Morszeck Biorepository | Behnisch Architekten

In all areas of new construction and renovation, conversion, operation, and maintenance/servicing, the five qualities of sustainability form the basis of planning and decision-making in the Building and Technical Infrastructure Departments:

- The economic quality, in order to optimize cost-effectiveness and thus minimize the expenditure of funds, while reducing the life-cycle costs of buildings and technical facilities.
- The ecological quality, in order to protect our environment and to conserve the natural resources of air, soil, and water with the help of ecological risk analyses and life cycle assessments in the planning processes and as a basis for execution.
- The functional and socio-cultural quality and the pursuit of the common good, in order to be able to guarantee the safety, health, and satisfaction of employees and to ensure design quality in addition to functionality.
- The technical quality of construction and technical systems, as a basis for safe and resilient buildings and building operations.
- The process quality, in order to ensure integral, responsible planning and execution processes and corresponding operational management.

Consideration of the entire life cycle from the start of planning and implementation to deconstruction and disposal is the basis in all areas of construction and technical infrastructure.

For the DKFZ, priority is always given to refurbishment or conversion before demolition and new construction, and to repair and maintenance before disposal and new acquisition.

As an institution on the Im Neuenheimer Feld campus, a property owned by the State of Baden-Württemberg, the DKFZ is part of the "Im Neuenheimer Feld" utility network shared by other institutions on the campus. The DKFZ obtains heating and cooling under the conditions agreed upon in the network and cannot influence the primary energy factors of the media provided or withdraw from the network. The DKFZ is therefore particularly dependent on compensating for the primary energy factors provided in all areas of planning, construction, and operation. The consistent use of heat pump and heat exchanger technologies, the operation of photovoltaic systems with the largest possible area and efficiency, and the resource-conserving use of geothermal energy, in consultation with the property owner and the neighboring institutions, are compensation measures that have been pursued for years and will continue to be expanded, with the goal of operating the DKFZ buildings as prosumers in the future.

The DKFZ, therefore, began to renovate, modernize and improve the energy efficiency of its building stock and technical infrastructure on the basis of the five sustainability qualities as early as 2000 and continues to pursue this strategy.

For the past 10 years, the DKFZ has been certifying its new buildings on a voluntary basis in accordance with the Federal Sustainable Building Council's Assessment System for Sustainable Building (BNB). During the system’s development, the DKFZ provided model projects to support the establishment of BNB specifications. The DKFZ has already successfully certified two new buildings meeting the BNB silver standard and is currently planning to certify two more new buildings according to the silver standard.

As early as 2012, the DKFZ Board of Directors decided to consistently plan modern workplace concepts to strengthen cross-functional collaboration in the form of activity-based workplaces ("Open Office" areas and "Activity Based Working Spaces") in its buildings. The aim is to achieve the best possible conditions for communication among employees and for optimal use of the valuable space resources in the laboratory and office. The DKFZ strives to dissolve fixed, rigid allocation of space in favor of activity-based workplace flexibility in the future.

The technology and operations of DKFZ's new buildings meet very high technical standards, and continuous, sustainable improvement of the technology installed in existing buildings is also being strived for and pursued. This includes the consistent conversion and retrofitting of LED lighting and water-saving sanitary technology, as well as the 24-hour monitoring of all technical systems and processes by the building control system and continuous process optimization to achieve optimum energy operating status.

In the future, an energy management system will be introduced to track and optimize the electrical, cooling, and heating energy flows, which will complement the measures for intelligent building control in the area of measurement and control technology and allow the autonomous control of individual areas.

With the currently available building technologies and the applicable rules of laboratory safety, it is not yet possible to construct and operate a climate-neutral laboratory building. However, the Building and Technical Infrastructure Departments are confident that a viable path forward exists and strive to continuously pursue and help shape the sustainable use and construction of buildings.

Procurement

The first electric utility vehicle is purchased at the DKFZ in 2022 | Jutta Jung/DKFZ

In line with recommendations from the LeNa Handbook, the DKFZ aims to assume international responsibility by adopting social and ecological procurement criteria for products and services. Environmentally friendly and socially responsible procurement must consider (1) the environmental impacts and (2) compliance with human rights and fair working conditions resulting from and associated with the value chain of procured products and services.

In science and research, purchasing is faced with very special challenges: demanding research topics, the use of high technology, dynamic and specialized procurement markets, and short product innovation cycles are essential conditions under which purchasing in a research institution makes its contribution to results. Under these conditions, the primary task of purchasing is, therefore, to ensure the economic, fast, unbureaucratic, legally secure, and orderly supply of the required goods and services in the best possible quality for the specific purpose. As far as possible, sustainability aspects are also taken into account.

Sustainability aspects of purchasing are guided in particular by the sustainability cornerstone paper of the Helmholtz Committee on Procurement, Materials, and Equipment Management, which is currently available in draft form. The Technical Purchasing Section of the Helmholtz Committee on Procurement, Materials, and Equipment Management also regularly exchanges ideas on the subject of sustainability, encourages sustainable procurement, and proposes concrete measures for the Helmholtz Centers.

Environmental Impacts

Environmental impacts occur throughout the value chain of procured products and services. Particularly in the case of an international supply chain, these may not fall under the stricter national environmental legislation. Environmental requirements in procurement can relate, for example, to recyclability, material specifics (e.g., recycled materials, conflict-free raw material sources), and production conditions (renewable energy sources or environmentally friendly manufacturing processes).

Human Rights

Important aspects of humane working conditions that should be considered in the criteria for socially responsible sourcing include compliance with the International Labour Organization's core labor standards, fair pay, safety and health at work, non-discrimination, and workers' entitlement to basic social security.

Status Quo

More than 80% of the procurement volume handled by the Purchasing Department in 2021 was accounted for by the product groups chemicals, laboratory supplies, laboratory equipment, plant maintenance, electronic data processing (EDP) equipment, services, rent for EDP equipment, and biological reagents.

Sustainability has consistently played an important role in procurement processes at the DKFZ. The areas in which sustainability measures have been implemented are summarized below.

Contracts and Tenders

Framework contracts for the supply of office materials, office furniture, and IT products at the DKFZ include environmental criteria requirements, such as the Blue Angel eco-label, EMAS, DIN EN ISO 14001, and DIN EN ISO 50001 certifications.

Purchasing

Purchasing coordinates its equipment recommendations closely with the safety department and relies on well-known manufacturers who have had sustainability on their agenda for years. Products made from recycled materials, carrying the ACT Environmental Impact Label, or meeting eco-design requirements are sought. The DKFZ is in the process of transitioning its vehicle fleet to electric, having purchased five electric vehicles in 2022. The vehicle life cycle is used to determine when purchasing an electric vehicle is beneficial in terms of energy and resource use. Organic, Fairtrade, and local food products and produce are sought where possible, and only MSC or ASC-certified seafood is purchased. Air-freighted food is deliberately avoided due to its high carbon footprint.

Resource Protection

The DKFZ equipment and furniture inventory includes more than 35,000 items, mostly consisting of high-quality laboratory equipment distributed among departments. In order to reduce the purchasing of new equipment and furniture and extend the lifecycle of equipment that can continue to be used, the DKFZ has set up an online second-hand equipment exchange platform. Laboratory and IT equipment and office furniture that departments no longer use can be posted on the exchange platform, which is now well established and has a high use rate.

In addition to the equipment exchange platform, a database for special laboratory equipment has also been created to avoid the purchase of new equipment when existing equipment in another department can be used. Because the experimental techniques used in the various research departments at the DKFZ are extremely diverse and often require very complex, high-quality equipment, their acquisition ties up resources such as money, laboratory space, and operating personnel. The special equipment database allows DKFZ scientists on the Heidelberg campus to maximize the utilization capacity of the equipment by sharing equipment. The database offers an easy and quick search on device availability, location, and contact person, allowing for queries about device use and requests for temporary or permanent use.

IT hardware that is no longer used at the DKFZ is passed on to an external service provider who, after proper and certified deletion of the data, resells the equipment or disassembles it into its components and recycles it, creating jobs for people with disabilities at the same time. Other products, such as toner cartridges and lab consumables packaging are collected and sent to specialized companies for reprocessing or to their corresponding companies for reuse, respectively.

Food waste in the Casino has been significantly reduced by switching to a self-service pay-by-weight system. Casino orders are consolidated into the most efficient quantities for each unloading location, taking into account food shelf life, scarce storage capacity, required pre-order deadlines, and current market situations. In 2023 single-use packaging waste was drastically reduced by introducing the Rebowl re-usable to-go container system in the Casino and discontinuing the use of single-use to-go cups at the coffee bars.

Strategic Goals

In collaboration with the DKFZ's Sustainability Coordinator, greenhouse gas reduction targets for purchased products and services will be set and lifecycle analyses carried out.

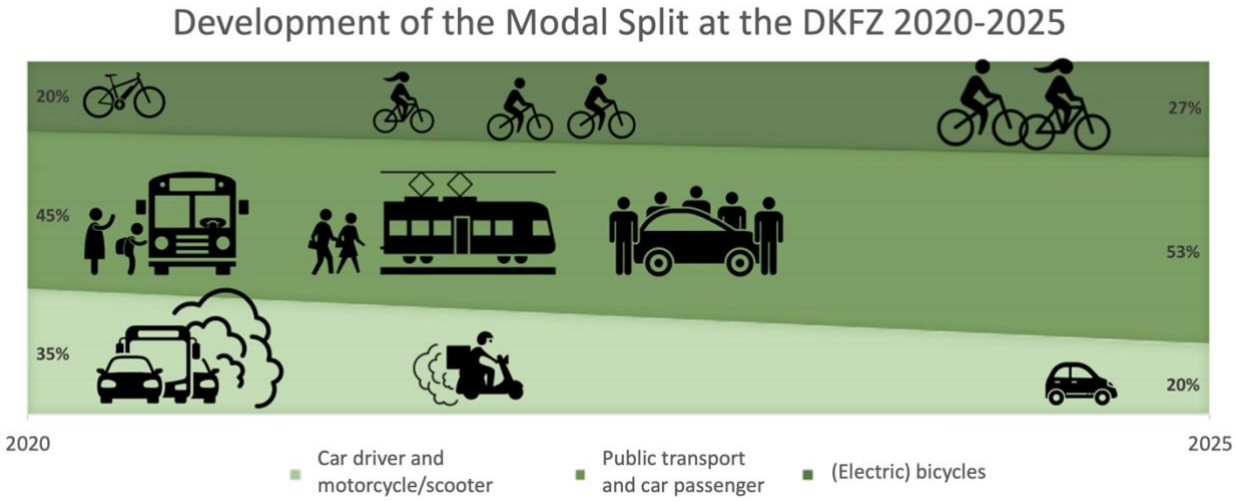
In the case of high-tech equipment in particular, however, a life cycle assessment is often only possible to a limited extent, as existing equipment often has to be replaced by more innovative solutions at relatively short notice.

In April 2016, the EU Public Procurement Directive was enacted into national law, upgrading labor, environmental, and human rights standards to general procurement law principles. Accordingly, both social and environmental standards may be anchored in contract terms and conditions, tender award criteria, and technical specifications. Consequently, the DKFZ strives to include social and environmental standards in the contracts, tender award criteria, and technical specifications for the purchasing of products and services insofar as possible in the increasingly difficult procurement markets. First and foremost, the supply of the DKFZ must be ensured.

Mobility Management

Scientist fills bicycle tire with air using bicycle repair station | Jutta Jung/DKFZ

Emissions resulting from DKFZ employee commuting, business trips, and logistics contribute to air pollution and climate change. To support the transition to sustainable mobility, the DKFZ has developed a corporate mobility management concept focusing on four key areas: traffic prevention, less individual traffic with combustion engines, increased public transport use, and increased bicycle traffic. Through implementing measures in these areas, the DKFZ intends to increase bicycle ridership from 20% in 2020 to 27% in 2025, increase public transit use and carpooling from 45% in 2020 to 53% in 2025, and reduce individual motor vehicle use from 35% in 2020 to 20% by 2025.



To gain insights into the mobility trends and needs of employees for the mobility concept, two corporate mobility management employee surveys were conducted in March 2021 and July 2022 and subsequently analyzed. The overwhelming response to the online employee survey with over 1,000 participants made it clear how highly relevant this topic is for the DKFZ workforce.

Traffic Prevention

Mobile working represents a building block of corporate mobility management because it not only offers employees the opportunity to organize working hours more flexibly and to better reconcile work and family life, but it reduces carbon emissions resulting from commuting. A DKFZ survey on this topic showed that many employees would like to take advantage of the option of working part of their hours on a mobile basis. A service agreement has thus been concluded that allows employees, whose work area permits, to work remotely for up to two days a week.

To reduce business travel emissions, the DKFZ has joined the project Flying Less[20] as a satellite organization and is committed to promoting lower-carbon modes of transport for work-related trips.

Less Individual Traffic with Combustion Engines

In addition, carpooling offers are being examined with the aim of establishing a platform for carpooling with other institutions on the Neuenheimer Feld campus. Opportunities for carpooling and electric vehicle charging at DKFZ external locations will also be sought.

Increased Public Transport Use

In order to increase the proportion of public transport users, the DKFZ has offered a subsidized Job-Ticket since November 2022 and the DeutschlandJobTicket since May 2023 with the highest possible subsidy.

Increased Bicycle Traffic

Approximately 51% of employees use bicycles to get to work in the summer and 36% in the winter. To increase this percentage and make commuting by bicycle more attractive, the DKFZ is continuously working to improve bicycle infrastructure. This includes installing additional roofing for bicycle racks, lockers for e-bike battery charging, and a bicycle repair station. An established component of the mobility concept is regular participation in campaigns such as *Bike to Work* and *City Cycling* as well as the annual offer of bicycle days with free coding services and basic bicycle maintenance. The DKFZ plans to participate in the Cycle Friendly Employer audit and certification scheme.

[20] Flying Less is a project created to reduce flight emission in academia. The project is led by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research and financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action and the National Climate Initiative.

The Future Begins Today

As part of its comprehensive sustainability strategy, the DKFZ is committed to creating lasting value for society and helping shape a sustainable future across all areas and departments. Through targeted measures in research, workplace culture, and infrastructure, the DKFZ is actively laying the groundwork today for a better tomorrow.

“The future depends on what we do today.” – Mahatma Gandhi

Guided by this principle, the DKFZ takes deliberate and forward-thinking action to ensure a liveable and sustainable future.

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