

FAQ

21 January 2025

Questions and answers about the German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R)

→ Changes compared to the version from 29 January 2016: adapted explanation of the ZEBET tasks

As part of the Animal Welfare Initiative of the Federal Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture (BMEL), the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) founded the German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R) in 2015. The centre coordinates nationwide activities with the aim of reducing animal experiments to the necessary minimum, and ensures the best possible protection for experimental animals. To this end, the centre's work aims to stimulate research activities worldwide and to encourage scientific dialogue. Below, the BfR has compiled a selection of questions and answers about the Centre. Further information on Bf3R can be found on the BfR website at <https://www.bf3r.de/en/bf3r-homepage.html>

What does “Bf3R” mean?

Bf3R is the abbreviation for the “German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals”. The abbreviation Bf3R refers to the “3R” principle of scientific animal welfare, according to which the centre works:

- *Replace*: Replacement of animal experiments through the use of alternative methods
- *Reduce*: Reduction of the number of laboratory animals to a minimum
- *Refine*: Reduction in the suffering of laboratory animals

What tasks does the centre perform?

The German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R) has the following tasks:

- Intensification of research into alternative methods
- Advising of authorities and research institutions
- Harmonisation of alternative methods at international level

- Research funding for alternative methods
- Informing the public and the scientific community

How is the Bf3R organised?

The German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R) is an integral part of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment with three locations in Berlin. The Centre is therefore also subject to the management of the BfR and its Presidium. The Bf3R is divided into the following five areas of competence:

1. Centre for Documentation and Evaluation of Alternative Methods to Animal Experiments
2. Reduction of severity and improvement of animal welfare
3. Alternative methods in toxicology
4. National Committee
5. Coordination of the promotion of research on alternative methods

This Bf3R infographic provides an overview of the tasks and objectives of the individual areas of expertise: <https://www.bf3r.de/cm/349/german-centre-for-the-protection-of-laborytory-animals-infographic.pdf>

What role does ZEBET play in the Bf3R?

ZEBET (“the Centre for Documentation and Evaluation of Alternative Methods to Animal Experiments”) is one of five areas of competence of the Bf3R. It was founded in 1989 with the aim of limiting the use of animals for scientific purposes to an absolute minimum and developing alternatives to animal experiments. ZEBET advises authorities on alternative methods. It provides information on alternative methods and develops new alternative methods.

What financial resources are available to the Bf3R?

When the Bf3R was launched in 2015, the centre received a one-off grant of 6 million euros from the Federal Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture (BMEL) for initial equipment. The Bf3R also has annual funding of around 1.5 million euros at its disposal.

Further information on the Bf3R

Website of the German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R)
<https://www.bf3r.de/en/bf3r-homepage.html>

Introduction film of the Bf3R: “Mission and goals”

https://www.bfr.bund.de/de/german_centre_for_the_protection_of_laboratory_animals_bf3r_mission_and_goals-283256.html

About the BfR

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in Germany. The BfR advises the Federal Government and the States ('Laender') on questions of food, chemicals and product safety. The BfR conducts independent research on topics that are closely linked to its assessment tasks.

About the Bf3R

The German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R) was founded in 2015 and is an integral part of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR). It coordinates nationwide activities with the goals of restricting animal experiments to only those which are considered essential, and ensures the best possible protection for laboratory animals. Moreover, it intends to stimulate research activities and encourage scientific dialogue.

This text version is a translation of the original German text which is the only legally binding version.

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