

# Facts & Figures

The BfR in brief



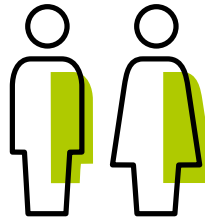
German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment



4

## Locations

Berlin, Jungfernheide  
Berlin, Alt-Marienfelde  
Berlin, Nahmitzer Damm  
Berlin, Marienfelde



1,179

Employees



3,995,190

Visits to the BfR  
website

### Most clicked:

FAQ: Can the new type of coronavirus  
be transmitted via food and objects?



884,584

Opinions

### Most clicked:

High doses of vitamin D supplements can  
affect health in the long term (No. 65/2023)

9

## Departments

- Central Department
- Risk Communication
- Exposure
- Biological Safety
- Food Safety
- Pesticides Safety
- Chemical and Product Safety
- Safety in the Food Chain
- Experimental Toxicology  
and ZEBET



Approximately

134

million euros



103  
Third-party  
funded projects




32  
Press releases



140  
Events



1,207  
Enquiries



# Facts & Figures 2023

The BfR in brief

# About the BfR

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**Dear readers,**

The year 2023 was characterised by the renewed assessment of the BfR by the German Science and Humanities Council. It certified that the BfR fulfils its tasks on the basis of “very good research”: independently assessing potential health risks in food and consumer products as well as informing the public about these risks.

Another focus last year was networking at the national and global level in order to strengthen scientific exchange in consumer health protection – whether as part of the BfR Summer Academy with participants from 20 countries or the expansion of international cooperation, for example by participating in the African Food Regulatory Authorities Forum (AFRAF) in Cairo.

The “BfR in brief” format gives a quick overview of the facts and figures of 2023. Are you curious about the projects and publications behind the figures? You can find more detailed information on the BfR website. And if you are interested in the BfR’s core research areas and content in 2023, you can read about them in our science magazine BfR2GO.

**Professor Andreas Hensel**  
President

**Identifying risks – protecting health: How can food, chemicals, cosmetics, toys and many other everyday products be made as safe as possible? The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment – BfR for short – provides the answers.**

The BfR was founded in 2002 to strengthen consumer health protection in Germany. As a federal authority with legal capacity within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, it advises the federal government and German federal states (“Laender”) on food and feed safety issues and on the safety of chemicals and products.

The BfR’s main tasks include assessing existing health risks and identifying new ones, preparing recommendations on risk mitigation and communicating this process transparently.

All working areas of the BfR – science, assessment, communication and administration – have been certified in accordance with quality standard DIN EN ISO 9001 since 2010.

At the BfR, there are also National Reference Laboratories under Regulation (EU) 2017/625 in the domains of food and feed safety and food hygiene. This means that the BfR is part of an EU-wide network for improved food monitoring.

The BfR is supported in its risk assessment and risk communication by an independent scientific expert network made up of 14 commissions and is advised in its strategic focus by the Scientific Advisory Board.

# Work areas

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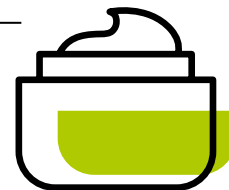


## Food and feed safety

Be it ingredients or additives, residues, contaminants or germs and parasites – on the basis of international recognised criteria, the BfR assesses food and feed with regard to toxicological, microbiological and nutritional aspects.

## Product safety

The BfR investigates ingredients and their release from products such as cosmetics, toys, clothing or food packaging and containers, and assesses whether the contained substances could be a hazard to human health.



## Chemical safety

The BfR also assesses health risks of chemicals, plant protection products, biocide products and hazardous materials to quickly identify undesirable effects.

## Risk communication

The BfR examines the risk perception and risk behaviour of the population. To inform the public about health risks, the BfR talks to various stakeholders in society.



## Alternatives to animal experiments

The BfR performs the tasks of the “German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R)” and coordinates all activities countrywide with the goal of restricting animal experiments and ensuring the best possible care for laboratory animals.

# International

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The BfR works closely with various multilateral, international, European and national institutions, ministries and embassies on all continents.

In order to promote cooperation with the 55 partner institutions, the BfR uses a variety of instruments for knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange. These include participation in joint research projects or the implementation of measures in international capacity development. In addition, the BfR is represented in numerous global networks and committees. At the European level, partnership with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is particularly important. As the point of liaison between the EFSA and the various national food and feed safety authorities, the EFSA Focal Point at the BfR is responsible for the work of scientific coordination and for the exchange of information.



[bfr.bund.de/en](https://bfr.bund.de/en) > [The Institute](#) > [Co-operation](#) > [European and international](#)

## Capacity building

# 1

### BMZ-funded project for technical cooperation in Tunisia

**Time period:** 2021–2025

**German project partner:** Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL)

**Objective:** Establishing and sustainably strengthening the respective Tunisian authorities in the areas of food safety and consumer health protection

[bfr.bund.de/en](https://bfr.bund.de/en) > A-Z Index > Cooperations > Flyer

# 2

### BMZ-funded project: Boosting Uganda's Investments in Livestock Development (BUILD)

**Time period:** 2019–2023 (individual activities with ILRI agreed for 2024)

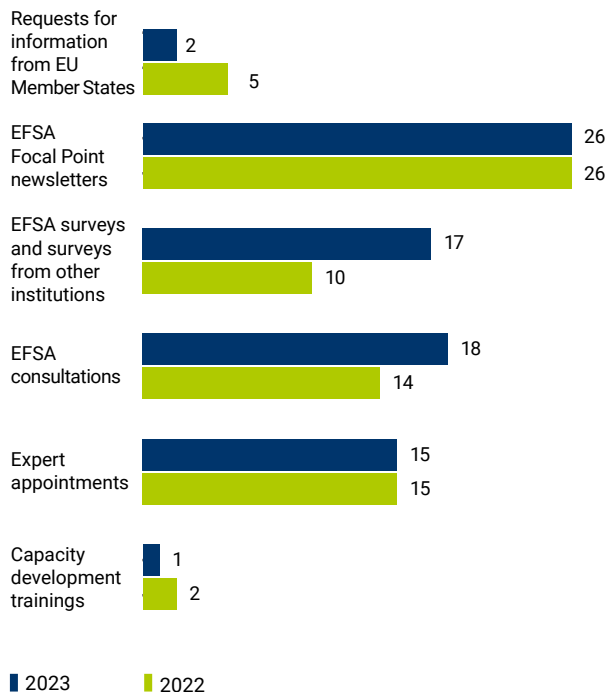
**Project partners:** International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and 4 German partners (including BfR)

**Objective:** Strengthening of existing structures for animal health and zoonoses control in Uganda

[ilri.org](https://ilri.org) > Research > Projects

## EFSA Focal Point

Scientific coordination and information exchange in 2023 und 2022



## International activities

International activities in 2023, organised, accompanied and/or implemented by the International Affairs department

# 17

Network meetings

# 11

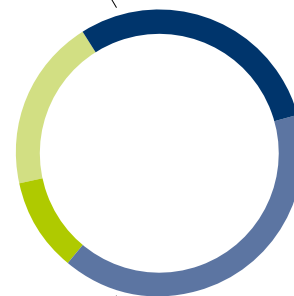
Visitor groups (delegations to the BfR)

# 6

BfR delegations abroad

# 23

Capacity development trainings



# 55

Partner institutions

32 in Europe (EU 27, EU candidate countries, EFTA member states, Russia\*)  
 12 in Asia  
 4 in North and South America  
 3 in Africa  
 4 international organisations

\* Currently projects and programmes with state participation from Russia and Belarus are suspended, subject to compliance with legal framework conditions. BMBF, announcement 17/03/2022

# Networks

Partnerships exist in the form of institutional cooperations or joint research projects. Scientists at the BfR actively contribute to the work in a variety of committees. The institutional exchange between experts is also becoming more important.

## Participation in committees

# 638

Committees in which BfR employees are officially involved

150

Committees of other institutions

82

Federal government-federal state ("Laender") committees

47

Committees of the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL)

52

Federal committees

# 331

national

60

Committees of the European Commission

46

Committees of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

31

Committees of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

60

Committees of other European organisations

# 197

European level

54

OECD committees

19

WHO/FAO: Committees of Codex Alimentarius

1

WHO/FAO: Other committees

14

Committees of other United Nations specialised agencies

22

Other committees involved in global standardisation activities

# 110

worldwide

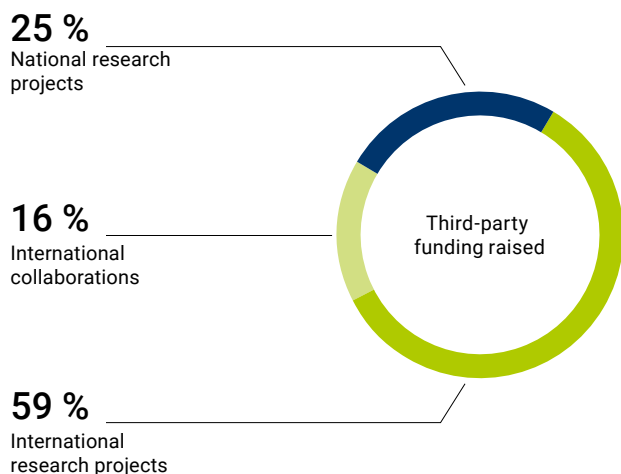
[bfr.bund.de/en](https://bfr.bund.de/en) > The Institute > Co-operation



# Research

One of the BfR's key competences is independent, application-oriented and cause-related research. The topics are closely related to its assessment tasks. One aim is to close knowledge gaps. Another is to constantly expand the Institute's scientific expertise in risk assessment and risk communication independent of economic, political and societal interests. The BfR is actively involved in numerous national and international research projects.

## Third-party funded projects

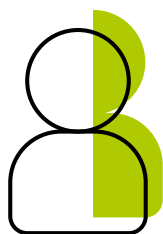


[bfr.bund.de/en > Research > Third-party funded projects](https://bfr.bund.de/en/Research/Third-party_funded_projects)

## Third-party funding raised

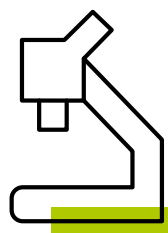
	Funding (in thousands of euros)	Number of projects
<b>National research projects</b>	<b>5,318</b>	<b>41</b>
Federal government	4,068	
DFG	1,237	
Other	13	
<b>International research projects</b>	<b>2,209</b>	<b>52</b>
EU	1,107	
EFSA	920	
Other	182	
<b>International collaborations (EU, EFSA, BMZ and others)</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,952</b>	<b>103</b>

[bfr.bund.de/en > Research > Main research](https://bfr.bund.de/en/Research/Main_research)



### Junior research groups

Junior research groups provide young scientists with research and scientific qualification opportunities shortly after completing their PhD. In doing so, the BfR specifically boosts core research areas and junior scientists.

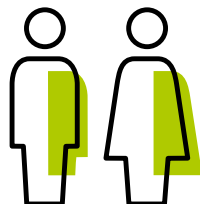


### Study centres

The study centres provide long-term prioritisation in strategically important areas of the BfR and pool technical expertise on interdepartmental topics.

# Personnel and training

**1,179**  
Employees



**161**

New appointments,  
of which

**10**

Trainees

Scientists	539
Administrative staff	270
Technical assistants	144
PhD candidates	48
Apprentices/trainees	20
Animal carers	23
Other (e.g. librarians, laboratory assistants, etc.)	135

## Focus on human resources development



## Training professions

Laboratory chemist

Office management clerk

Animal carer

Plant mechanic

Laboratory biologist

IT specialist

Electronic technician

## Trade fair appearances

### Sticks & Stones, Berlin

Europe's largest LGBTIQ+ job and career fair

### BCF (Bio Chemistry Food)

#### Career Event, Ghent/Belgium

Largest career event for graduates in life sciences

### Stuzubi, Berlin

Study and training fair

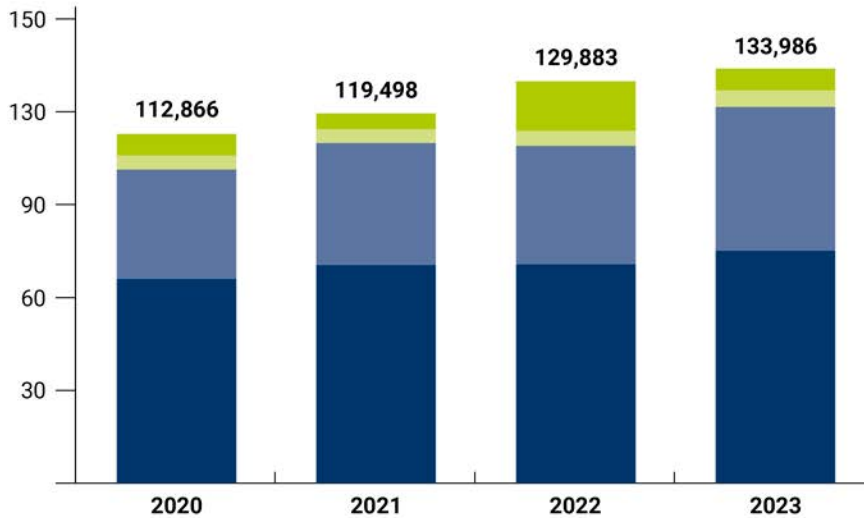
↗ [bfr.bund.de/en](https://bfr.bund.de/en) > Job advertisement

↗ [bfr.bund.de/en](https://bfr.bund.de/en) > The Institute > Working at the BfR

# Budget

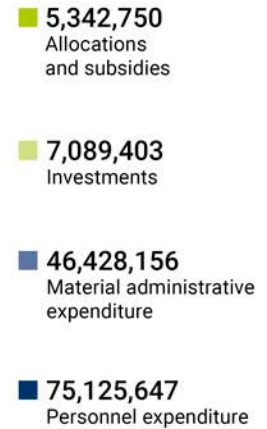
## Expenditure 2020–2023

in thousands of euros



## Expenditure 2023

detailed, in thousands of euros



In 2023, the BfR spent approximately **134** million euros.

## Selected expenditure

Scientific collections and libraries	507,519
Initial and further training	479,996
Public relations work, publishing and documentation	1,729,767
Conferences, trade fairs, exhibitions	612,559

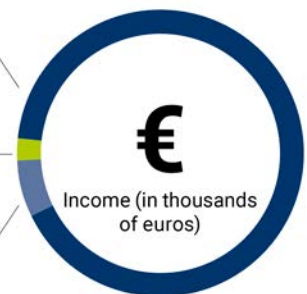
## Income

in thousands of euros

**123,578**  
Refund (subsidy) from BMEL

**1,456**  
Administrative and other income

**8,952**  
Third-party funding raised



# Publications

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The expert opinions of the BfR are risk assessment reports and therefore the basis for advising policy-makers and the public.

They comprise the four elements of a risk assessment (hazard identification, hazard characterisation, exposure estimation, risk characterisation), the uncertainties and their causes and formulate goals and strategies to minimise the risk.

In addition, the BfR fulfils the legal mandate to review the formulations of chemical products and to provide them to the poison information centres (GIZ) for their medical counselling activities.

These product reports make up a large part of the BfR output reported here.

The BfR's risk assessments are always also the subject of the Institute's risk communication.

All of the BfR's published expert opinions can be found at:



[bfr.bund.de/en](https://www.bfr.bund.de/en) > **Publications** > **Opinions**

## Opinions

199	Expert opinions for supervisory federal ministries
2,423	Assessments in legally prescribed procedures, e.g. authorisation procedures addressed to the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) or to the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA)
1,136	Other opinions outside of legally prescribed procedures to authorities, associations, citizens, NGOs and international groups
880,826	Product reports

# 1,713

## Publications

Presentations	973
<b>Journal publications</b>	<b>283</b>
Poster contributions	223
Contributions to conference proceedings	177
Dissertations/postdoctoral qualification/ master theses/diploma theses/bachelor theses	45
Contributions to compilations	7
Contributions to collected editions	3
Reports EFSA	2



### Most clicked opinions

- High doses of vitamin D supplements can affect health in the long term (No. 65/2023)
- New studies on antiperspirants containing aluminium: impairments to health unlikely as a result of aluminium uptake via the skin (No. 45/2023)
- Vitamin D supplements – useful or superfluous? (No. 55/2023)

🔗 Overview of all publications  
[bfr.bund.de/en > Publications](https://bfr.bund.de/en/Publications)  
[bfr.bund.de/en > Science News](https://bfr.bund.de/en/ScienceNews)  
[openagrar.de](https://openagrar.de)

### Key publications

Dumit, V. I. et al. 2023. **From principles to reality. FAIR implementation in the nanosafety community.** Nano Today 51: 101923.

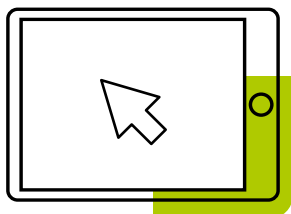
Schmeisser, S. et al. 2023. **New approach methodologies in human regulatory toxicology – Not if, but how and when!** Environment International 178: 108082.

Hackethal, C. et al. 2023. **Chronic dietary exposure to total arsenic, inorganic arsenic and water-soluble organic arsenic species based on results of the first German total diet study.** Science of The Total Environment 859 Part 1: 160261.

## Public relations

# 3,995,190

Visits to the BfR website



Views BfR YouTube channel	46,037
Followers on X (Twitter)	13,383
Subscribers to the BfR newsletter	9,432
Followers on LinkedIn	9,992
Followers on Instagram	2,354
Followers on Mastodon	1,607

# 1,207 Enquiries

were submitted to the BfR, of which:

## 859

Enquiries from the public

## 348

Enquiries from TV, print/online media, news agencies as well as from radio



### 49

Ingredients and additives in food

### 23

Residues and contaminants

### 24

Animal experiments

### 24

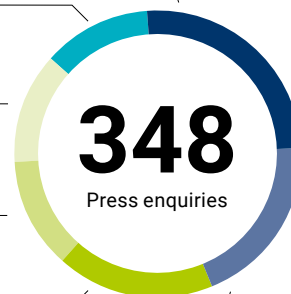
Plant protection products

### 34

Biological safety

### 37

Consumer products



# 140 Events

were organised by the BfR.

[bfr-akademie.de/english](https://bfr-akademie.de/english)



### 50

Information events



### 90

Scientific dialogues

# Legal notice

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The BfR in brief: Facts & Figures 2023

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Twice a year, the compact and knowledge-packed BfR2GO scientific magazine provides current and well-founded information on the research on and assessment of possible health risks of food and feed, chemicals and consumer products. Order, subscribe to or download the magazine free of charge at: [bfr.bund.de/en](https://bfr.bund.de/en)

## BfR2GO

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**BfR** | Identify Risks –  
Protect Health