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9
8
7
6
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4
3
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Growth
from
Knowledge

How We Measure Up: GfK Annual Sustainability Report 2020



Growth
from
Knowledge

Trusted
for over 85 years.

“People, Partners and Planet – Please remember these three ‘P’s as you go through our report. They build the framework for GfK’s sustainability approach.”

Peter Feld, Chief Executive Officer



Dear colleagues

It is my privilege to open GfK’s inaugural Annual Sustainability Report covering the sustainability efforts of our company in 2020.

GfK is a company with a rich and diverse history that dates back to 1934. Our company is built on a strong set of traditions and values, most importantly “Trust”. While our heritage is strong and well-recognized, our future direction is driven by our core belief that GfK supports the world by creating Growth from Knowledge.

These three powerful words – Growth from Knowledge – reiterate to me the importance not only of our services to our clients, but the importance of growth to our People, Partners and Planet.

Growth needs to be not only economically but also socially and environmentally sustainable.

GfK embraces this fact through its sustainability approach, which is based on three pillars: People, Partners and Planet. You will find these concepts repeated throughout this report:

- **People:** we positively influence the lives of our employees.
- **Partners:** we partner with our clients, vendors and the wider community to improve our society and economy.
- **Planet:** we reduce our environmental footprint and support our clients to reduce their environmental footprint.

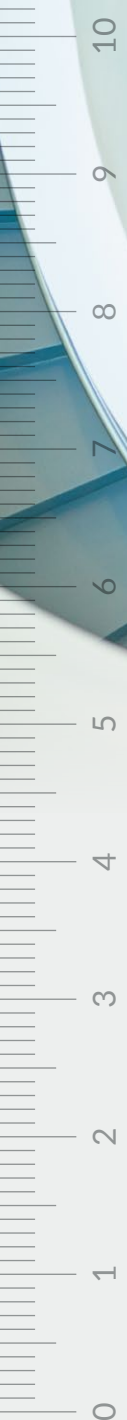
We recognize the challenges with the task ahead but are committed to achieving continuous improvement.

We face constant change, new technologies and industry trends. As we tackle these challenges we improve and while we will always acknowledge feedback, we value positive external recognition for our work.

I am convinced that through our ongoing sustainability efforts, we are on the right track. Please enjoy reading this report and do not hesitate to give us your feedback via sustainability@gfk.com.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Feld', with a large, sweeping underline.

Peter Feld, Chief Executive Officer



Our business

GfK is one of the world's most trusted providers of market intelligence. It is testament to our integrity that we serve the world's leading brands, and reset industry benchmarks by supplying unparalleled, always-on, AI-powered intelligence and consulting services for the consumer products industry, globally.

“We turn knowledge into an engine for sustainable growth for the shapers of tomorrow.”



180 million+
products tracked



10,000+
clients



100,000+
retailer partnerships



approx. EUR
1 billion
global revenue



approx.
1.9 million
panelists



2 million+
SKUs added each year

Table of contents

Message from our CEO	3
Our business	4
First things first...	6
Governing our sustainability	7
People	8
Supporting diversity and equal opportunity	8
Ensuring health and safety	10
Respecting human rights	11
Collectively enhancing working conditions	11
Raising concerns in the workplace	12
Creating flexible working options	13
Enabling mobility	13
Developing our people	13
Giving our people a voice	14
Partners	16
Being a trusted business partner	16
Rejecting corrupt practices	19
Engaging with institutional stakeholders	19
Collaborating with our community	20
Contributing to sustainable Growth from Knowledge	21
Maintaining sustainable business relations	22
Planet	23
Rethinking the global office	24
Establishing our green headquarters	25
Reducing our server footprint	25
Conserving energy	26
Reducing our waste	26
Looking to the future	26
Goals	27



First things first...

As a global technology and services company and good corporate citizen, our company is committed to establishing and maintaining systems to protect our company from negative impacts and to ensure we have a positive impact on our people, partners and planet.

That is why we are building and improving upon our sustainability approach.

GfK has considered the following international standards and charters in the development of our sustainability approach:

- German Corporate Governance Code
- ISO 14001:2015
- OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises
- UN Global Compact
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights



We also submit ourselves to external evaluation including by EcoVadis and via the Carbon Disclosure Project on a regular basis.

This Annual Sustainability Report encapsulates for the first time the efforts undertaken by our company in the prior year.

Governing our sustainability

Sustainability matters are subject to the following governance structure:



People

“We show respect to the people we work with, whether that is treating our employees fairly, protecting the rights of workers in operations or making a contribution to the communities where we operate.”

Jutta Suchanek, Chief Human Resources & Diversity Officer

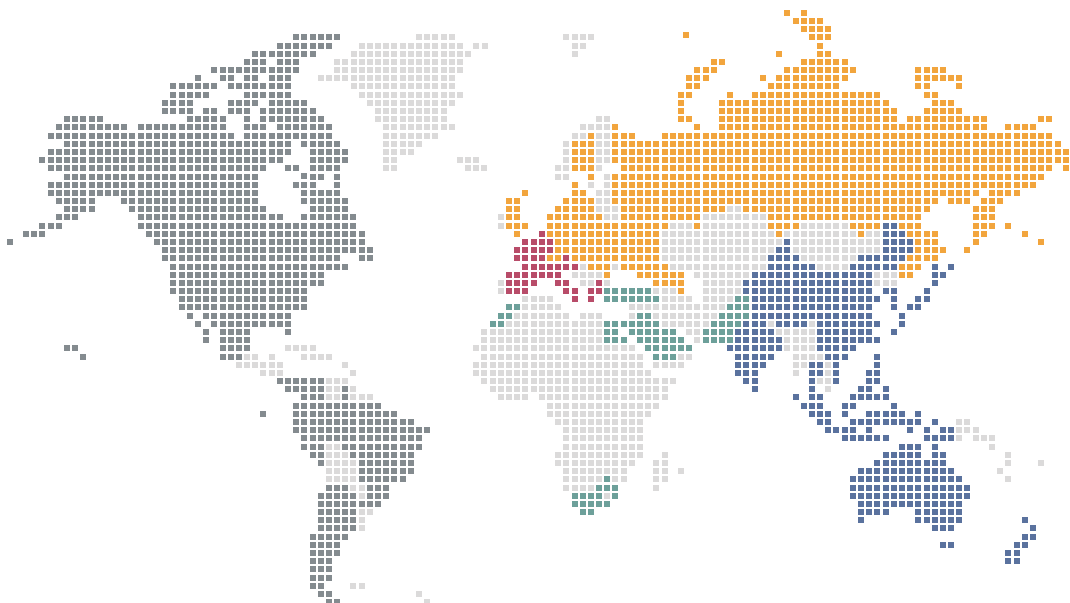
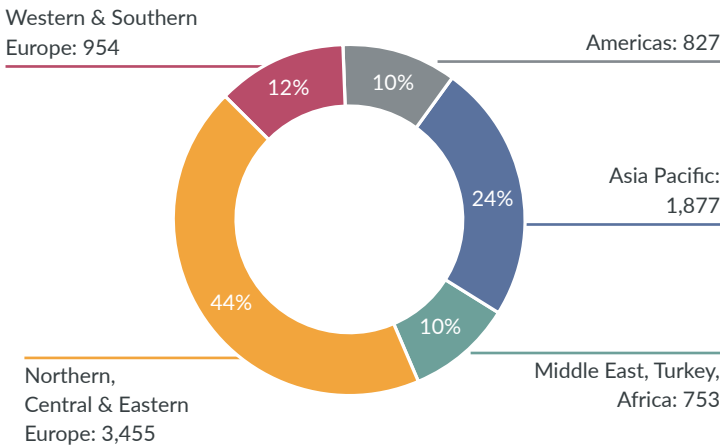
Supporting diversity and equal opportunity

GfK promotes and maintains an inclusive working environment that respects every employee within our company regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, personality, experience, culture, faith, socio-economic status and physical ability. In 2019, we significantly overhauled our Global Tolerance & Respect Policy and continued to develop our diversity framework into 2020, in particular by initiating the development of a company Diversity Charter to be released in 2021.

In 2020, we also conducted the following activities directed towards promoting diversity and inclusion within our company:

- Launched with a virtual opening event led by our Executive Leadership Team we celebrated International Women’s Day across the globe. Activities were conducted in the majority of local office locations and included workshops, speeches, open discussions and quizzes to name a few examples.

2020 Total Full-Time Equivalent Employees: 7,866





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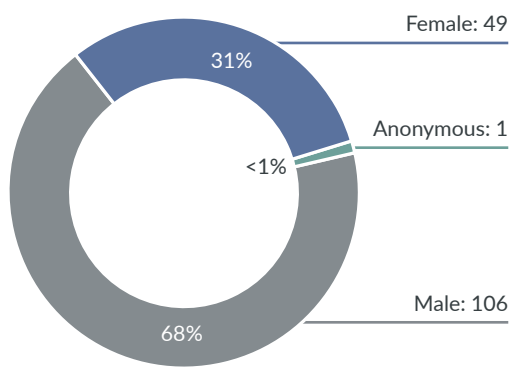
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Gender split between male and female Supervisory Board members

- In our Americas region, a Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) Team was established and tasked with enabling our people to fight bias and increase racial diversity within the company. Accompanying this, a DIB Book Club was launched that uses books as a springboard to important dialogue, personal growth, and community building and a DIB newsletter focused on bringing awareness to diversity issues and highlighting GfK's diverse workforce was released.
- In Brazil, the GfKconsciência Committee invited topic experts to give our employees lectures about race and gender issues in the workplace. There was a high participation rate and the talks were very well received.
- The Women@Work network led by employees in our headquarters continued to evaluate the role and treatment of gender equality in our company. Throughout the year the group

advocated for further Executive Leadership Team action on gender issues; supported in updating our company's recruitment policies; and analyzed statistics on gender equality in GfK in order to define goals for 2021.

Gender split in the Senior Leadership Team





Ensuring health and safety

GfK promptly responded to the new risks posed by the global Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

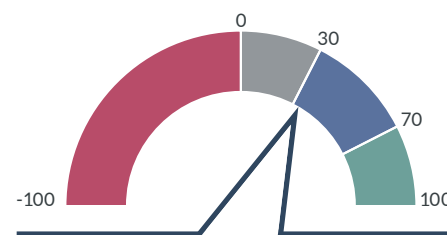
Our company has managed the Covid-19 pandemic by supporting our locations in adopting policies, developing systems, conducting training and following best practices to protect our employees. During this challenging time, our company worked closely with both employees and employee representative bodies to ensure that our people were protected but also able to still maintain a collegial virtual working environment.

As part of the improvement of our existing procedures, we completed and published detailed occupational health and safety risk assessments in line with local legal requirements. However, we recognize that the health and safety of our people extends beyond legal compliance and in 2020, a focus for the company was on mental health and wellbeing. Our company introduced several offerings including of medical, physical and social nature to address this.

GfK's efforts were positively received by our employees. When asked to consider how GfK dealt with the Covid-19 situation, our employees awarded GfK a strong and positive employee net promoter score (eNPS) of +32.

Our company offers access to medical personnel in key office locations. This onsite support is reinforced by the offering of free annual health

eNPS: Considering how GfK coped with the COVID-19 situation, how likely are you to recommend GfK to a friend or your professional network?



32
"GREAT"

checks and vaccinations in our headquarters. Due to the pandemic virtual consultation sessions were also offered in 2020.

GfK moved its principal headquarter location in May 2020 to a new location called Orange Campus. This new state-of-the-art building benefits from ergonomic principles and features sport, recreation and relaxation areas, a non-denominational prayer room and parent-friendly facilities. Our people make use of a cutting-edge canteen with healthy food options as well as enjoy free fresh fruit delivered twice a week to communal kitchen areas.

Respecting human rights

“Respect for human rights and working conditions, together with established processes to reduce the risk of human rights abuses, is critical to our long-term success.”

Josh Hubbert, Chief Operations Officer

The GfK Code of Conduct is very clear about our expectations and responsibilities regarding human rights and labor conditions.

We recognize our responsibility to ensure safe and proper working conditions for every person who works for us, either as an employee or through our supply chain, and also concerning the communities close to our operations.

Specifically, GfK adheres to its duty to respect human rights as set out in the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact, including the principles to support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights and ensure non-complicity in human rights abuses.

Our company combats the use of child, forced and involuntary labor and this is set out in the GfK Supplier Code of Conduct, which our company’s key vendors are required to commit themselves to. This standard and commitment have been adopted from the International Labor Organization’s Protocol on Forced Labor.

82% of GfK employees completed training on preventing discrimination and human rights violations

Collectively enhancing working conditions

Our company continued in 2020 to work closely with our people and employee representative bodies to collaboratively approach topics involving labor relations. Examples of this include the alignment at a country-level on aspects including wages, working benefits and working hours.

> 49% of total global workforce are represented by employee representative bodies

Our company has entered into various collective agreements with employee representative bodies, especially at our main locations in Europe. These agreements include topics covering employee health and safety, employee working conditions and employee training and career management. In 2020 our company was in ongoing dialogue with the respective employee representative bodies to implement measures intended to further improve talent calibration, mobility, and salary and grading.

Raising concerns in the workplace

We want to know if we are having a negative impact on an employee or if they are concerned about something they may have seen at work.

GfK realizes that not all employees will feel comfortable reporting concerns within their line of management. That is why in 2019, GfK launched an improved reporting channel by

means of an online whistleblowing portal and supporting infrastructure enabling anonymity. This portal, Whistleblowing@GfK, replaced GfK's former German language-only external email service and mirrors GfK's digital transformation. In 2020, Whistleblowing@GfK was further supported with enhancements to language availability and the release of a mobile app.

All reports made are treated in the strictest confidence and details of reports including any disclosed identities are only shared, if necessary, for investigative purposes on a strict need-to-know basis. The web portal is available 24/7 in multiple languages. Employees are also encouraged to enable a secure postbox option so that they can be contacted (anonymously) regarding any follow-up questions or queries.

The above approach is reinforced by a zero-tolerance stance towards retaliation which is further detailed in the GfK Global Whistleblowing & Non-Retaliation Policy.

“The GfK Global Legal & Compliance department’s management and handling of compliance cases in GfK entities worldwide is independently overseen by the Audit Committee of the Supervisory Board.”

Will Hammond, Vice President Global Legal & Compliance

Whistleblowing@GfK is available worldwide in
21 languages





“In 2020 we undertook a massive exercise to implement flexible work in each country and office globally. We see a great openness to this change, and we look forward to a true win-win-win: for the employees, for managers and the company overall.”

Joshua Hubbert, Chief Operations Officer

Enabling mobility

Global workforce mobility is an integral part of our HR strategy and in 2020 further emphasis was placed on designing measures to enhance the calibration of GfK talent and to enable employees more options in terms of their future career development. This included developing new methods to map the succession situation on the GfK Senior Leadership level globally. The company has made succession risks transparent and has placed emphasis on improving our succession pipeline.

Creating flexible working options

During August 2020 GfK undertook a comprehensive survey on the topic of flexible working arrangements and the Executive Leadership Team evaluated and reacted to the results by adopting a new approach to enable employees to more easily choose between office and home working locations. The new approach incorporates input from over 80 internal local proposals worldwide and was formalized with the support of the Supervisory Board into the ‘Flexible Work@GfK’ guidelines.

Developing our people

We are committed to transparency in the recruitment process and in 2020 implemented a dedicated IT solution. The use of this standardized process is reinforced in communications with potential candidates. Our company is also proud to ensure that its position advertisements are standardized to ensure that they properly promote diversity and inclusion. In most locations we also offer a preference to internal candidates to promote employee mobility. In addition, GfK offers internship and trainee programs at our major locations.

In addition to GfK’s standardized performance management processes, in 2019 and throughout 2020, our company further implemented a 360° review process. This 360° review process provides employees the opportunity to receive honest and anonymous feedback from various internal stakeholders including peers, counterparts and direct reports.

All employees have the opportunity to receive regular performance and career development reviews

288 leaders

volunteered to participate in the 360° feedback process in 2020

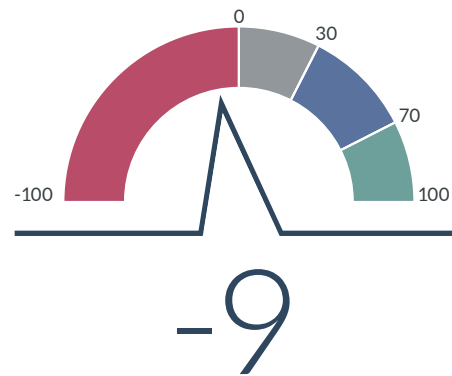
Training and development are managed by a dedicated Global Learning Team who through the global HR network supports managers and employees to ensure appropriate learning and development opportunities are available.

100%

of employees had access in 2020 to comprehensive career or skills-related training

Giving our people a voice

Our company is committed to giving our employees a voice and the GfK People Pulse helps gauge overall employee loyalty and satisfaction. As in previous years, GfK conducted a targeted survey including eNPS evaluation in 2020 and the results were evaluated by the Supervisory Board, Management Board and Senior Leadership Team.



“Needs improvement”

The questionnaire component of the People Pulse dives more deeply into understanding our employees’ perspectives about their role, their team and our company by asking topical and open-ended questions to elicit constructive feedback.

The results were globally communicated and in 2021 a regional and functional ambassador network will be activated to define consequent action plans.



64%

of employees responded to the 2020 People Pulse survey

Partners

Being a trusted business partner

“We conduct our business to the high ethical standards reflected in our core values which oblige compliance with the law as well as leading with integrity.”

Peter Feld, Chief Executive Officer

Conducting business ethically

Our company is committed to conducting all aspects of its business in an ethical manner and in compliance with applicable laws. To ensure this we have established a comprehensive compliance management system implemented by a dedicated compliance organization managing three pillars: ‘Prevent’, ‘Detect’ and ‘Respond’.

In 2018 the GfK Code of Conduct was significantly overhauled and then again in

2020 underwent further updates. To support this, we also deployed internal communication and training materials to promote ethics and compliance topics. These are also circulated at relevant periods to reinforce a positive compliance message.

In 2020, GfK also revised its internal controls framework under the supervision of the Audit Committee of the Supervisory Board and Management Board. During this process all global company policies were reviewed and updated accordingly.

Ethics and compliance topics are regularly reported to and discussed with the Management Board, the Audit Committee of the Supervisory Board, employee representative bodies and multiple other functions at regional and local levels.





“GfK’s partners value trust. Our commitment to ensure we deliver is reflected in a company culture that encourages employees and partners alike to speak up rather than turn a blind eye.”

Lars Nordmark, Chief Financial Officer

Protecting privacy

Data is at the core of our business and we have strict processes and controls in place to protect personal data, to respect privacy and to proactively manage the risks that technology and data businesses face today.

We believe that everyone has a right to privacy, wherever they live in the world. That is why we apply a global approach to managing privacy that is founded on the principles of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) even for markets outside the European Economic Area:

- **Respecting rights:** obtain and manage consents or other bases for processing personal data.
- **Being transparent:** provide a clear, transparent and understandable privacy notice.
- **Fitting the purpose:** collect and process data that is necessary and relevant for the purpose for which it was collected.
- **Maintaining quality:** keep data up-to-date, delete unnecessary or outdated data and do not make unnecessary copies.

- **Ensuring confidentiality:** appropriately manage access to personal data.
- **Implementing security:** apply technical and organizational measures to prevent unauthorized access, use, disclosure or loss.
- **Designing for privacy:** incorporate privacy and security into services from the outset.

“We understand that respecting our clients’ and panelists’ privacy is essential to maintaining their trust in our business.”

Joshua Hubbert, Chief Operations Officer

The GfK privacy program and GfK Global Data Protection Policy govern how our company collects, uses and manages personal data to ensure we maintain confidentiality and respect any choices that individuals make regarding our use of their data.

“In June GfK UK renewed its registrations in accordance with EN ISO 9001:2015 Quality Assurance and ISO 20252:2012 Market, opinion and social research standards.”

Jackie Megahey, Supervisory Board Member and Data Protection Officer, UK

In 2020, we furthered our commitment to privacy by reinforcing the company Data Protection Network with new ambassador roles at functional levels and Privacy Champion roles in emerging market locations. Added to this, our company refreshed and relaunched its global data protection e-learning which was delivered in 9 languages and to our entire employee base.

In 2020 we also acquired a dedicated IT solution which has been used to update and maintain the company’s register of processing activities and to digitalize a process for conducting data protection impact assessments.

During 2021 we intend to prepare our headquarter entity for an independent certification of its data protection compliance.

Securing information

Our company’s security systems and processes are continually updated and monitored to prevent, detect and respond to information security threats. An information security management system forms the backbone of GfK’s information security framework and serves to ensure confidentiality, integrity and availability of GfK information.

Through 2019 and 2020 we conducted further updates to our comprehensive information security governance framework.

“GfK’s information security governance framework consists of over 60 separate standards and policies which have been aligned with key business stakeholders and IT team members to ensure that our handling of data is safe and secure.”

Ben Jones, Chief Technology Officer



722 processes

involving personal data were reviewed and documented in a dedicated register in 2020

Rejecting corrupt practices

Our GfK Global Gifts, Benefits, Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy reinforces that employees or others working on our behalf must never offer or accept any kind of bribe. Our anti-bribery policy is consistent with the UK Bribery Act and the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and any breaches can lead to serious employment consequences.

The policy also delivers guidance about what constitutes a bribe and prohibits the giving or receiving of any excessive or improper gifts and hospitality. This concept of guiding and training employees is supported by a global network of Compliance Officers. Compliance Officers not only support the completion of our global e-learning courses but also conduct classroom reinforcement training for higher-risk teams.

Our company's global gift and hospitality registration approval process ensures that gifts and hospitality offerings are reviewed centrally and that no gifts or hospitality are offered to public officials without review and approval of the Vice President Global Legal & Compliance. The process of reviewing interactions with public officials also extends into sponsorships and charitable contributions with proposals also vetted for this purpose by the Vice President Communications & Public Affairs.

Local markets regularly monitor implementation of the anti-bribery policy as part of our Compliance Review process, which reviews key anti-bribery controls and is further supported by internal control self-assessments.

Engaging with institutional stakeholders

We actively engage with public institutions through industry representative bodies about the future of the digital economy in Europe. As a company with significant influence in data and data analytics, we believe we have the expertise and experience to contribute on important policy initiatives.

Our company engages with public institutions through various industry representative bodies, including the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR), The Market Research Society (MRS), Workgroup of German Market and Social Research Institutes e.V. (ADM), Professional Association of German Market and Social Researchers e.V. (BDM), The Advertising Research Foundation (ARF), Expertise Center for Marketing-Insights, Research & Analytics (MOA) and IAB Europe. In 2020 discussions especially at a European level predominantly consisted of contributing to improvements to e-privacy.



Collaborating with our community

We recognize the positive impact of community involvement and social engagement on society and encourage the establishment and involvement of our company in local initiatives and projects. This section highlights some of key initiatives undertaken in recent years.

GfKonsciência

Starting as a simple campaign to encourage environmentally friendly practices in our Brazil office in 1996, GfKonsciência ('GfKconsciousness') has become an all-encompassing social project run by a committee of employees. The committee runs numerous initiatives from supporting local NGOs in the mitigation of social injustice; to clothes and toy donations; and speaking at conferences. In 2020 GfKonsciência began a monthly circulation of infographics within our company to bring key social topics to light such as gender and racial diversity.

Nuremberg Child and Youth Welfare Center

2020 marked 21 years of partnership between our company and the Nuremberg Child and Youth Welfare Center (Nürnberger Kinder- und Jugendhilfezentrum). Over this time, we have supported the Center both financially and through the provision of employee volunteers. An initiative loved by the children and by GfK is the annual creation of Christmas tins. Christmas-themed drawings and paintings made by the children are used to decorate tins that are the traditional packaging for German gingerbread.

Sri Lanka Aid Nuremberg

Our people have had a connection to the local non-profit organization Sri Lanka Aid Nuremberg (Srilankahilfe Nürnberg) since its foundation in 2005. Most recently in 2020 our company made a monetary donation to contribute to the expansion of a learning and training center for youth in Eravur.

“The project brings us great fulfillment and it humbles us when we are faced with the realities that sometimes are drastically different from our own.”

Carolina Malaquias, HR Business Partner Brazil

Contributing to sustainable Growth from Knowledge



Green Gauge

Our product offering, Green Gauge, presents a comprehensive consumer perspective on sustainability based on data from GfK's Consumer Life study; the most comprehensive and longest-standing consumer trend study in the world. Green Gauge helps our clients understand questions such as what environmental concerns consumers have; how consumers' social awareness is evolving; how sustainability compares with other consumer trends; and what environmental actions will consumers take and how these tie back to purchase decisions. In 2020 Green Gauge data was also used as the basis for the whitepaper "Understanding today's green shopper dilemma: Eco-consciousness vs. consumerism" that is published on our global website.

Sustainability Concern and Action Report

Under the Europanel partnership, GfK and Kantar conducted the Sustainability Concern and Action study in 2020 for the second year in a row. By linking purchase data and reported insights involving more than 75,000 European households, the resulting report details how consumers' attitudes ("Who cares?") and behaviors ("Who does?") are changing with regards to the environment. In addition, our clients can understand:

- what actions they should take to meet consumer demands concerning the environment;
- how the Covid-19 crisis has affected concerns about climate change and plastic waste reduction;
- what role manufacturers, retailers, government and shoppers play in limiting and regulating waste;
- whether consumers across different demographics are influenced by social media influencers and celebrity activists; and
- what actions consumers are willing to take in their day-to-day lives to protect the environment.





Best Brands

Each year our company along with the Serviceplan Group and several other partners host the Best Brands College to honor and promote successful brand management and at the same time provide a strong forum for new, forward-looking communications solutions. The award-winning candidates are determined in a complex representative study by GfK and measured against two key criteria: their actual commercial market success and the popularity of the brand as perceived by consumers. At the beginning of 2021 we additionally introduced the award category “Best Brand Health & Wellbeing” to pay recognition to the importance of sustainable and socially responsible business to the consumer.

Covid-19 Resource Center

In March 2020 we launched a Covid-19 Resource Center on our website. It includes free in-depth reports, white papers, conference calls, webinars and infographics that enable our clients to manage disruption by making the right decisions for success. In 2020 our company also offered flexible subscription arrangements for certain products that could assist clients in mastering the crisis.

Supporting independent research

We work with various academic, market research and industry partners to initiate and support academic research projects. Our company is also a data partner for many universities and individual academics, providing access to unique data, insights and analytics tools as well as feedback from business and research practitioners. All without applying GfK’s ordinary license fees.

Maintaining sustainable business relations

GfK has a complex supply chain consisting of several thousand vendors, contractors and subcontractors. We require these partners to live up to the same standards we commit to ourselves.

As part of GfK’s vendor qualification process, our key vendors are screened for compliance purposes with a focus upon sanctions compliance, and this process is conducted at the start of new business relationships. In addition, we conduct regular checks of our partners’ trade sanctions compliance and follow further due diligence processes according to a risk-based approach. We also reserve the right to audit our partners in accordance with individual agreements.

Vendors also agree and commit to comply with the GfK Supplier Code of Conduct. This naturally requires complying with all applicable laws, regulations, and standards but especially places emphasis on our high standards with regards to ethical business and labor practices. The Supplier Code sets out expectations concerning anti-bribery, data privacy, protection of human rights, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment, fair working conditions and environmental protection and additionally prohibits the use of child and involuntary labor. Furthermore, we require our vendors to communicate these principles further down the supply chain.

Planet

“Commercial success and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive. By keeping environmental impacts in mind, we can secure wins for our clients and partners while doing our part to promote a sustainable future.”

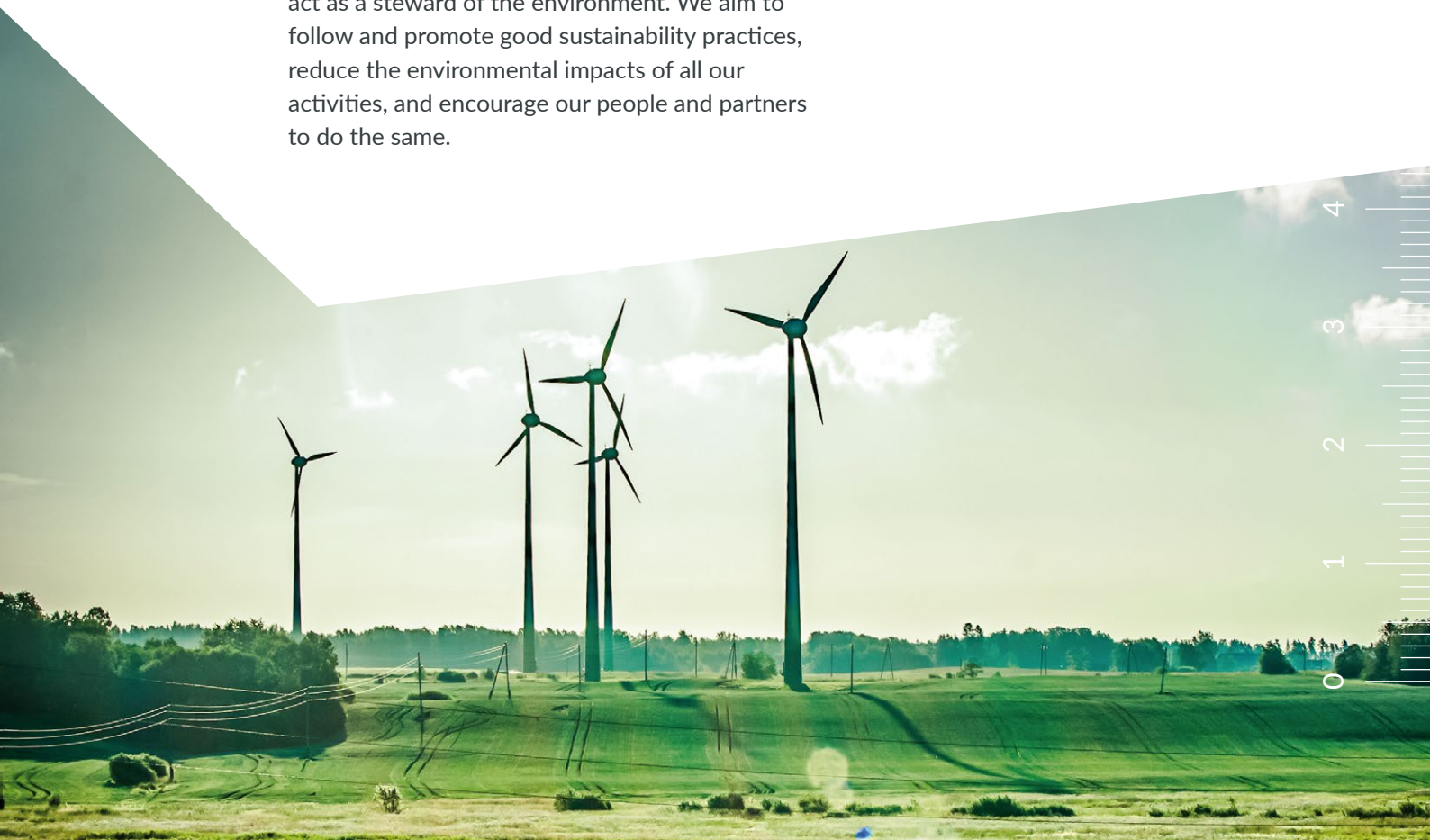
Lars Nordmark, Chief Financial Officer

Our planet is at a crossroads and with each passing year we witness the progressive effects of human activity on the environment. The results of GfK’s own Green Gauge demonstrate a decade of rising environmental consciousness across the globe that shows no sign of waning amidst the crises of the Covid-19 pandemic, social unrest, and economic upheaval that defined 2020.

As a global player, we recognize that our company has both a responsibility and an opportunity to act as a steward of the environment. We aim to follow and promote good sustainability practices, reduce the environmental impacts of all our activities, and encourage our people and partners to do the same.

Whether with our business partners, employees or the general public, GfK makes it clear where it stands on the environment. Our Code of Conduct, endorsed by the GfK Management Board, pledges our support for the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact, including the principles to support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges, to undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility, and to encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Our company doesn’t see a trade-off between commercial success and environmentally responsible behavior. Rather, we see the two as being inextricably linked, and believe a company’s long-term viability will be conditioned upon its ability to commit to smart sustainable practices. This section highlights some of the steps we are taking to that end.



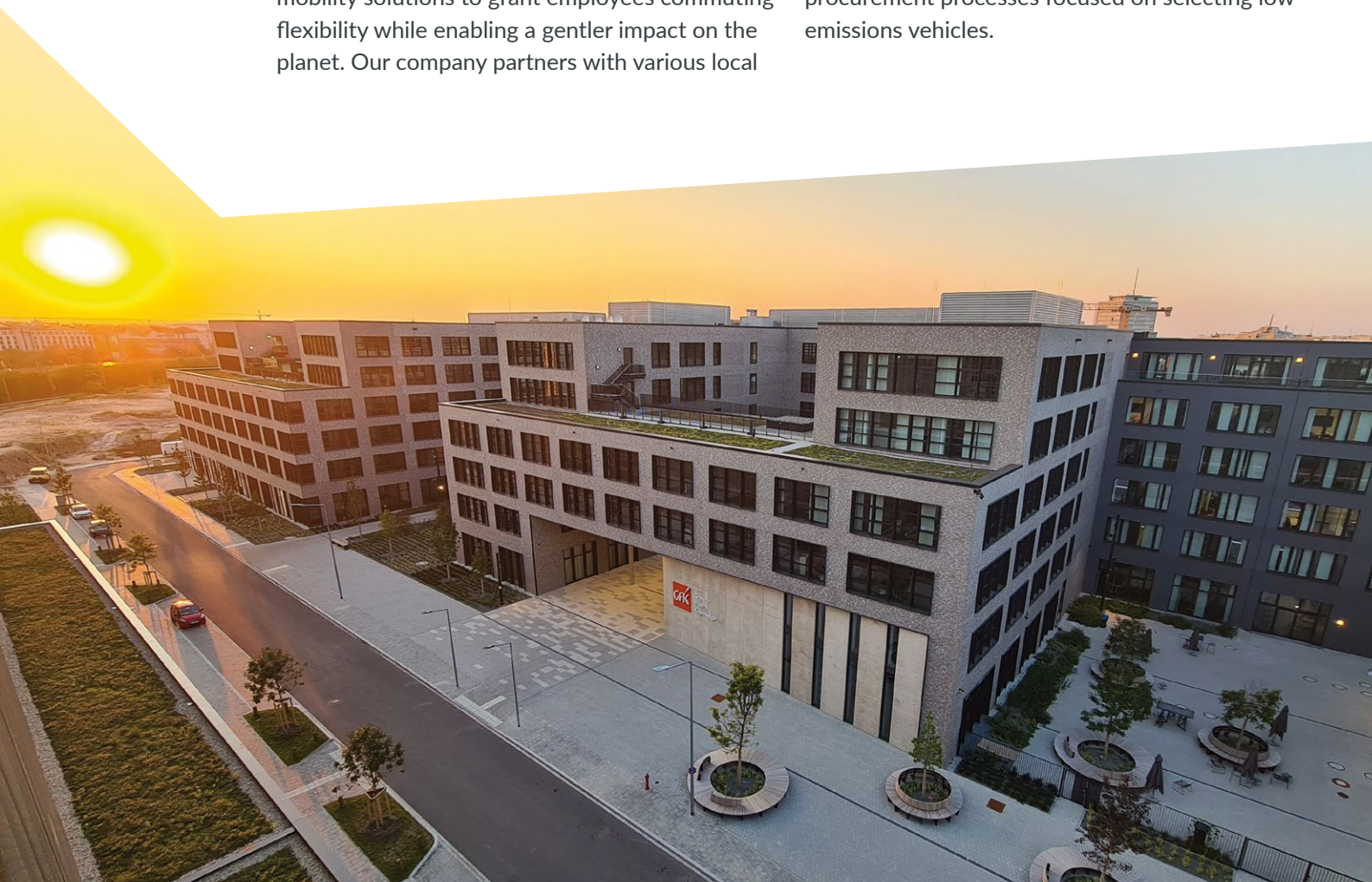
Rethinking the global office

GfK is cognizant of the environmental impacts of business transportation. With this in mind, and applying the lessons learned from virtual work arrangements during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have committed to implementing a new flexible work location schedule across our company. This new work arrangement will allow employees an average of two to three flex days per week, when they can choose to work from the office, from home, or from some other location. We anticipate that within the next four years, 90% of GfK's global workforce will be incorporated into this on a flexible work location scheme. Considering the average GfK employee commutes up to 1.6 hours a day, this will amount to significant savings in commuting time and a proportional reduction in business transportation related GHG emissions.

GfK has also begun a process to rethink employee mobility solutions to grant employees commuting flexibility while enabling a gentler impact on the planet. Our company partners with various local

transit authorities to provide our people with discounted season tickets for public transport which not only provides a benefit for employees but encourages the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transportation.

We are also actively exploring ways to reduce our dependence on gasoline-powered vehicles. By exercising stringency in the issuance of company vehicles, increasing our use of electric models and incorporating additional solutions with smaller carbon footprints – including scooters, bikes, and e-bikes – we are building a new fleet of GfK vehicles that will promote sustainable modes of transportation among our people. These global initiatives build on efforts in individual markets, where some GfK countries have succeeded in reducing the CO2 emissions of local vehicle fleets by as much as 20% through implementing procurement processes focused on selecting low-emissions vehicles.



Along with shifting work and commute strategies, we are also reconsidering our approach to business travel. Video conferencing technologies have strengthened our virtual work environment and enabled our company to build a “global office” where cross-continental collaboration is just a mouse click away.

The move of our company further contributes to sustainability in that four office locations across the city of Nuremberg have now become one and Orange Campus is well connected with the public transport network. This is supplemented by designated preferential parking for electric vehicles in the Orange Campus parking lot.

Establishing our green headquarters

At the beginning of quarter 2 in 2020, GfK completed construction of Orange Campus, our new state-of-the-art global headquarters. Our focus was to create a new home for GfK that is modern, efficient and incorporates green technologies. Our ambition is to work with the landlord to have the entire facility accredited by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), the most widely used green building rating system in the world.

Several sustainable technologies are deployed at Orange Campus. One highlight is that the electricity used is generated by means of a combined heat and power (CHP) plant. By capturing and reusing the heat produced as a byproduct of the CHP’s electricity generation, significant energy efficiencies are achieved over single-generation facilities. Our headquarters also has control systems that monitor and automatically calibrate lighting, heating and ventilation based on office capacity and outside weather conditions.

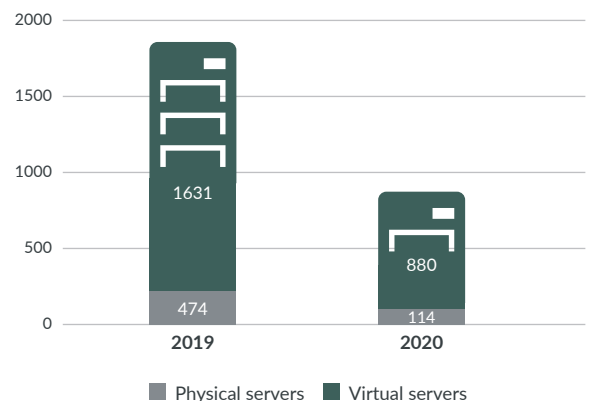
We’ve implemented a trash-free office policy at our new headquarters, meaning that all trash is collected centrally to promote better waste separation and recycling. Other waste-reduction solutions at Orange Campus includes eliminating the use of coffee machines that require pods or capsules and working with our canteen caterer to provide reusable cups and bowls for orders to-go.

Reducing our server footprint

As a digital services provider that neither operates factories nor produces physical goods, GfK may not fit the profile of the stereotypical carbon-producing business. But the truth is the carbon footprint of digital technology is not negligible.

With this in mind, our company launched an initiative to decommission and consolidate its servers. Between the project’s inception in January 2019 and completion at the end of 2020, we reduced GfK’s total servers by 53%, physical servers by 76%, and virtual servers by 46%. This decommissioning and consolidation process has resulted in an overall reduction in energy consumption of approximately 170,000 kWh per annum. Further opportunities to optimize and rationalize the server estate are planned for 2021.

Computer server reduction



Conserving energy

Our company has implemented additional measures to conserve energy in its operations around the globe. For example, many GfK offices employ building management systems, computer-based control systems that monitor and automatically calibrate lighting, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning based on office capacity. Additionally, it is standard that computers, office printers and technical meeting room equipment are set to transition to sleep mode after several minutes of non-use.

Reducing our waste

We are committed to responsible consumption to minimize the waste we produce. We've limited the use of paper in our offices by defaulting many printers to double-sided printing, offering a limited number of hard copy materials for clients, and substituting the printing of in-house materials for distribution via our company intranet.

All waste is disposed of responsibly, in strict adherence of any local regulations, and recycling is implemented wherever possible. Our offices recycle paper, cardboard, glass bottles, aluminum cans, waxed paper cups, office furniture, fluorescent lamps and tubes, and a host of IT equipment, including batteries, mobile phones, laser printers, CDs, ink cartridges, and more. In some GfK markets, local offices partner with charities like Computer Aid to donate redundant PCs and laptops across the developing world.

Looking to the future

To kick-off the new year, GfK participated in the International Green Week hosted by Messe Berlin.

“Together with experts from the areas of forecasting systems, blockchain and food logistics, we discussed how forecasting systems change supply chains and how they can be made more efficient and sustainable.”

Dr. Vlad Ardelean, Senior Data Scientist

In 2021 and beyond, GfK is committed to reinforcing its commitment to environmental stewardship. Our short-term priorities include developing our very first global GHG emissions inventory to fine-tune our understanding of the drivers of carbon emissions in our company and to illuminate opportunities for further reducing our carbon footprint. We look forward to building out our environmental reporting processes, continuing to increase transparency about our practices that have an impact on the environment, and partnering with our clients and vendors to achieve outcomes that further our business interests while leading the way to a greener, more sustainable future for all.

GfK was gold sponsor at The Economist's 6th Annual Sustainability Week (March 2021), featuring over 7,000 attendees and 50 speakers on actionable sustainability insights and solutions.



Goals

We are on the right track but recognize the need to continuously improve our efforts with regards to ensuring sustainability in our interactions with our People, Partners and Planet. In line with this, GfK's broader goals for 2021 are to:

1. Improve our company's current EcoVadis and CDP ratings
2. Update our Annual Sustainability Report into a format that mirrors the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards
3. Be recognized by our partners as a supplier of professional services that has a positive impact on our People, Partners and Planet





Growth
from
Knowledge

This GfK Annual Sustainability Report 2020 was written by Will Hammond, Chris Pietronigro and Kate Pavlou of GfK's Global Legal & Compliance department and subsequently reviewed and approved by the GfK Executive Leadership Team and approved by the Management Board.

If you have any questions or feedback about this Report, you may contact us at sustainability@gfk.com.

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