

FISCAL YEAR 2021

# How We Measure Up: GfK Annual Sustainability Report



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# Message from Our Management Board

Dear reader,

It is our privilege to publish our second Annual Sustainability Report. This covers our full range of environmental, social and governance (ESG) efforts carried out in the fiscal year 2021.

The outbreak of COVID-19 taught us that we are connected in ways that we could not have imagined. In response, we have re-evaluated our assumptions, innovated new ways to work and live, and placed a renewed emphasis on the health and well-being of our colleagues and communities. We continue to be driven by our core belief: that we support the world by enabling Growth from Knowledge. The essence of this belief is a focus on our People, Partners and Planet.

In 2021 we accelerated our focus on our sustainability agenda. We strengthened our environmental ambitions by making our corporate carbon footprint calculation an annual exercise, enabling us to track our progress. We also made commitments to increase the share of women in senior leadership by 2023 and, if identified, close any gender pay gap at GfK by 2023. With these strong pledges, GfK will remain dedicated to supporting ventures designed to protect people and the environment.

These measures demonstrate the growing importance of ESG for the GfK Management Board and senior leadership. Only with ambitious targets will we make the world a better place. We recognize the challenges of the task ahead and are committed to achieving continuous improvement. As we tackle these challenges, we improve through experience and through always inviting and acknowledging feedback. We value the positive internal and external recognition we are gaining for our work.

We are convinced that through our ongoing sustainability efforts, we are on the right track and moving our industry in the right direction. Please enjoy reading this Report.



**Lars Nordmark**  
Interim Chief Executive Officer



**Joshua Hubbert**  
Chief Operating Officer

# About This Report

**This is our second Annual Sustainability Report, and encapsulates the efforts undertaken by our company from 1 January through 31 December 2021.**

This reporting period aligns with the calendar-year reporting of our consolidated financial statements. Quantitative Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) disclosures in this Report show data as of 31 December 2021. All entities of the GfK group included in GfK SE's consolidated financial statements are covered in this Report (see Appendix 1 for the full list). In accordance with our company's current reporting capabilities, a different organizational scope may be used for certain disclosures. Where this is the case, an explanatory footnote is included.

The disclosures included in this Report were decided by a multi-departmental committee which conducted a materiality assessment.

This included:

- the consideration of the nature of our operations and business relationships
- the review and discussion of a variety of internal and external materials that provide further insight into our company's impacts on the economy, environment and society.

These materials included our 2021 Risk Register, aggregated whistleblowing case data, the results of our client surveys, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) standards for industries applicable to our company, and the EcoVadis Industry Risk Profile for our industry.

The outcome of our analysis was a list of sustainability topics that are material to our business. That list guided our selection of relevant disclosures for this Report. For a full list of GRI disclosures included in this Report, please see Appendix 2.

**For more information about this Report, please contact**  
[sustainability@gfk.com](mailto:sustainability@gfk.com)

## Confirmation Certificate

This Report has been compiled by a project team under the direction of GfK's Global Legal & Compliance department, with reference to the GRI Standards. I, William Hammond, Vice President Legal & Compliance (General Counsel), confirm that, to my knowledge, the information and data represented in this Report have been collected and contributed to by the responsible internal contacts, and included in this Report on the basis that such internal contacts have properly collated the information and data with a view to ensuring its correctness. We did not seek external assurance for this Report.



September 9, 2022



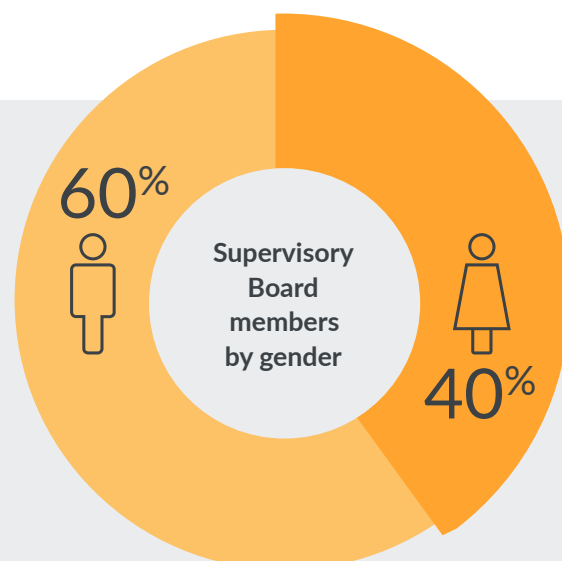


## Our Company

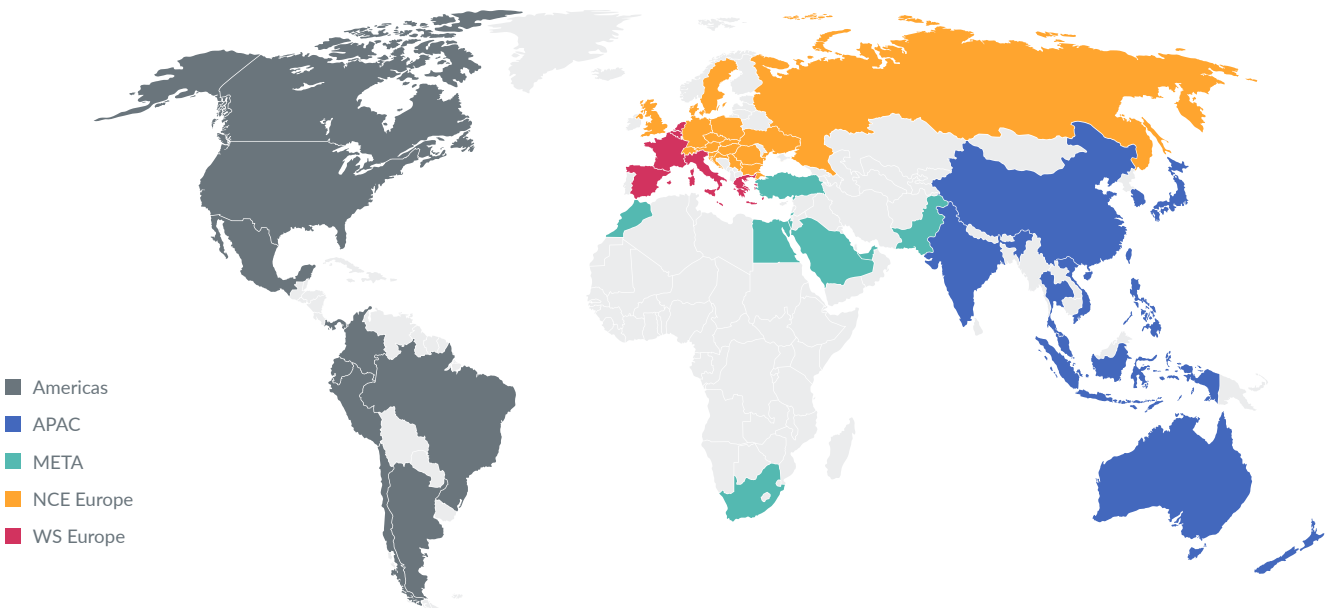
**Founded in 1934 as the non-profit organization 'Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung', GfK has grown to be one of the world's most trusted providers of market intelligence on consumers, markets, brands and media.**

The parent company of the GfK group, GfK SE, is a 'Societas Europaea', headquartered in Nuremberg, Germany. Our company has three shareholders that are legal entities and a two-tier

governance structure. This consists of an independent Supervisory Board, and a Management Board that is responsible for day-to-day management of the company's operations. During the period covered by this Report, the Management Board had two members: the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer. The Supervisory Board had ten members consisting of both shareholder and employee representatives and also included an Audit Committee.



## GfK Countries of Operation



It is a testament to our integrity and standing that we serve the world's leading brands and reset industry benchmarks. We do this by supplying unparalleled, always-on, AI-powered intelligence and consulting services for the consumer goods industry, globally. In 2021 our employee base spanned 56 countries, and we served clients in even more, resulting in annual revenues of approximately EUR 1 billion.

The countries our employees are based in were organized into five geographic regions:

- **Americas**
- **Asia Pacific** (APAC)
- **Middle East, Turkey & Africa** (META)
- **Northern, Central & Eastern Europe** (NCE Europe)
- **Western & Southern Europe** (WS Europe)

As a global provider of technology-powered market intelligence and consulting services, we strive constantly to be a good corporate citizen. We are committed to establishing and maintaining systems that protect and positively impact our People, Partners and Planet. That is why we are continuously improving our sustainability approach.

We guarantee transparency by submitting ourselves to annual external evaluation, including by EcoVadis and via the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP). In 2021, we earned an EcoVadis Silver Medal and were placed in the top 14% of rated companies within our industry. Our overall CDP score for 2021 also increased by an entire letter grade to a C, signifying 'Awareness: Knowledge of impacts on, and of, climate issues,' thereby matching the benchmark performance of companies in our sector. We intend to keep up the trend of continual improvement with respect to both evaluations in the coming years.



*We empower our clients to take bold actions for sustainable growth and become the shapers of tomorrow, by unlocking Growth from Knowledge.*

## 01



## People

**“The shapers of tomorrow will come from every background and every culture. We believe in that. That's why we nurture an environment of trust and respect across our entire GfK community.”**

**Jutta Suchanek**  
*Chief Human Resources &  
Diversity Officer at GfK*



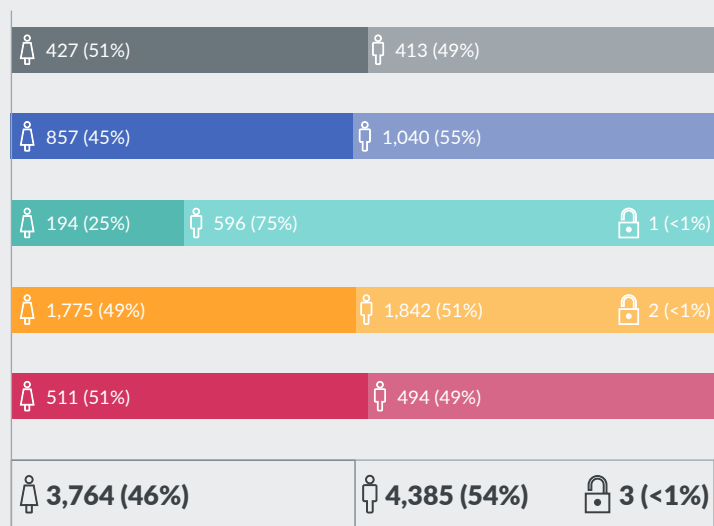
# Driving Diversity and Inclusion

With more than 8,000 employees spread across six continents, our GfK global community unites a wide variety of people in the pursuit of Growth from Knowledge.

We continue to work hard to create and encourage a diverse and inclusive working environment. One that respects and values every employee regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, personality, experience, culture, faith, socio-economic status, or physical ability. In 2021, we expanded this commitment by taking steps to increase Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) awareness, support, and accountability throughout our organization.



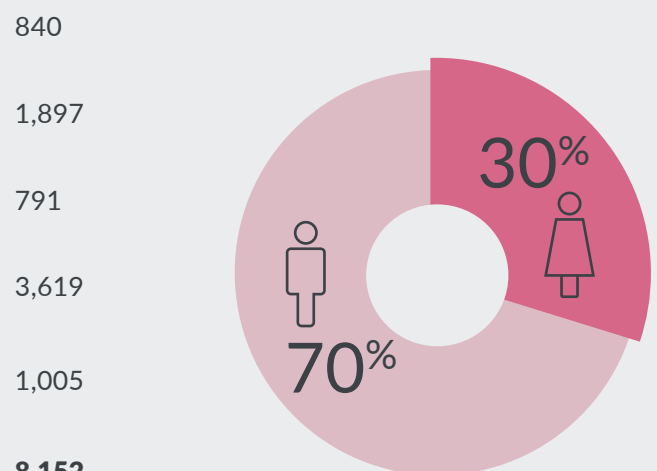
Total employees by region and gender<sup>1</sup>



Female Male Undisclosed

Americas APAC META NCE Europe WS Europe Total

Gender composition of the GfK Senior Leadership Team



<sup>1</sup> Figures reported are GfK regular employee headcount as of the end of the reporting period. Regular employees are those who are obliged, through an employment agreement with a GfK company, to perform a particular employed service; they are directly subject to GfK's terms when it comes to the time, place and content of their work. Regular employees do not include employees in marginal employment (e.g., interns, working students), dormant employees (employees on unpaid leaves of absence), employees who have been released from their contract, or contingent workers (e.g., temporary labor, freelancers, self-employed).

## Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council

**In the spring of 2021, we launched a survey to assess the attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of our global workforce with respect to DEI topics.**

The survey results demonstrated that GfKers around the world placed a high importance on DEI considerations. Our People felt these topics impacted them considerably, both on a professional and personal level. Our task was therefore clear: to assess the current DEI climate within the company, increase awareness, and drive change.

To fulfill our mandate, in 2021, we founded our very first Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council. Comprising a diverse network of 20 of our company leaders from all regions and business areas, the Council works to increase DEI awareness, support, and accountability throughout the company.

In 2021 the Council focused on a number of key measures. These included developing a DEI playbook and toolkit to embed in hiring and career management processes, conducting unconscious bias training for employees, implementing reverse mentoring, and building regional and local DEI networks across our global community. Guided by the Council, our business leaders and employees from all regions and countries will collaborate on a tailored DEI agenda and relevant focus topics for the future.

To keep our employees abreast of the Council's goals, initiatives, and outcomes, the company developed a DEI hub on our intranet. Employees can use the hub to explore current measures, join local DEI networks and initiatives, ask questions and provide feedback. In addition to the hub, our marketing and communications team use the company's intranet to keep employees informed of internal and external DEI topics and events. They post and promote articles reporting on actions taken by our local teams or exploring subjects like Pride Month, Black History Month, and the holidays of the various world religions.

### Our four DEI core promises of action are:

- to drive diversity and equality among our GfK teams
- to develop Council members' own potential for inclusive leadership
- to promote awareness of DEI values among employees
- to establish networks to promote DEI initiatives and outcomes



## Global Women in Leadership Virtual Summit

Over ten days in November, we hosted the first Global Women in Leadership Virtual Summit for our employees.

The Summit featured a line-up of international women leaders from across industries, who led panel discussions and interactive sessions about how to challenge gender bias, accelerate women's equality and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

On the final day of the Summit, senior leadership aligned and committed to several key actions to further establish support for women within our company. These included the creation of a global parental leave and career growth program, and the development of a structured leadership pipeline to ensure equal development and career opportunities for women and minorities alike. The event was met with high interest across our organization with over 800 participants.



## International Women's Day 2021— #ChooseToChallenge

We held our annual celebration of International Women's Day in March. It took the form of a global virtual live event, with additional activities held in our local markets throughout the world.

Our campaign theme for 2021 was #ChooseToChallenge. We encouraged our employees to ask themselves how they each could challenge inequalities and raise awareness against bias, with the goal of creating a more inclusive world.

This 2021 celebration was organized by our Women@Work employee-led group that brings together a diverse mix of successful women leaders across the company to champion gender diversity and inclusion at GfK.

**“We are creating an environment where everyone is encouraged to lend their voice to the conversation. Diversity must be in our DNA as a company. For a top-performing organization, it is non-negotiable.”**

**Cheong Tai Leung**  
Regional President  
APAC at GfK



## DEI Moment

We launched our DEI Moment campaign in 2021 to facilitate conversation about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion topics among our employees.

For this initiative, we invited our employees to take a minute at the start of every meeting to share a personal experience, a thought or an opinion that touches on a DEI-related subject.

**“We believe open conversations are key to understanding and appreciating our differences, expanding awareness of our blind spots, and developing our sensitivity to ensuring an inclusive workplace for all GfK employees.”**

**Suki Becker**  
*Vice President Procurement &  
Real Estate at GfK*

## Pride Month

Every June, our organization celebrates Pride Month by holding events and promotions to raise awareness about LGBTQIA+ issues and history, and by displaying our support for the LGBTQIA+ community internally and through social channels.



In 2021, our DEI-focused colleague network in the UK, called Fast Forward, hosted a local Pride Month event. This featured a keynote address by Dame Inga Beale, the former CEO of Lloyd's of London and the first female CEO in the insurance market's 328-year history. Dame Beale, who was instrumental in driving gender equity and promoting inclusivity for LGBTQIA+ colleagues inside and outside Lloyd's, spoke candidly about the challenges she faced in driving change, and gave guidance about how employers could build a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

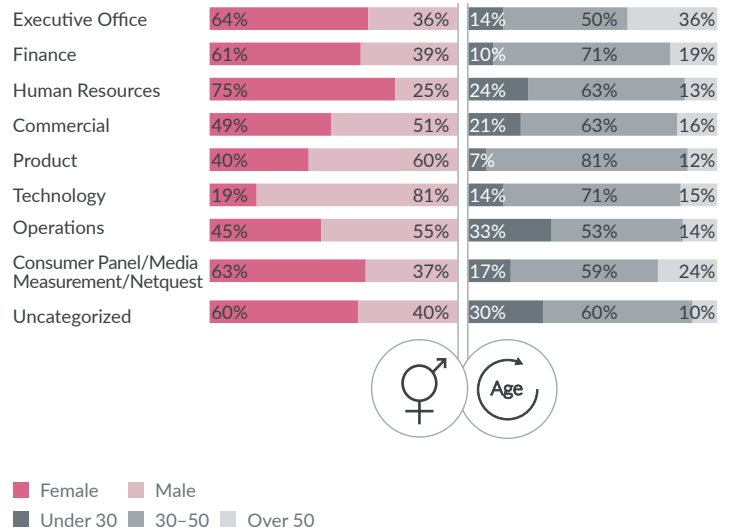
## Committing to Further Action

We are proud to be cultivating a workplace that values uniqueness and embraces differences. We recognize that establishing true Diversity, Equity and Inclusion takes ongoing and diligent effort.

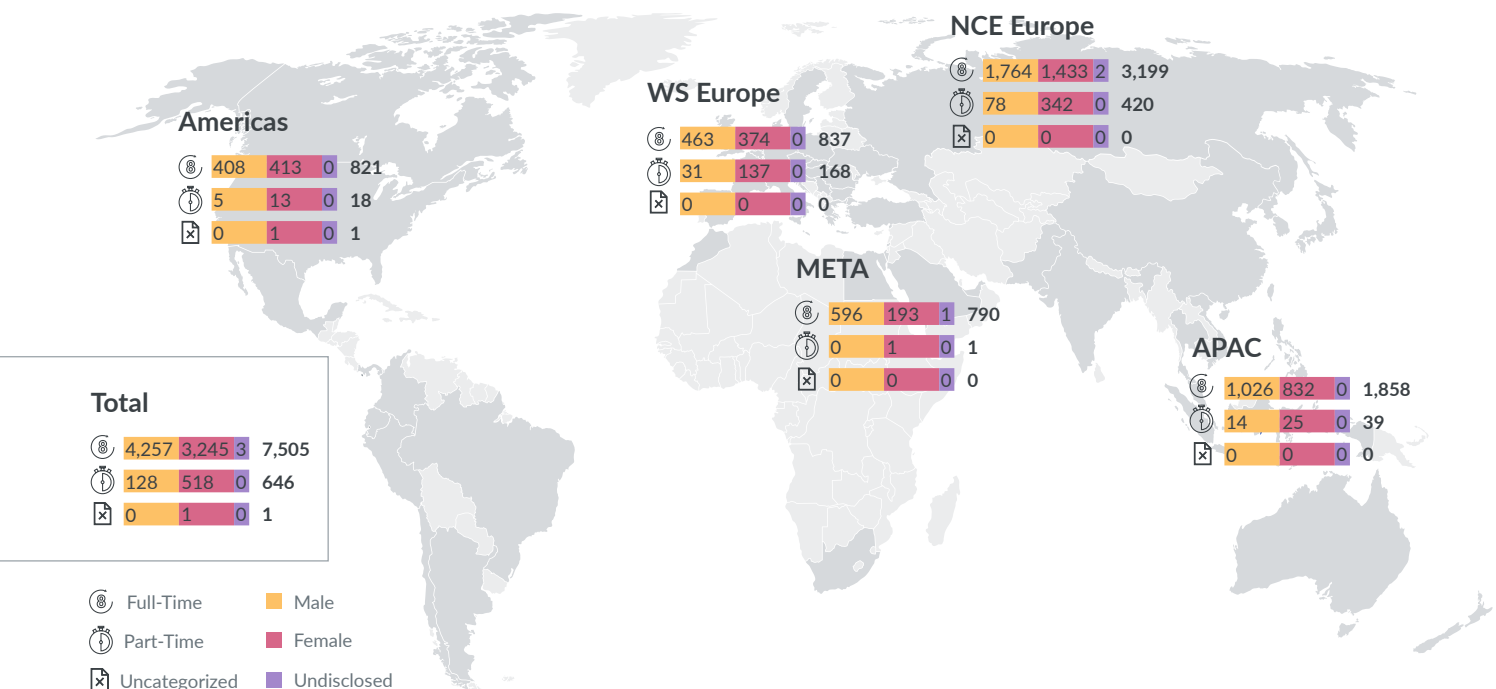
Accordingly, we aim to achieve the following in coming years:

- Increase the share of women on our Senior Leadership Team to 40% by end of 2023
- Assess whether a pay gap exists between male and female employees across our company, and close any gap by the end of 2023
- Establish a DEI dashboard with key KPIs on global, regional, and functional levels

### Gender and age composition of employees by employee category<sup>2</sup>



### Full-time and part-time employees by region and gender<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> As seen throughout this Report, one of the ways GfK categorizes employees is by functional area. As of the end of the reporting period, 10 employees globally were not assigned to a functional area in GfK's HR information systems (here these employees are grouped under 'Uncategorized'). Employees who work for GfK's Consumer Panel, Media Measurement, and Netquest businesses globally are grouped separately in our HR information systems, as reflected in this chart. The number of employees in the Undisclosed gender category represent <1% of each employee category and therefore do not appear in this chart.

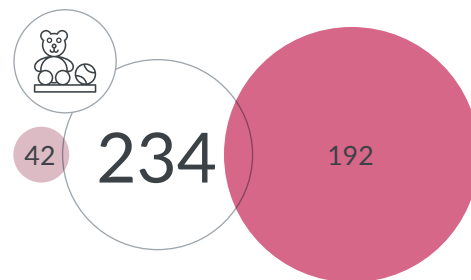
<sup>3</sup> Figures reported are GfK regular employee headcount as of the end of the reporting period. Regular employees are those who are obliged through an employment agreement with a GfK Company to perform a particular employed service; they are directly subject to GfK's terms when it comes to the time, place and content of their work. Regular employees do not include employees in marginal employment (e.g., interns, working students), dormant employees (employees on unpaid leaves of absence), employees who have been released from their contract, or contingent workers (e.g., temporary labor, freelancers, self-employed).

# Supporting Employee Health and Well-Being

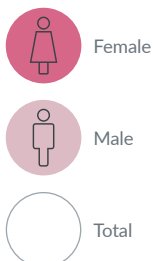
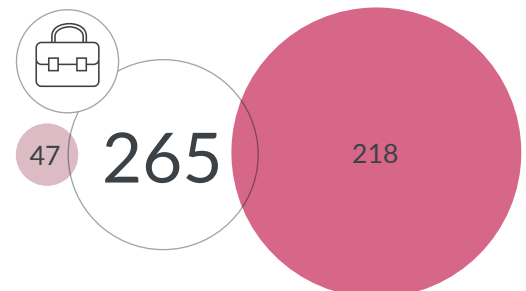
Our People genuinely are our greatest asset. We recognize the impact every employee's health and well-being has on our workplace culture, performance, and productivity, and we take steps to protect our employees and ensure their continued happiness and success.

This includes providing access to health coverage, parental leave, free medical check-ups and vaccinations; offering ergonomics guidance and consulting; hosting webinars led by industry experts in mental health, fitness, and nutrition; and providing access to medical personnel at key locations and via virtual consultations. We try hard to equip our employees with the tools, resources, and information they need to succeed and to feel their best doing so.

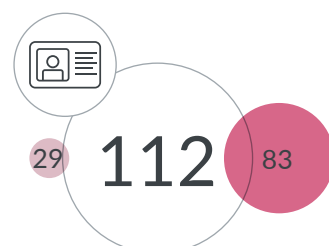
Total number of employees that took parental leave in 2021, by gender<sup>4</sup>



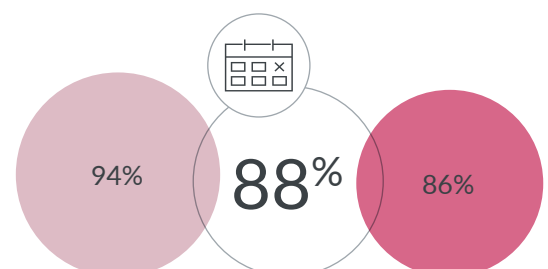
Total number of employees that returned to work in 2021 after parental leave ended, by gender



Total number of employees that returned to work after parental leave ended that were still employed 12 months after their return to work, by gender



12-month retention rate of employees that took parental leave



<sup>4</sup> Figures concerning parental leave do not include colleagues in entities 72, 73, 74, 75, 76 and 78, which together comprise 363 regular employees.



The Covid-19 pandemic presented challenges to us across our operations. Chief of these was the need to ensure the safety and well-being of our employees around the world. We quickly sprang into action to support our global locations in adopting policies, developing systems, conducting training, and following best practices to protect our workforce. We also completed and published

detailed occupational health and safety risk assessments in line with local legal requirements. We worked closely with both employees and employee representative bodies to ensure that our People were protected, while also being able to maintain a collegial virtual working environment. Moreover, we spearheaded a successful campaign at our headquarters to vaccinate employees and their family members on-site.

## Spotlighting Mental Health

We have taken steps to address the unseen toll of the Covid-19 pandemic—the momentous impact on mental health felt by many over the past two years.

In 2021, we launched a comprehensive health and well-being initiative to support our employees. The initiative is based on five pillars: optimizing mental health, balancing work and life, staying physically active and healthy, ensuring occupational health and safety, and promoting interpersonal connections among colleagues.



**Spectrum.Life**  
24h / 365d

Key to the initiative has been our collaboration with Spectrum.Life. This is a mental health and well-being digital platform that is now available to all our employees globally, and their families. The platform includes an employee assistance program, providing a confidential live chat program staffed by experienced clinicians, to help employees address any work or personal issues they or their dependents are facing. The service is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and is available in the employee's native language. The Spectrum.Life platform also provides a host of additional offerings, including rich content covering topics such as nutrition, fitness, remote work, ergonomics, mental health and sleep hygiene.

We also created a digital mental health channel. This provides monthly webinars and other resources on topics like managing anxiety, building resilience, and using mindfulness exercises to help tackle stress, anxiety, and depression. The channel has been well-received by our colleagues and boasted over 1,000 active users by the end of 2021.

**“What I like the most is the optimism that I felt after the training; the fact that you see that your company cares about your mental health is very important.”**

**Aymen Barrak**  
Operations Specialist  
at GfK



## Aiding in the Transition to Flexible Work

The way we work has undergone a huge shift over the past two years. Lockdowns and other preventive measures initially made work-from-home a necessity. The need for immediate change was abrupt and the transition presented some challenges, but, with time, the shift revealed new opportunities.

In feedback from our global 2020 Work-From-Home Survey, our employees made it clear that they have found that working from home has a significant, positive impact on their professional and personal lives, enhancing job satisfaction and overall quality of life.

Taking this feedback on board, along with input from over 80 internal local proposals worldwide, our Executive Leadership Team decided to adopt a flexible work model. This enables our employees to easily choose between office and home working locations moving forward. We also provided various support to promote our employees' health and well-being as they acclimated to their new home offices. This included creating a flexible work wiki containing helpful tips and best practices and developing and disseminating a series of videos on home-office ergonomics to help employees optimize their health and mood while working remotely.

**“In 2020, we didn’t know how the transition to remote work would affect our employees or our business. What we found was that a flexible working arrangement could improve our employees’ quality of life without diminishing our ability to provide world-class service to our clients.”**

**Lars Nordmark**  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
at GfK

We also developed the Virtual Sports@GfK program. This helped employees stay fit at a time when they did not have access to our GfK on-site fitness and recreational centers, and when many gyms around the world were closed due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. The program offers a diverse suite of exercise classes that can be done at home, led by experienced employees, and conducted live via video call at various points during the workday. All our employees are eligible to participate in the classes, which include yoga, Pilates, high intensity interval training, and meditation.

# Respecting Human Rights

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

**Joshua Hubbert**  
Chief Operating Officer  
at GfK

**We set out our expectations regarding human rights and labor conditions in our GfK Code of Conduct, which is posted publicly on [gfk.com/about-gfk](https://www.gfk.com/about-gfk).**

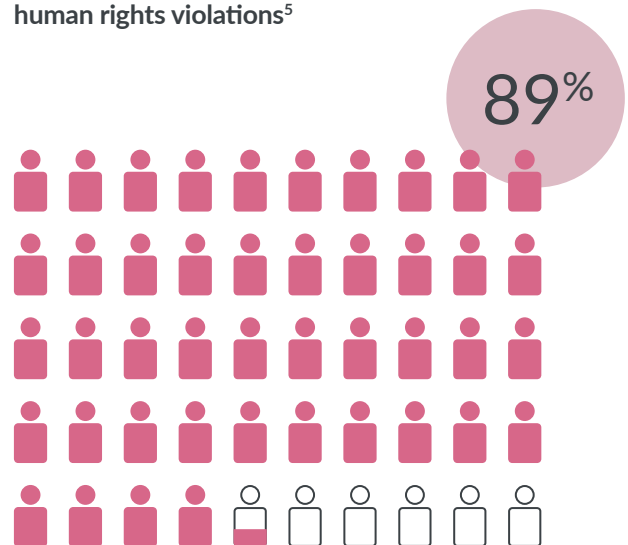
All new GfK employees are trained on this document as part of our onboarding program. The Code is complemented by our Global Tolerance & Respect Policy, which sets out our company's expectations with regard to non-discrimination, non-harassment and anti-bullying in a more comprehensive fashion.

We value 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 or the communities close to our operations.

Specifically, we fully adhere to our duty to respect human rights as set out in the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact. This includes supporting and respecting the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights and ensuring non-complicity in human rights abuses.

Our commitment to human rights extends to our relationships with our business Partners. For more information on that, please refer to the Partners chapter of this Report.

**Percentage of employees who received training on preventing discrimination and human rights violations<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>5</sup> All training related figures reflect training conducted on GfK's e-learning platform only, and exclude all additional internal and external trainings offered to GfK employees or reimbursed by GfK during the reporting period.



# Collectively Enhancing Working Conditions

In 2021, we continued to work closely with our People and employee representative bodies to collaboratively approach topics involving labor relations. Examples of this include alignment at a country-level on aspects including wages, working benefits, mobile working, and working hours.

## 55%

Percentage of total global workforce represented by employee representative bodies

**Our company has entered into various collective agreements with employee representative bodies throughout Europe, as well as in locations in Latin America and Asia.**

These agreements cover topics including employee health and safety, employee working conditions, and employee training and career management. In 2021, our company was in ongoing dialogue with the respective employee representative bodies to implement measures aimed at further improving talent calibration, mobility, and salary and grading.



# Developing Our People

**“A company can grow only if its people grow. We’re continually on the search for new ways to help our GfK employees change perspectives, step out of their comfort zone, and build their resilience to change.”**

**Nico Brinkmann**

*Vice President HR People*

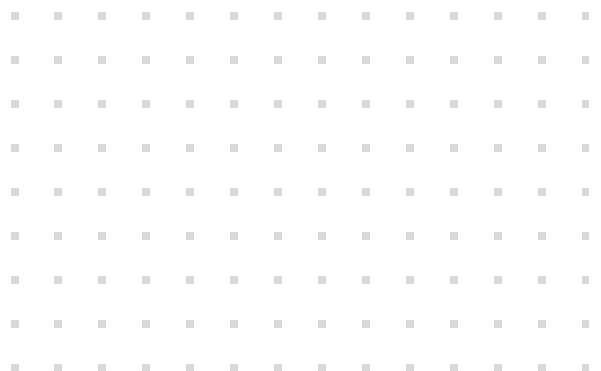
*Development & Culture at GfK*

The last couple of years have reminded us that change is the only constant in life. Our ability to adapt is critical, as global events and new technologies continue to influence the way we work, play, spend, and communicate. Our commitment to developing our People and cultivating a culture of growth is crucial to ensuring that our employees and our company as a whole remain relevant and successful in these fast-changing times.

## Enabling Mobility

Global workforce mobility is an integral part of our HR strategy. In 2021, our People Development & Culture team initiated our new GfK Career Perspectives project. This is designed to promote and improve internal career development opportunities across our company through a broad range of activities, tools, and resources.

To enhance the calibration of our talent and expand career options for our employees, we have developed a multi-pronged approach to career development. Our employees can work with their manager and HR business partner to achieve vertical career growth, or make horizontal career moves into different but related job families. They can also broaden and enrich their current skills and job scope, or downshift into a new position with less responsibility, to facilitate a career change or shifting focus to other areas of life.



## Recruitment and Performance Management

We are committed to a recruitment process that is open, transparent, and merit-based, and that affords equal opportunities to all job applicants.

All advertisements for our positions globally are standardized to ensure that they properly promote diversity and inclusion. Our HR professionals and third-party recruitment Partners work closely with applicants to make sure they understand the details of the recruitment process and are kept abreast of developments along the way. We also offer internship and trainee programs at our major locations.

New employees hired in 2021<sup>6</sup>

**17%** | **1,353**

New hire rate

New hires

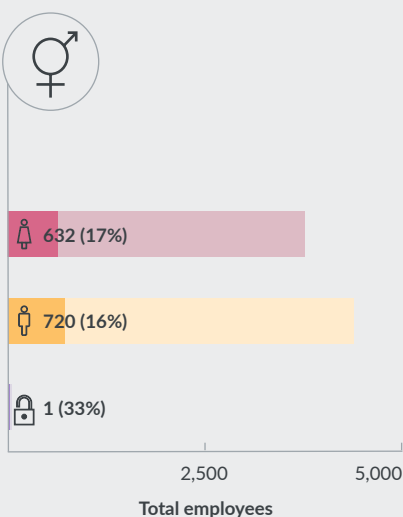
Voluntary and involuntary employee departures in 2021<sup>7</sup>

**18%** | **1,432**

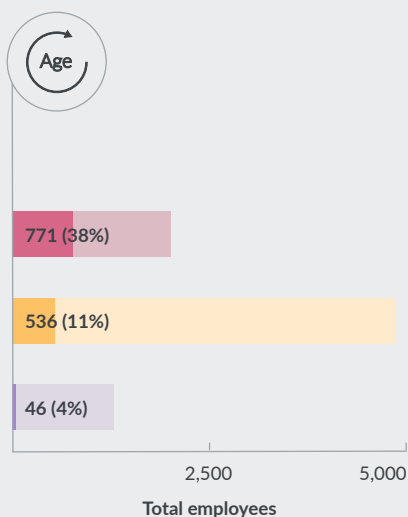
Turnover rate

Departures

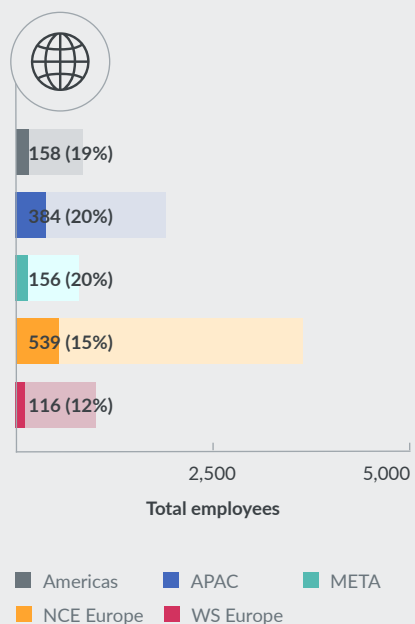
Total number and rate of employee hires in 2021 by gender



Total number and rate of employee hires in 2021 by age



Total number and rate of employee hires in 2021 by region



Female Male Undisclosed

<30 30-50 >50

Americas APAC META  
NCE Europe WS Europe

<sup>6</sup>We have derived all new hire rates using end-of-year employee counts as opposed to average employee counts during the reporting period. The formula we have used is: New hire rate = (# new hires in category / total count of employees in category at end of reporting period) \* 100

<sup>7</sup>We have derived the turnover rate using end-of-year employee counts as opposed to average employee counts during the reporting period. The formula we have used is: Turnover rate = (# departures / total count of employees at end of reporting period) \* 100

We recognize that one of the key drivers of employee mobility is internal recruitment. For this reason, in 2021 we undertook an assessment to determine how we could improve our internal recruiting efforts. As a result of the evaluation, we set up several KPI targets for internal recruiting to achieve by the end of 2022. These include raising the percentage of job requisitions advertised internally from approximately 61% to 90% and increasing the annual number of internal job applications by 15 – 20%. We have developed a set of measures to help us reach these targets, such as incorporating recruitment training into our leadership development offerings for managers.

Our annual GfK Talent Review process also enhances our ability to recruit internally. This is a collaborative exercise between our HR teams and managers across our organization. It identifies specific employees with potential for development and promotion and provides them with action plans for reaching that potential. The process enables us to build a strong internal talent pipeline and to fill a greater number of roles internally, while simultaneously enhancing employee engagement and motivation.

2021 internal hire rate<sup>8</sup>

10%



<sup>8</sup> We have derived the internal hire rate using end-of-year employee counts as opposed to average employee counts during the reporting period. The formula we have used is: Internal hire rate = (# internal hires / total count of employees at end of reporting period) \* 100. Internal hires include both 1) positions advertised by GfK and filled by an internal candidate and 2) employee promotions and lateral moves within the company.

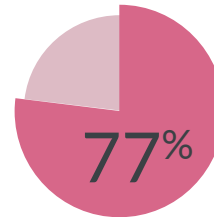


Our global annual performance management process also allows employees to set targets together with their managers, evaluate and receive feedback on their performance, and plan for their development. All our managers at GfK are responsible for completing the process annually for the employees they supervise, and we have set an organization-wide goal of achieving a 100% process completion rate for our global workforce.

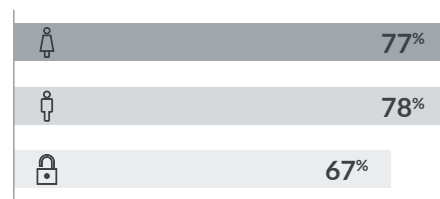
Complementing our standard performance management process is our ongoing 360° feedback process, available to all GfK managers. The primary purpose of a '360' is to drive the growth and development of employees through increasing their self-awareness. The process provides employees the opportunity to receive honest and anonymous feedback from various internal stakeholders including peers, counterparts and direct reports. The 360's holistic approach allows us to widen the lens of performance management and reduce bias, enhancing the support we provide in developing our workforce.

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

Percentage of employees who received regular performance and career development reviews in 2021<sup>9</sup>



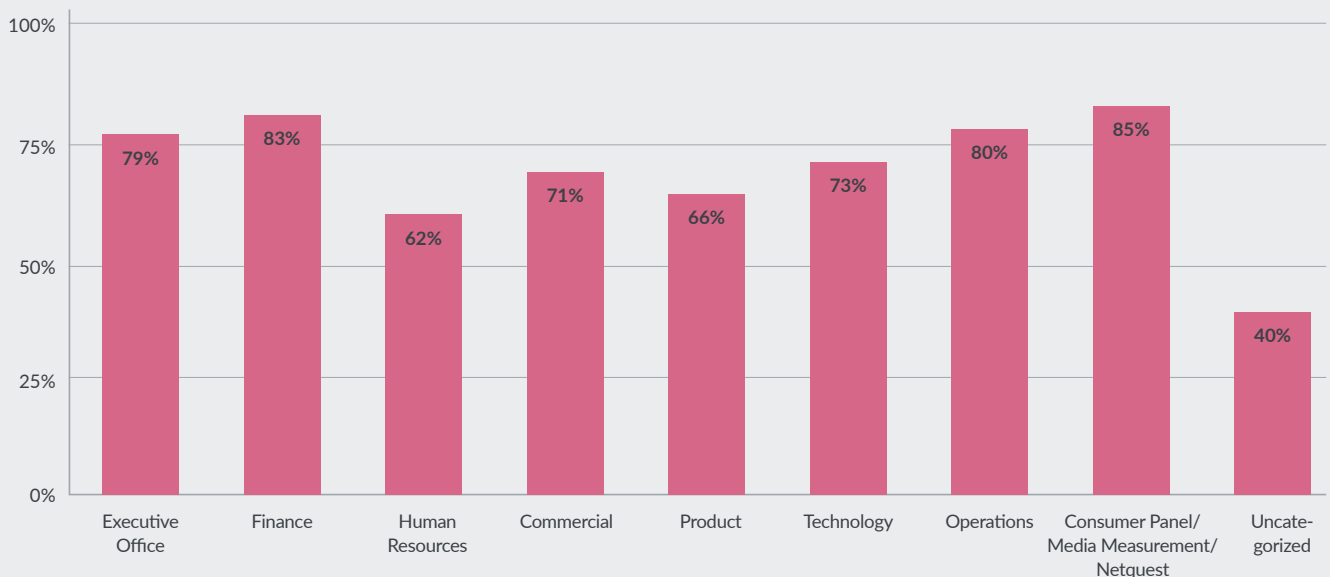
Percentage of employees who received regular performance and career development reviews in 2021 by gender



Female Male Undisclosed

<sup>9</sup> All performance and career development review figures do not include entities 72, 73, 74, 75, 76 and 78, which together comprise 363 regular employees.

Percentage of employees who received regular performance and career development reviews in 2021 by employee category



## Development Opportunities

We have developed a broad portfolio of opportunities to support the development journey of all our employees globally.

Launched in the third quarter of 2021, our Individual Development Plan (IDP) process provides our employees with a tool to target and structure their personal and professional development aspirations. Employees lead the process and collaborate with their manager to reach their short- and mid-term career goals and strengthen current job performance. In addition to supporting employees, the IDP process helps managers better understand the motivation and professional goals of their team members, discover untapped potential, and target development opportunities to meet the wants and needs of their employees. By the end of 2021, and only months after the IDP process launched, 531 employees had created individual development plans and set a total of 1,125 goals.

**“My mentor encouraged me to stand up for my wishes and ideas, and to communicate them openly. She supported me in really perceiving and exploiting my strengths.”**

**Jannik Ziegler**  
Community Manager Technology  
at GfK

Our global Mentoring@GfK program leverages our diverse community of backgrounds, personalities, and skill sets to empower and support the development of our People. Mentees benefit from the knowledge and expertise of their mentors, gain access to mentors' networks, and increase their awareness about different functions, roles and career opportunities at the company. Mentors get to practice their coaching and feedback skills and enrich their knowledge through understanding the experiences and perspective of the mentee.

Our company benefits from improved knowledge sharing, increased employee learning, and enhanced networking across hierarchies and departments.

In 2021, we digitized our mentoring matching process. This increased the awareness of the program and facilitated matches. By the end of the year, Mentoring@GfK boasted 79 unique mentors from 18 different countries, and 72 active mentoring relationships.



**Mentoring@GfK**  
(79 mentors | 72 mentees)



Our GfK Leadership Development program fosters the career development of employees in leadership positions with a suite of offerings. For example, our virtual leadership development training: Leading Today, Creating Tomorrow. This training equips our new managers with the necessary skills and mindset to be successful. It also drives global alignment on what good leadership looks like at GfK. Since the program's launch in 2019, over 300 new managers from all over the world have participated, with 144 new leaders from 58 countries participating in 2021 alone.

We also supply confidential 1:1 online coaching with external coaches. This supports our leaders with work and personal challenges,

from improving their management skills to achieving work-life balance. 150 of our leaders participated in our online coaching program in 2021. On top of that, we hosted Leadership XCHANGE, a virtual, live leadership development program where our managers collaborate to find solutions to challenging situations they are facing.

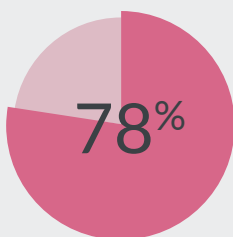
At the end of 2021, we launched the Career Perspectives initiative to gather feedback on the measures in place across our global community to promote internal career development. This included conducting interviews with HR leaders in every region and surveying approximately 80 additional internal stakeholders globally. Feedback is now being analyzed and used to enhance our internal career development efforts in 2022 and beyond.

## Learning@GfK

**“We encourage employees to stay curious and make continuous learning a part of their everyday work life at GfK.”**

**Jason Flynn**  
Global Head of Learning  
at GfK

Percentage of employees who received career- or skills-related training<sup>10</sup>



At the beginning of 2021, our Global Learning Team conducted the Learning Priorities Survey across our global workforce.

We used the 2,500+ responses to build a new e-learning management system around the topics and skills most requested by our People. The new system boasts an enhanced learner-centric interface, 686 courses on a wide variety of subjects, and course series curated by the Global Learning Team in response to the most requested topics from our employees. By the end of the year, 32,313 total courses had been completed and 4,973 unique learners had completed at least one course on the new system.

<sup>10</sup> All training-related figures reflect training conducted on GfK's e-learning platform only, and exclude all additional internal and external trainings offered to GfK employees or reimbursed by GfK during the reporting period.

**2021 also saw the launch of our first globally accessible Blended Learning Programs. These programs are co-created with external experts and tailored to our company. They are delivered using a combination of structured live sessions, coaching, e-learning, feedback and peer review.**

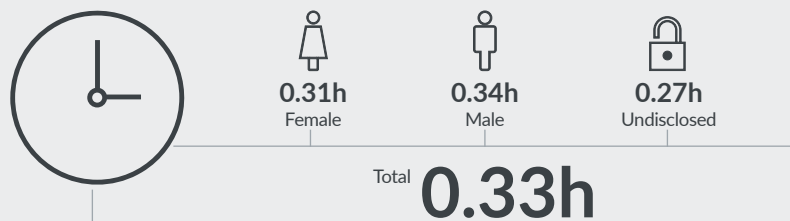
Current Blended Learning offerings include courses to help our employees enhance their storytelling and presentation skills, strengthen active listening, improve their English language skills, and bolster their ability to build business relationships in the new world of hybrid work. We have also launched the GfK Accredited Trainer Program, aimed at standardizing the quality of internally delivered training courses throughout the company.

Our popular Learning Live sessions, introduced at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, continued throughout 2021. These monthly sessions bring in external thought-leaders to

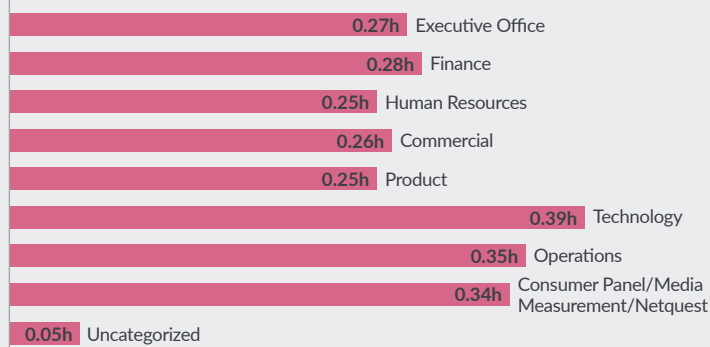
share their experience and perspectives on relevant personal development and business skills topics, in one-hour slots that are open to all throughout the company. Sessions have been delivered by international sports stars, authors, entrepreneurs, business leaders and academics on topics such as leadership, personal branding, prioritizing your time, overcoming impostor syndrome, mindfulness and resilience.

To allow our learners to celebrate, measure, and record their accomplishments, we partnered with Accredible in the third quarter of 2021 to offer Open Badges. These digital badges can be stored for personal use, shared across social media platforms, and stacked with other Open Badges awarded by universities, professional associations, training organizations, and other businesses. Ultimately, they provide learners with a portable, personal record of achievement. By the end of 2021, a total of 652 credentials had been awarded across our company, and we are already seeing employees proudly sharing their credentials on LinkedIn and Twitter.

**Average hours of training per employee in 2021 by gender<sup>11</sup>**



**Average hours of training per employee in 2021 by employee category<sup>11</sup>**



<sup>11</sup> All training-related figures reflect training conducted on GfK's e-learning platform only, and exclude all additional internal and external trainings offered to GfK employees or reimbursed by GfK during the reporting period.



# Giving Our People a Voice

Our company is committed to giving our employees a voice. Our Global Pulse Check Survey helps us understand our employees' perspectives about their role, their team and our company.

The most recent edition of the survey, conducted at the end of 2020, covered not only the standard employee satisfaction questions, but also health, well-being and inclusion topics as well. With over 5,300 colleagues sharing feedback, we achieved a survey participation rate of 64%. The survey results showed a rise in overall employee satisfaction over the previous year's survey, with a 14-point increase in Employee Net Promoter Score—a measure of employees' willingness to recommend GfK as a place to work.

In 2021, ambassador groups, consisting of various volunteers across regions and functions, collaborated with leadership teams across our company to dive deeper into the 2020 Pulse Check results. They identified opportunities for growth, diagnosed challenges and obstacles to success, and developed action plans to drive progress. Many of the initiatives described in this Report are direct outgrowths of this work.

**“We are proud of all we have accomplished on our culture journey over the past year. But the work is never done. We will continue to listen to and learn from our people as we strive to make GfK a truly great place to work.”**

**Jutta Suchanek**  
Chief Human Resources &  
Diversity Officer at GfK

02



## Partners

“Partnerships present the opportunity for shared successes. Whether with our clients and suppliers, our industry partners, or the broader community, we leverage our expertise, our passion, and our time to create win-wins throughout the GfK ecosystem.”

Kai Hummel  
Vice President Communications  
& Public Affairs at GfK

# Being a Trusted Business Partner

## Prevent

- Training
- Communication
- Guidelines & Procedures
- Compliance Risk Assessments
- Employee Background Checks
- Third Party Screening
- Law Tracking
- Standardization

## Detect

- Whistleblowing@GfK
- Internal Controls
- Compliance Reviews
- Compliance Registers

## Respond

- Investigations
- Consequences
- Lessons learned



Tone from the Top



Compliance Organization



Continuous Improvement

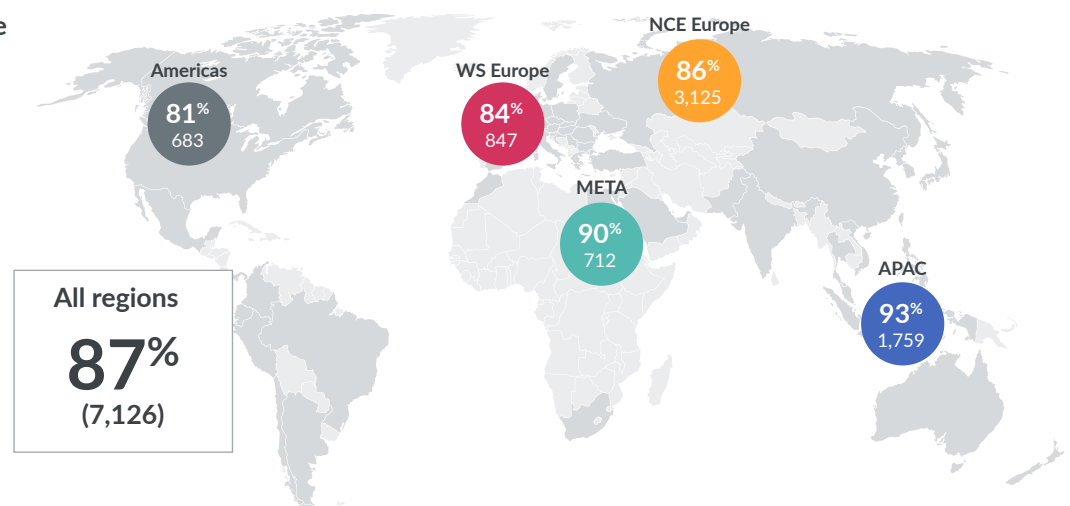
## Conducting Business Ethically

Our company is committed to conducting all aspects of our 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'.

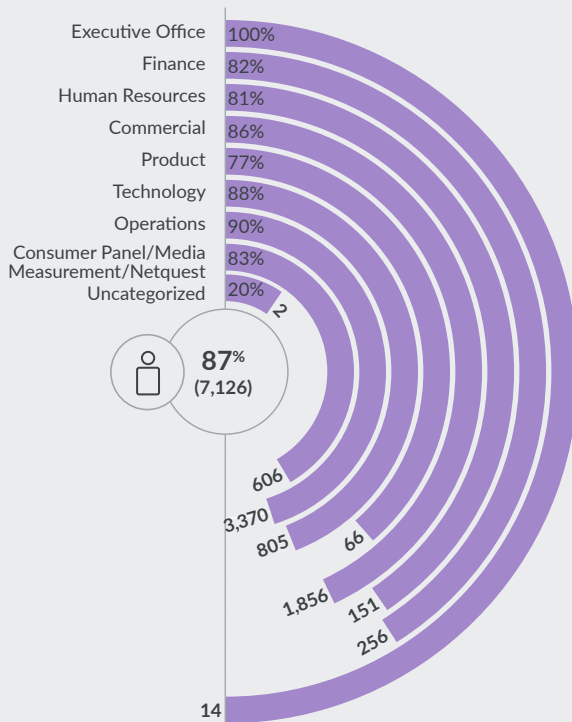
Emphasis is placed on the Prevent pillar, with our expectations for ethical business practice being communicated in our GfK Code of Conduct, as well as in our internal training—such as the Code of Conduct e-learning, which forms part of the onboarding of new joiners.

Total number and percentage of employees that have received training on anti-corruption by region<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> All training-related figures reflect training conducted on GfK's e-learning platform only, and exclude all additional internal and external trainings offered to GfK employees or reimbursed by GfK during the reporting period



### Total number and percentage of employees that have received training on anti-corruption by employee category



Our company's approach to ethics and compliance is more formally set out for employees in our global company policies. These focus on communicating internal rules in an understandable manner, covering risk areas such as:

- bribery and corruption
- competition
- conflicts of interest
- discrimination and harassment
- fraud and theft
- information security
- privacy
- retaliation
- sanctions and trade restrictions

For further advice on implementing and complying with our Code of Conduct and company policies, employees can reach out to local HR, their regional Compliance Officer, the central compliance function within the Global Legal & Compliance department, or the department that issued the respective policy.

Ethics and compliance updates are regularly presented 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.

## Rejecting Corrupt Practices

One of the foundations of conducting business ethically is rejecting corrupt practices. Our GfK Global Gifts, Benefits, Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy reinforces our rule 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. Our company's global gift and benefit registration approval process ensures that gifts and benefit offerings are reviewed centrally in accordance with value thresholds. This ensures that anything of value offered to public officials is first subject to review and approval of the Vice President Global Legal & Compliance.

Similarly, we have established our GfK Global Conflicts of Interest Policy. This is because we recognize that corrupt tendencies such as nepotism can be detrimental to the trust that colleagues and business partners place in us. The Policy provides guidance on identifying conflicts of interest and mitigating associated risks and sets out processes that emphasize transparency and conflict management.



## Protecting Privacy

Data is at the core of our business. 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. We apply these 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.

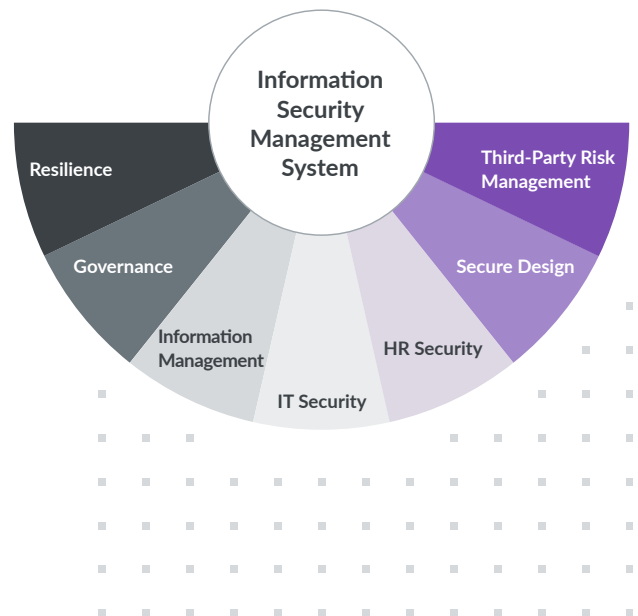
Our privacy program and Global Data Protection Policy govern how our company collects, uses and manages personal data. Together, they ensure we maintain confidentiality, and respect any choices that individuals make regarding our use of their data. In 2021 we took the following key actions relating to data protection:

- Prepared our legal entities in China and other relevant business areas for the introduction of the Chinese Personal Information Protection Law;
- Kicked off the implementation of the new Standard Contractual Clauses issued by the European Commission in June, including training responsible employees on their use;
- Appointed further Privacy Ambassadors as additional points of contact on data protection topics, supporting our Privacy Champions and Data Protection Officers on country and regional levels respectively.

## Securing Information

Going hand-in-hand with protecting privacy is ensuring information security.

Our company's comprehensive information security management system is aligned with ISO 27001 and serves to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of the information we deliver.



The system is maintained by our Information Security department. This comprises four teams across the globe, each specializing in different areas of information security:

- Enterprise Security Team—responsible for implementing measures to safeguard our IT infrastructure.
- Governance, Risk & Compliance Team—responsible for the governance of the information security management system, which also includes third-party risk management.
- Product Security Team—responsible for ensuring our clients can use our apps and platforms in a secure manner.
- Security Operations Center—responsible for detecting and managing IT security threats.

# Raising Concerns

We are committed to transparency. We want to know if we are having a negative impact on an employee or business partner, or if they are concerned about something they may have seen in relation to our company.

**Our company therefore offers various channels and points of contact for raising concerns about wrongdoing or breaches of the law.**

However, we realize that not all individuals will feel comfortable reporting concerns within their own line of management. That is why GfK maintains an online whistleblowing portal, [Whistleblowing@GfK](mailto:Whistleblowing@GfK), with an infrastructure that enables anonymity. This portal is not just available to employees, but also third parties such as our business Partners.

All reports made are treated in the strictest confidence. The details of any reports, including any disclosed identities, are only shared if it's essential for investigative purposes—and then only on a strict need-to-know basis. The web portal is available 24/7 in multiple languages. Individuals are also encouraged to enable a secure postbox option that allows them to be contacted (anonymously), with any follow-up questions or queries.

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

**“The cornerstone of Whistleblowing@GfK is our zero-tolerance policy on retaliation: no employee who comes forward in good faith to report a breach of conduct shall be retaliated against. This stance is essential to making our employees feel supported in speaking up and ensuring we continue to meet the highest standards of ethics and professional integrity.”**

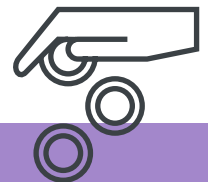
**William Hammond**  
*Vice President Global Legal & Compliance at GfK*

# Collaborating with Our Community

We recognize the positive impact of community involvement and social engagement and encourage the establishment and involvement of our company in local social initiatives and projects. This section highlights some of the key initiatives undertaken in 2021.

## Flood Aid in Germany

In July, Germany was affected by an historical flood disaster. Our company assisted by donating EUR 10,000 to Aktion Deutschland Hilft, an organization that was on the ground with numerous flood relief initiatives. These included helping with evacuations and clean-ups, organizing accommodation and emergency shelter, distributing food and hygiene kits and also providing psycho-social care.



Donation to  
Aktion Deutschland Hilft:  
EUR

**10,000**

## Fit for a Good Cause

A team of 56 colleagues from various locations took part in the Wings for Life World Run. This took place on May 9 to support research into spinal cord injuries. Under the motto 'running for those who can't', the team collectively covered a distance of 554 km (346 mi) and raised over EUR 1,300.

Also, from May to July, our Media Measurement business unit in Germany came up with a way to beat the lockdown blues and also do something positive for others. Whether by running, riding, swimming, or any other means of covering distance via exercise, GfK colleagues got outside and got moving. For each kilometer, EUR 5 cents was donated to charity. This raised a total of EUR 1,205, with donations going towards three organizations: the Verein Hilfe für Frauen in Not e.V. (a women's shelter in Nuremberg), Schlupfwinkel e.V. (an organization, also in Nuremberg, supporting children, youth and their families in crisis and emergency situations), and the flood relief fund of Aktion Deutschland Hilft.



## Heinrich A. Litzenroth Memorial Health Center

The Heinrich A. Litzenroth Memorial Health Center in Kalmunai, Sri Lanka was built after our Management Board member, Heinrich Litzenroth, fell victim to the tsunami that occurred at the end of 2004.

This was made possible by generous donations from our employees, the Management Board, service providers and the non-profit organization, Sri Lanka Aid Nuremberg (Srilankahilfe Nürnberg). Our colleagues have had a connection with Sri Lanka Aid Nuremberg since the organization's foundation.

The Memorial Health Center has now been operating for more than a decade, advising and caring for expectant mothers and families with small children, and looking after acutely ill patients in the district. In the past couple of years, the health center has also served as a Covid-19 vaccination center.

## Using Our Voice

Throughout the year, we participated in numerous events to impart knowledge and promote thought leadership on various topics centered around sustainability.

These events included: The Economist's Sustainability Week 2021 where we were a gold sponsor; the International Green Week in Berlin, running in its 86<sup>th</sup> year; the CEO Pledge Panel Discussion hosted by the Market Research Society (MRS), promoting diversity within the research sector; and one of our Talking Tech webinars focused on sharing insights on consumers' concerns about the environment.

On top of this, there was a 'first' on 24 July, 2021, when a TEDx event was held Nuremberg. This is where our company's headquarters are located and, befittingly, we therefore got on board as a Platinum Sponsor of TEDxNuremberg. The theme was Shaping Futures, and talks revolved around how individuals, companies and the broader society can shape and contribute to our future.



**“We want to stay ahead and help shape the future, not only for our clients but also for our region. And one of these local projects is the TEDx Program that shares ‘ideas worth spreading’ all across the world.”**

**Sandra Bystricky**  
Data Scientist at GfK



# Contributing to Sustainable Growth from Knowledge

We are in the business of helping our clients to grow from knowledge. For over 85 years our clients have relied on our data and insights to make decisions that contribute to sustainable economic growth. But now, more than ever, brands need trusted insights on consumers' changing sustainability behaviors and perceptions.



The disconnect between people's good sustainable intentions and their actual purchase behavior accounts for USD 806 billion in lost sales annually for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG)<sup>12</sup>. It also has substantial impact on sales in other industries, including tech and durable goods. Throughout 2021, our company continued to adapt to incorporate relevant data points around sustainability into our existing products. We also continued to further build out our products dedicated entirely to insights on sustainability.

This helps our clients bridge the gap and become more environmentally sustainable brands whose products meet the full range of expectations of consumers.

**“The greatest impact we can have on the planet is to help our industry clients make better choices to achieve real ESG goals.”**

**Sean O'Neill**  
Chief Product Officer at GfK

<sup>12</sup> Source: Europanel, 2021. #WhoCares?WhoDoes?



More  
eco-conscious



Green  
inDeed

Glamour  
Green

Carbon  
Cultured

Green  
In Need

Jaded



Less  
eco-conscious

## Green Gauge

Our product offering, Green Gauge, presents a comprehensive consumer perspective on sustainability. It is based on data from our GfK Consumer Life study, the most comprehensive and longest-standing consumer trend study in the world.

With the global edition running in its 11<sup>th</sup> year in 2021 and covering 18 core countries, 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; what environmental actions consumers will take; and how these considerations relate to purchase decisions. In 2021, our Green Gauge team held a roundtable with clients that included Tom Szaky, the CEO of TerraCycle, as a keynote speaker.

Tim Kenyon, Vice President Consulting for Consumer Insights at GfK:  
What could brands be doing to better address sustainability?

Tom Szaky, CEO at TerraCycle:  
What I think brands should be doing is making it commercial—really focusing on, 'How do you make sustainability a commercial topic?' with budget and P&L responsibility, so that these things can become more than a risk to be managed.

GfK (Kenyon, Tim), 2021.  
A conversation with Tom Szaky:  
Founder & CEO, TerraCycle

## Who Cares? Who Does?—Sustainability Concern and Action Report

Under the Europanel partnership, GfK and Kantar conducted the Who Cares? Who Does? Sustainability Concern and Action study in 2021 for the third year in a row.

By linking purchase data and reported insights involving more than 50,000 households in over 20 countries, the report details how consumers' attitudes ('Who cares?') and behaviors ('Who does?') are changing with regard to the environment. In addition, the report helps our clients 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 FMCG manufacturers and retailers can play in empowering green shopping behavior;
- What actions households are willing to take to protect the environment in their day-to-day lives and when shopping for their daily needs.



**“The Covid-19 pandemic has acted as a catalyst for consumers’ concern about environmental issues. Data from the Who Cares? Who Does? report demonstrates this: 52% of shoppers globally say that sustainability has become more or much more important to them because of the pandemic.”**

**Lenneke Schils**  
*Global Insight Director  
at GfK*

## LGBTQ and Gender Identity Study

2021 also saw the launch of the MRI-Simmons LGBTQ and Gender Identity Study. The Study was developed and delivered by MRI-Simmons, which is GfK US's joint venture with SymphonyAI Group.

This syndicated, national research study explores Americans' attitudes and issues around sexual orientation, sexuality and gender identity. It arms marketers with the knowledge to create new products and services that appeal to the LGBTQ community.



“This is a pivotal time for the LGBTQ and gender diverse communities in America. Our data signals that a third of Americans personally know someone who has a gender-diverse identity and a majority of adults see gender as a social construct. At the same time, transgender rights continue to be a polarizing issue in politics and in culture. Understanding consumer attitudes and opinions on these topics is critical for brands to effectively drive strategy and messaging, while avoiding missteps that could turn off potential customers.”

**Anna Welch**  
President of MRI-Simmons





## Best Brands

Each year our company, along with the Serviceplan Group and several other Partners, hosts the Best Brands College. This honors and promotes successful brand management, and provides a strong forum for new, forward-looking communications solutions.

The award-winning candidates are determined by means of a complex GfK study that measures brands 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 recognize the importance of sustainable and socially responsible business to the consumer.

## 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 students with access to unique data, insights and analytics tools, as well as feedback from business and research practitioners. All exempt from our ordinary license fees, of course.



# Maintaining Sustainable Business Relations

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



**As part of our vendor qualification process, all our key vendors are screened for compliance purposes, with a focus on sanctions compliance. This process is conducted at the start of all 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. For example, in September, Global Legal & Compliance scanned a total of 8,867 suppliers against applicable sanctions lists as a further check to ensure no risks were missed by the 'first line of defense'. We also reserve

the right to audit our Partners in accordance with individual agreements.

Key vendors also agree and commit to comply with our GfK Supplier Code of Conduct. This requires not only complying with all applicable laws and regulations, but also committing to meet our high standards for ethical business, labor and environmental practices. The Supplier Code sets out our expectations concerning anti-bribery, data privacy, protection of human rights, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment, fair working conditions and environmental protection. It additionally prohibits the use of child and forced labor. Furthermore, we require our vendors to communicate these principles further down their own supply chain.



03



## Planet

“We can no longer ask whether we can afford to be environmentally conscious. The truth is we can’t afford not to be. Working to mitigate the effects of climate change and using natural resources wisely are essential to the health of our business, our society, and our planet.”

Jochen Franz  
*Head of Strategic Projects and  
Sustainability Director at GfK*

Our Planet is at a crossroads. With each passing year we witness the progressive effects of human activity on the environment.



**The results of our Green Gauge study show a decade-long trend of rising environmental consciousness across the globe. Importantly, this has shown no sign of waning despite the crises of the Covid-19 pandemic, social unrest, and economic upheaval that have defined recent years.**

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 our activities, and encourage our People and Partners to do the same.

Whether it's with our business Partners, employees or the general public, we make it clear where we stand on the environment. Our Code of Conduct, endorsed by our Management Board, pledges our

support for the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact. This includes 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.

*We believe a company's long-term viability will be conditioned upon its ability to commit to smart sustainable practices. This chapter highlights some of the steps we are taking to that end.*





# Rethinking the Global Office

We began drafting a flexible work policy prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. But we didn't know how well our flex-work aspirations would transition to reality.

When work-from-home became a necessity, we learned remote work offered a win-win-win: improved employee well-being, reduced environmental impacts, and the ability to maintain a best-in-class level of service to clients.

We are fully aware of the environmental impacts of our employee commuting and business travel. Since our staff started returning to the office towards the end of 2021, we have accelerated the flex-work project and reduced the requirement to come into the office across the globe. This new work arrangement will allow our employees an average of two to three days per week when they can choose to work from either the office or from home. We are also planning to move to a flexible work model in all of our offices within the next three years.

According to a survey we conducted in 2020, our average employee

Flex-work project:

**2 – 3** days/week  
homeoffice

commutes up to 1.6 hours a day. This means that our flex-work project will amount to significant savings in commuting time and a proportionate reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions related to business transportation.

We have also begun rethinking our 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. This not only provides a benefit for employees, but also encourages the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transportation than private vehicles.

Added to this, we continue to explore ways to reduce our dependence on gasoline-powered vehicles. One example is that we are building a new fleet of vehicles that will promote sustainable modes of transportation amongst staff. We are doing this by exercising stringency in the issuance of company vehicles, increasing our use of electric models in our company fleet, and incorporating new solutions that have smaller carbon footprints such as scooters, bikes, and e-bikes.

These global initiatives build on our efforts within individual markets, where some of our country teams have succeeded in reducing the carbon emissions of local vehicle fleets by as much as 20%. They've achieved this through implementing procurement processes focused on selecting low-emissions vehicles.



Some of our country teams have succeeded in reducing the carbon emissions of local vehicle fleets by as much as

**20%**



Video conferencing technologies have strengthened our virtual work environment. They have enabled our company to build a 'global office' where cross-continental collaboration is just a mouse click away. Throughout 2021, colleagues have become more accustomed to this new way of working and our company is considering whether revisions to business travel policies could support in maintaining this shift to digital working.

# Calculating Our Corporate Carbon Footprint

In the spring of 2021, we formed a team to conduct the company's first-ever corporate carbon footprint (CCF) calculation.



**The project was supported by ClimatePartner, a CDP-accredited climate action solutions provider. We now calculate our CCF annually and finalized the results of our 2021 CCF in early 2022.**

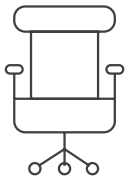
We calculate our CCF according to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard. For our baseline year, 2019, as well as for 2020, we defined our organizational boundary using the operational control approach. However, beginning in 2021, we adopted the financial control approach to align our company's CCF reporting with the organizational scope of our other ESG disclosures, such as those in this Report. For each year, our company has accounted for 100% of the GHG emissions from operations over which GfK SE has control (in accordance with the respective control approaches)<sup>13</sup>.

Emissions in Scopes 1, 2, and 3 were calculated using consumption data and emission factors. Primary data was used wherever possible, and, if primary data could not be used, secondary data from recognized sources was substituted in its place. Emission factors used in the calculations originate from internationally recognized databases such as ecoinvent and the Global Emission Model for Integrated Systems.

The CCF measurement factored in all types of GHGs covered by the Kyoto Protocol: carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF<sub>3</sub>). Each of these gases affect the atmosphere differently and remain in the atmosphere for different lengths of time. Rather than reporting on each gas separately, gases are expressed as a CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

<sup>13</sup> The operational control and financial control approaches yield the same total emissions figures for GfK in 2021.

We chose 2019 as our CCF baseline year in collaboration with stakeholders and as this demonstrates a typical year in terms of emissions. It is prior to the drastic change to 'business as usual' triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, and also prior to our development of a more comprehensive sustainability strategy. Our 2021 CCF indicates a significant reduction in emissions versus our 2019 baseline, which is mainly attributable to two factors:



### 1. the significant reduction in office locations

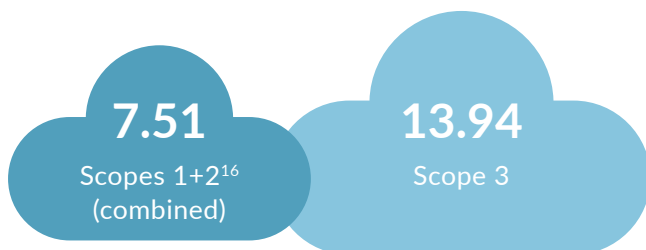
that we have achieved over the past several years; and



### 2. the impact of the pandemic

on business travel and commuting.

**GHG emissions intensity ratio 2021**  
(tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e / EUR 1 million revenue)

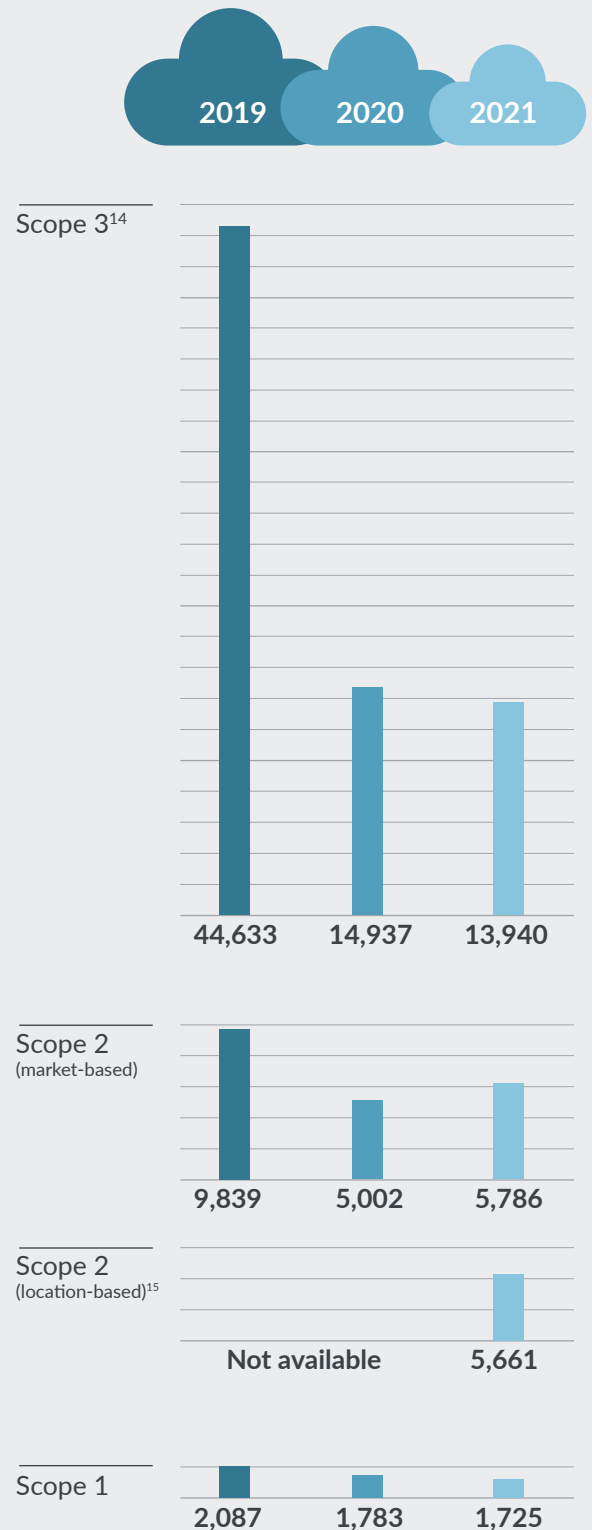


<sup>14</sup> GfK measures the following emissions categories under Scope 3: purchased goods and services, waste generated, business travel, employee commuting, and fuel- and energy-related activities. This list of categories was created based on an initial materiality analysis and may be subject to change over time.

<sup>15</sup> GfK did not undertake the calculation of location-based Scope 2 figures until 2021; therefore, only a market-based gross Scope 2 emissions figure is available for 2019 and 2020.

<sup>16</sup> We used our 2021 Scope 2 market-based figure in this calculation.

#### Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions in tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e





# Conserving Energy

Our company has implemented additional measures to conserve energy in our operations around the globe.

For example, many of our offices employ building management systems. These are computer-based control systems that monitor and automatically calibrate lighting, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning based on office capacity.

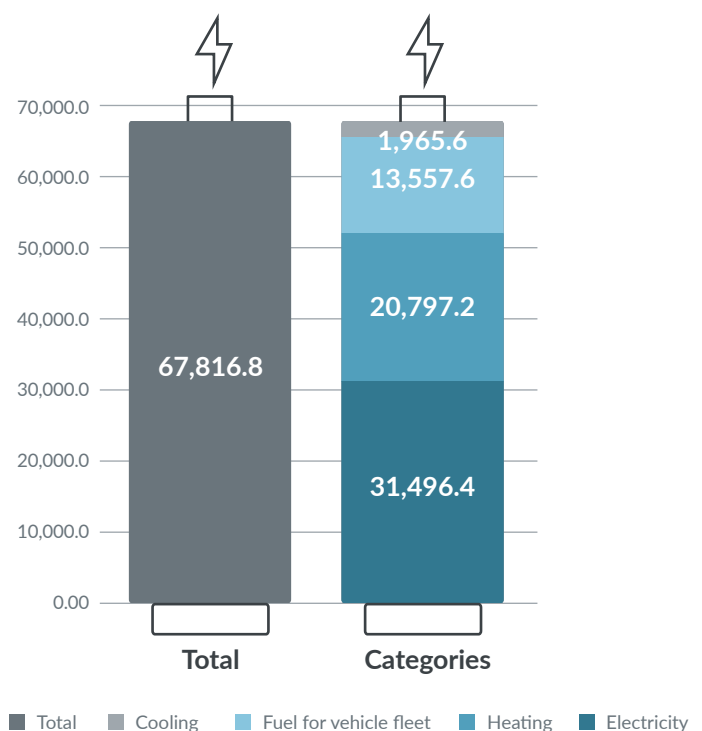
Additionally, it is our standard practice that computers, office printers and technical meeting room equipment are set to transition to sleep mode after several minutes of non-use.

Using the data collected for our 2021 CCF calculation, we determined that our total energy consumption in 2021 was 67,816.8 gigajoules (equivalent to 18,838 megawatt hours).

*Did you know our headquarters 'Orange Campus' is fully powered by renewable electricity?*

Our energy intensity ratio for 2021 was 67.81:1, where the numerator is absolute energy consumption in gigajoules, and the denominator is EUR 1 million revenue. This ratio is for energy consumption within our company and includes electricity, cooling, heating and fuel attributable to our vehicle fleet.

Total energy consumption in 2021 in gigajoules<sup>17</sup>



<sup>17</sup> In 2021 GfK did not have energy consumption attributable to steam.



## 67.81:1

Energy intensity ratio 2021  
(gigajoules / EUR 1 million revenue)

# Reducing Our Waste

We are committed to responsible consumption to minimize the waste we produce.

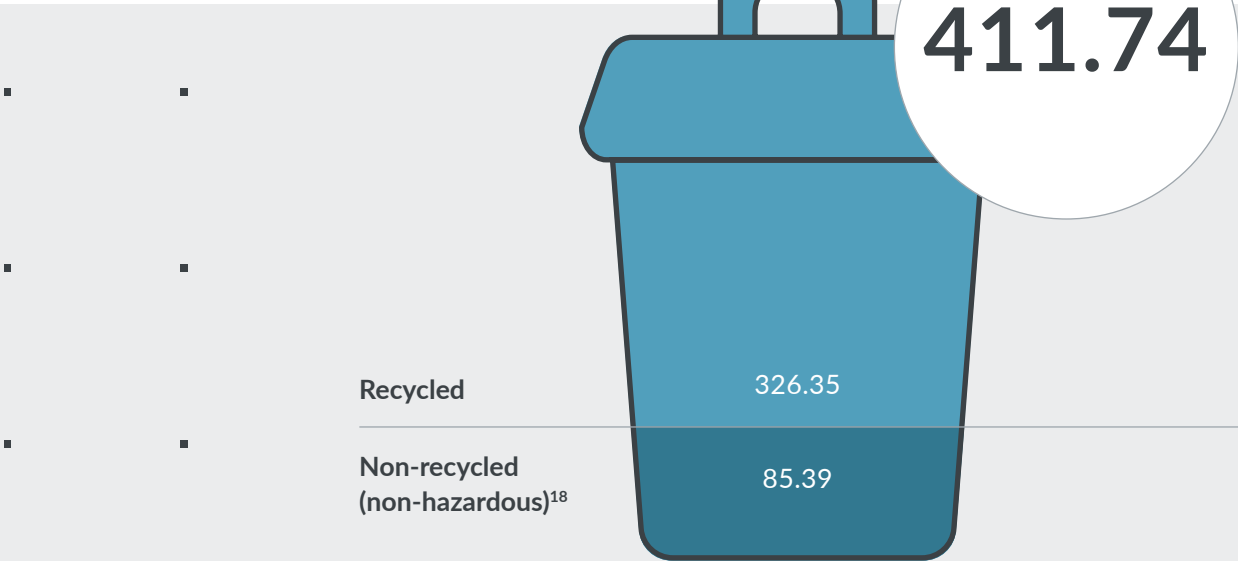
- We've limited the use of paper in our offices by defaulting many printers to double-sided printing. We offer a limited number of hard copy materials for clients. And we have substituted the printing of in-house materials for distribution via our company intranet.
- 

- We dispose of all waste responsibly, in strict adherence to any local regulations, and we recycle 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 of our markets, local offices partner with charities like Computer Aid to donate redundant PCs and laptops across the developing world.

We are also focused on recycling IT equipment. In 2021, together with our global Partner, Sims Lifecycle Services, 996 assets were refurbished for reuse and 3,877 assets were recycled for material recovery.

- Total weight of waste 2021 in tons
- 



- <sup>18</sup> GfK does not produce any hazardous waste.
-

# Encouraging Employee Initiatives

## 2021 Hackathon

Environmental sustainability has also become a key area of focus for our employees. In 2021, we incorporated a sustainability-based challenge into our second annual hackathon.

This is a coding event where techies and other interested colleagues from across our company collaborate to create innovative solutions to various tech-based challenges that are given to them. The 2021 winning team responded by developing a dashboard for our employees to visualize our company's CCF and simulate the effects of potential emission reduction actions.

## Sustainability@GfK

An employee led group called Sustainability@GfK was established in 2021 by colleagues who are passionate about the environment and eager to increase our sustainability efforts.

The group encourages the exchange of ideas and discusses the implementation of measures that drive environmentally friendly actions on local, regional, and global levels within our company.

Several initiatives took place in 2021, such as our first Sustainability Challenge, which began on World Environment Day (June 5). Participating teams earned points by incorporating sustainable lifestyle choices into their daily lives over a period of one month. The second Sustainability Challenge was kicked off in December. This Challenge had the goal of avoiding as many emissions as possible in the personal carbon footprints of participating colleagues. Concluding at the beginning of January 2022, the participants collectively avoided consuming 1,694 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e, 156 kg of waste and 23,100 L of water, which they would otherwise have consumed in their daily lives.

Sustainability@GfK's efforts also led to the launch of Sustainability 101, an interactive self-study course rolled out on our Learning@GfK e-learning management system. This course introduces the subject of environmental sustainability and offers best practice advice and guidance to promote individuals' sustainable practices.



# Goals

We are on the right track but recognize the need to continuously improve our efforts around ensuring sustainability in our interactions with our People, Partners and Planet. In line with this, our broader goals for 2022 are to:

## 1

Continue to improve our sustainable practices across all areas as reflected by improvement in EcoVadis and CDP ratings.

## 2

Launch our first-ever carbon off-setting initiative.

## 3

Increase our use of renewable energy, and standardize other energy-saving measures in offices globally.

## 4

Establish a DEI dashboard with key KPIs on global, regional and functional levels.

## 5

Further incorporate sustainable principles into our procurement practices.

## 6

Build out our product offerings to provide additional market and consumer intelligence on sustainability.





## APPENDIX 1

# Organizational Scope

## Legal Entities<sup>19</sup>

1. China Market Monitor Co., Ltd.
2. FE GfK Ukraine
3. GfK - Centar za istraživanje trzista d.o.o.
4. GfK - Conecta S.A.C.
5. GfK - Retail and Technology Colombia Limitada
6. GfK Adimark Chile S.A.
7. GfK ANZ Pty Ltd
8. GfK Arastirma Hizmetleri A.S.
9. GfK Asia Pte Ltd.
10. GfK Australia Fieldwork Pty. Ltd.
11. GfK Austria GmbH
12. GfK Belgium NV
13. GfK Belgrade d.o.o.
14. GfK Boutique Research Inc.
15. GfK CE Argentina S.A.
16. GfK Colombia S.A.
17. GfK Custom Research Beijing Co., Ltd.
18. GfK Custom Research Brasil Pesquisa de Mercado Ltda.
19. GfK Custom Research Pte. Ltd.
20. GfK Custom Research, LLC
21. GfK Czech, s r.o.
22. GfK Danmark A/S
23. GfK Ecuador Investigaciones de Mercado CIA. LTDA.
24. GfK Entertainment GmbH
25. GfK Etilize (Private) Limited
26. GfK Etilize, Inc.
27. GfK GeoMarketing GmbH
28. GfK HELLAS E.P.E.
29. GfK Hungária Piackutató Kft.
30. GfK ISL, CUSTOM RESEARCH FRANCE SAS
31. GfK Italia S.r.l.
32. GfK Malta Holding Limited
33. GfK Market Consulting (Beijing) Co. Ltd.
34. GfK Marketing Services Japan K.K.
35. GfK Mexico S.A.P.I. de C.V.
36. GfK Middle East and Africa FZ-LLC
37. GfK Middle East FZ-LLC
38. GfK Mode Pvt Ltd
39. GfK Netherlands B.V.
40. GfK Nielsen India Private Limited
41. GfK Philippines Corporation
42. GfK Polonia Sp. z o.o.
43. GfK Research Dynamics, Inc.
44. GfK Retail & Technology Egypt, L.L.C.
45. GfK Retail & Technology Israel Ltd.
46. GfK Retail and Technology (Thailand) Ltd.
47. GfK Retail and Technology Argentina S.A.
48. GfK Retail and Technology Chile Limitada
49. GfK Retail and Technology China Co. Ltd.
50. GfK Retail and Technology France SAS
51. GfK Retail and Technology Hong Kong Limited
52. GfK Retail and Technology Korea Limited
53. GfK Retail and Technology Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.
54. GfK Retail and Technology Market Research Vietnam Limited
55. GfK Retail and Technology North Africa SARL
56. GfK Retail and Technology Panama S.A.
57. GfK Retail and Technology Peru S.A.C.
58. GfK Retail and Technology Taiwan Ltd
59. GfK Retail and Technology UK Ltd.
60. GfK Romania-Institut de Cercetare de Piata Srl
61. GfK SE
62. GfK Slovakia, s.r.o.
63. GfK SLOVENIJA, tržne raziskave d.o.o.
64. GfK South Africa (Pty)
65. GfK Sverige Aktiebolag
66. GfK Switzerland AG
67. GfK Turkey Danismanlik ve Pazar Arastirma Hizmetleri A.S.
68. GfK U.K. Limited
69. GfK US MRI, LLC
70. GfK-Bulgaria, Institut für Marktforschung EGmbH
71. GfK-RUS Gesellschaft mbH
72. Netquest Brasil Pesquisa de Mercado Ltda.
73. Netquest Estudios Cono Sur Ltda.
74. Netquest Mexicana, S.A. de C.V.
75. Netquest S.A.S.
76. Netquest USA, Inc.
77. PT. GfK Retail and Technology Indonesia
78. Soluciones Netquest de Investigación, S.L.

<sup>19</sup> Legal entities have been assigned a number only for the purpose of making references in this Report.

## APPENDIX 2

# GRI Content Index

GfK SE has reported the information cited in this GRI Content Index for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 with reference to the GRI Standards (GRI 1: Foundation 2021). In some instances, only parts of the below disclosures have been made.

GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	PAGE LOCATION
<b>GRI 2:</b> General Disclosures 2021	<b>2-1</b> Organizational details	5, 6
	<b>2-2</b> Entities included in the organization's sustainability reporting	4, 49
	<b>2-3</b> Reporting period, frequency and contact point	4, 51
	<b>2-5</b> External assurance	4
	<b>2-7</b> Employees	8, 12
	<b>2-9</b> Governance structure and composition	5
	<b>2-11</b> Chair of the highest governance body	5
	<b>2-26</b> Mechanisms for seeking advice and raising concerns	28, 30
<b>GRI 201:</b> Economic Performance 2016	<b>201-1</b> Direct economic value generated and distributed	6
<b>GRI 205:</b> Anti-corruption 2016	<b>205-2</b> Communication and training about anti-corruption policies and procedures	27-28
<b>GRI 302:</b> Energy 2016	<b>302-1</b> Energy consumption within the organization	45
	<b>302-3</b> Energy intensity	45
<b>GRI 305:</b> Emissions 2016	<b>305-1</b> Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions	43-44
	<b>305-2</b> Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions	43-44
	<b>305-3</b> Other indirect (Scope 3) GHG emissions	43-44
	<b>305-4</b> GHG emissions intensity	44
<b>GRI 401:</b> Employment 2016	<b>401-1</b> New employee hires and employee turnover	19
	<b>401-3</b> Parental leave	13
<b>GRI 404:</b> Training and Education 2016	<b>404-1</b> Average hours of training per year per employee	24
	<b>404-2</b> Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programs	22-24
	<b>404-3</b> Percentage of employees receiving regular performance and career development reviews	21
<b>GRI 405:</b> Diversity and Equal Opportunity 2016	<b>405-1</b> Diversity of governance bodies and employees	5, 12

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