

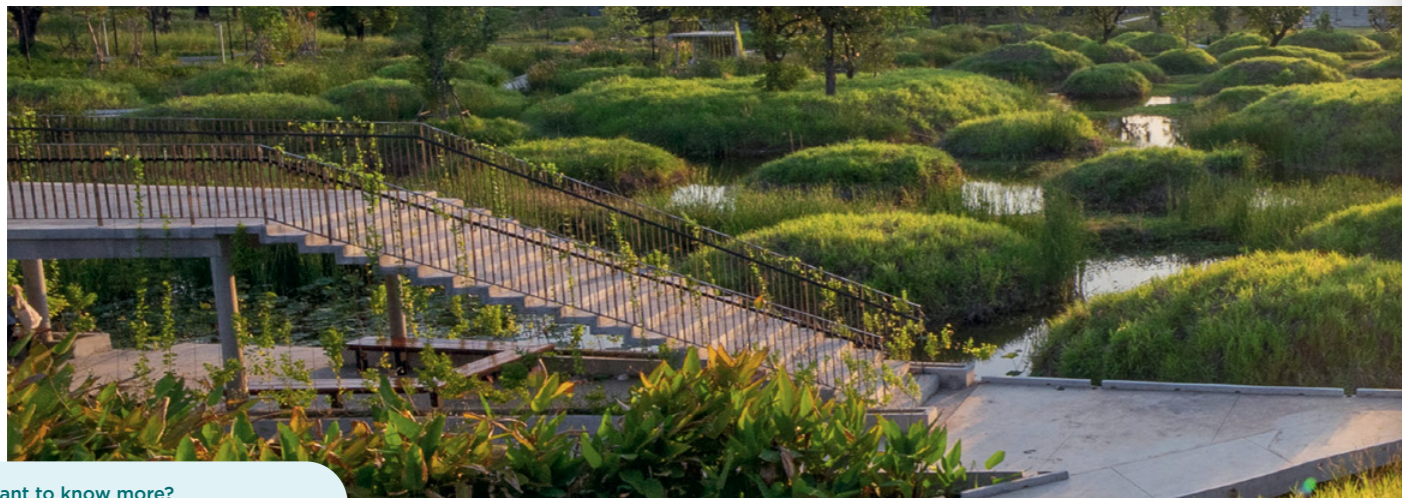
# Mission: Transformation!



# Our Ambition: A Sustainable World for Everyone



Making utopia possible. Our ambition to build a fair and sustainable global society drives us to make the seemingly impossible possible. The Wuppertal Institute's research provides the necessary knowledge foundation for this. Everyone should be able to enjoy a good and just life within the planetary boundaries. Rather than being dismissed as a utopian fantasy, this vision must become a shared reality. We see working towards this goal as both our motivation and our mission.



Want to know more?  
<https://wupperinst.org/en/the-institute>



**T**he Wuppertal Institute develops science-based solutions to environmental, social, political and economic challenges. Examples range from practical measures for urban societies and businesses to policy recommendations at regional, national and EU level, and guidance to support international climate negotiations.

## Taking a holistic approach to sustainability

**Our vision:** We want to create a future in which everyone can enjoy a good quality of life and the planet is in a healthy state. To achieve this, we must bring an end to the overexploitation of resources at the expense of future generations and limit global warming to a tolerable level. We are aware that the associated transforma-

tion processes are challenging. But at the same time, we firmly believe that a just transformation is possible as long as environmental and social issues are always considered side by side from the outset.

Our research is aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined by the United Nations. Implementing the Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for a holistic approach that incorporates social innovations. Sustainability cannot be achieved through technological solutions alone. That is why it is essential that human needs are also taken into account.

## Shaping a just future

Our aim is to eliminate existing social inequalities and prevent new ones



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from arising. In our research, we take cross-generational aspects into consideration, as well as the national and global dimensions of the necessary transformation processes. Everyone should be able to partake in the benefits of a sustainable future – regardless of their background or status. Everyone should be able to live a good life without putting the survival of others at risk. We want to make an active contribution to decoupling economic prosperity from resource consumption and ensuring that resources are distributed fairly.

When we talk about resources, we don't just mean raw materials. Knowledge, creativity and skills have an equally important role to play in a sustainable and just transformation. We work to

protect natural and intangible resources and make sure they are used efficiently. After all, we are in no doubt that a fair and sustainable future is possible – if we build it together with everyone contributing in whatever way they can.

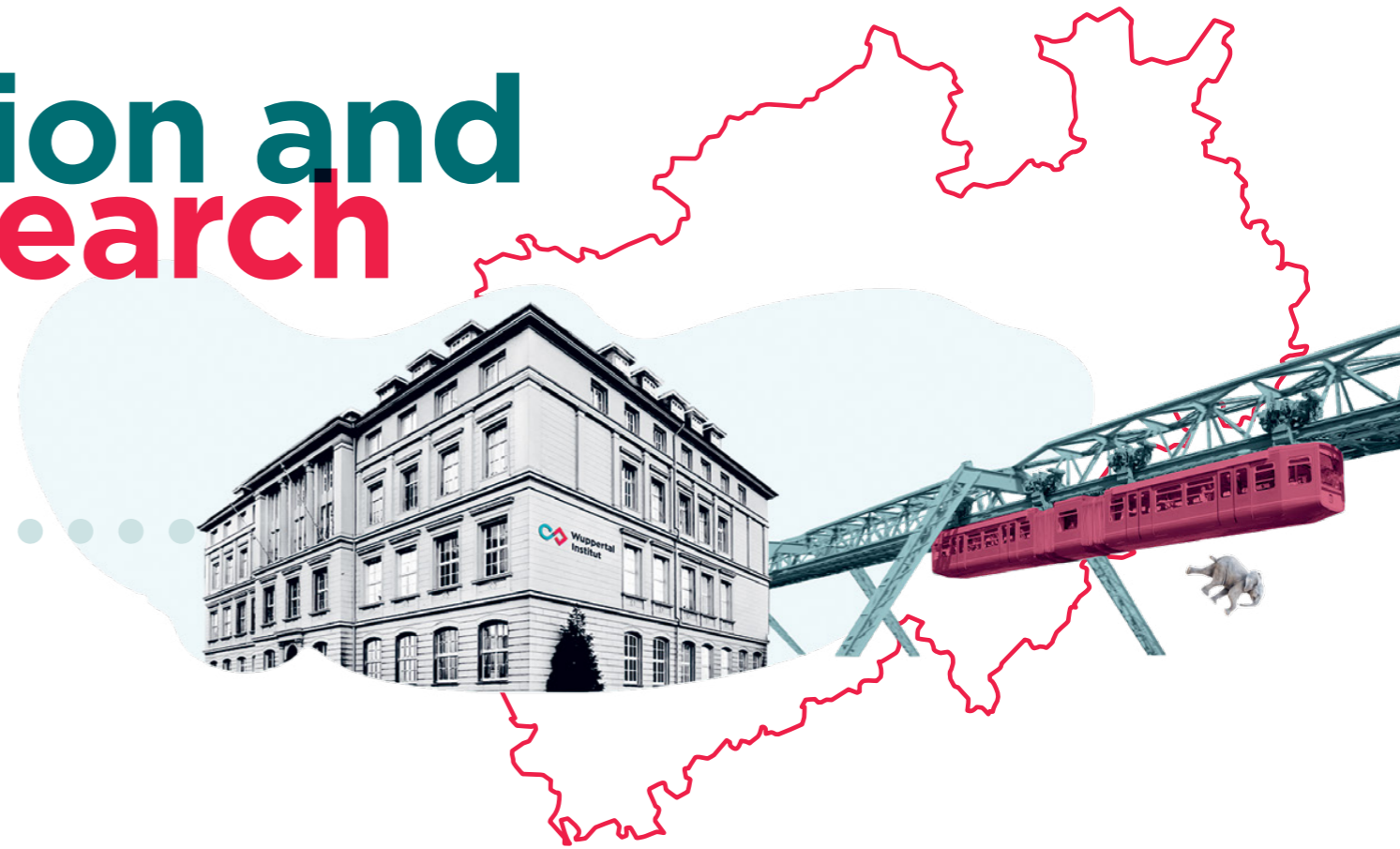


# Our Mission: Transformation and Sustainability Research

Is utopia only for dreamers? A vision of the bright future, but impossible to realise? Absolutely not. The scientists at the Wuppertal Institute are working on making utopia a reality. Across their various Research Units, they are piecing together the challenges posed by the transformation to form one big picture.



Want to know more?  
<https://wupperinst.org/en/research>



Since its foundation in 1991, the Wuppertal Institute has worked tirelessly to make its vision of a sustainable future a reality. That is why we carry out sustainability and transformation research. Today, our activities are organised into four Research Divisions:

- Future Energy and Industry Systems
- Energy, Transport and Climate Policy
- Sustainable Production and Consumption
- Circular Economy

These Research Divisions lay the foundations on which utopia can be built. Although their areas of focus differ, the research scientists use transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to work on key elements of the transition cycle, be it analysing problems, developing visions, designing strategies and experiments or disseminating successful transformation concepts.

Researchers in the Future Energy and Industry Systems Division develop integrated transformation pathways for the design of sustainable, climate-neutral energy systems and the restructuring of energy-intensive industries.

The Energy, Transport and Climate Policy Division contributes to the development of transformative policy strategies through its analysis work, paying particular attention to the interplay between actors at different political levels.

Alongside other topics, the researchers in the Sustainable Production and Consumption Division explore opportunities for creating a sustainable society that consumes fewer resources. The Division also looks at how changes and innovations at business, social and technological levels can be combined to achieve the best possible results.

The primary focus of the research carried out by the Circular Economy Division is on how the resource-intensive, linear economy can be successfully transformed into a circular economy. The aim here is to preserve the value of products and the raw materials they contain to the greatest possible extent (even after their use phase).

## Local roots, global audience

Although we are deeply rooted in North Rhine-Westphalia, our approach is global. The Institute is an important

voice in the debate on climate action, sustainability, and social justice, both in Germany and internationally.

We receive institutional funding for our research from the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). Project-related grants and commissions account for about three-quarters of our research budget. On average, the Institute runs almost 200 externally funded projects per year.

In the context of our externally funded projects, we work closely with a diverse range of clients, including state and federal ministries in Germany, the European Commission, partners from the private sector and civil society organisations.

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# Our Commitment: Research with a Real-World Focus

The Wuppertal Institute's research is concerned with real-life social problems, such as those associated with climate-friendly mobility and the restructuring of energy systems. We aim to gain a better understanding of change processes, accelerate them and actively involve the affected stakeholders in research efforts. It takes more than just theoretical ideas to implement complex changes. These potential solutions must also be tested through experiments and in hands-on pilot projects.



Making  
Utopia  
Possible



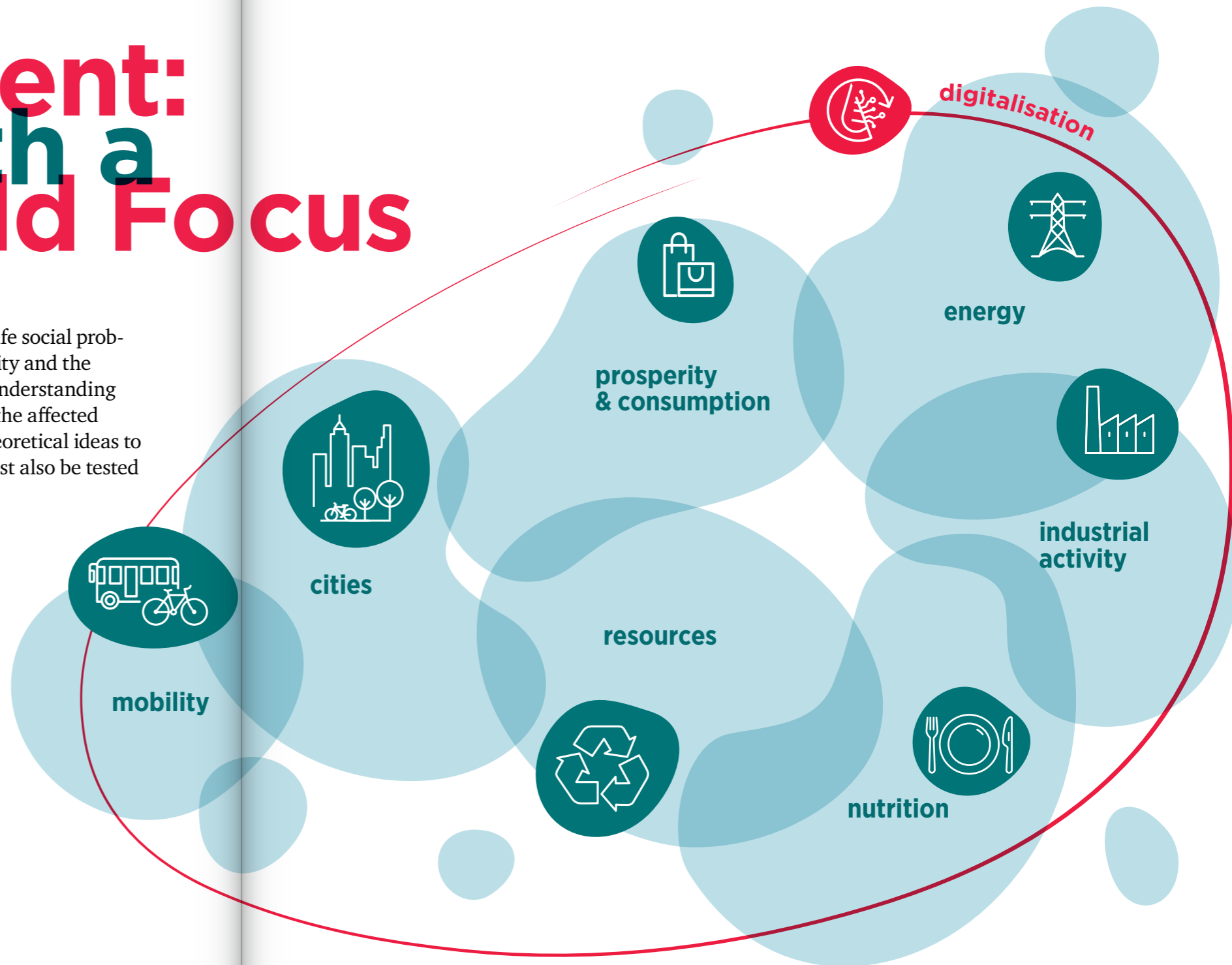
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interrelate. To gain target knowledge, we examine both the intentions associated with the transformation process and the interplay of different target levels. Where do conflicts arise between the environmental, economic and social levels? Where are there potential synergies that need to be identified and understood? Last but not least, transformation knowledge is needed: What leads actors to take practical action? How can they use their target and system knowledge to actually implement change processes – whether in the political sphere, within city councils or at companies? We refer to this three-pronged approach comprised of system knowledge, target knowledge and transformation knowl-

edge as “Zukunftswissen” (future knowledge).

The transition towards a sustainable world must take place in many transformation areas: energy, resources, nutrition, cities, mobility, industrial activity, prosperity and consumption. In all our research fields, we look at how the associated structural changes can be managed. To what extent can digitalisation support the implementation of transformation processes? And how can digitalisation itself be carried out sustainably? Adaptation to climate change is an issue that has grown in importance in recent years, and we are addressing it on an interdisciplinary basis in various Research Units.

**S**haping a sustainable future requires knowledge about how systems function, how goals can be achieved and how transformations can be initiated and managed. We generate system knowledge by finding out which actors determine the system, how they arrive at their decisions and how the social, economic and technical variables



## The details in the bigger picture

Each individual transformation area comes with its own specific challenges and questions. For example, one issue in restructuring the energy system is how to actively involve as many stakeholders as possible. Where resources are concerned, it is not simply a case of using natural raw materials efficiently, but also – and in particular – closing resource cycles. For its part, the aim of transforming the food system is to deliver sustainable and healthy nutrition. Urban transformation is all about making cities sustainable and able to offer a good quality of life. Our work on the transformation of mobility

focuses on climate-friendly transport systems and opportunities to reduce traffic volumes and shift the load onto other modes of transport. The goal of industrial transformation is to move towards climate-neutral production processes, while our focus in terms of prosperity and consumption is on how we can do business and consume resources without harming the environment.

In each case, it is important not to shift problems to other areas. For instance, progress towards a climate-neutral energy system should not come at the cost of excessive consumption of (scarce) raw materials.

The transformation areas are all closely interconnected, and they each have specific challenges and questions. They also represent all the spheres in which transformation is especially urgent and relevant. They are pieces of a big puzzle that we can only solve by working together.

# Our Approach: Transformation Research

By specialising in transformation research, we not only play a decisive role in shaping the scientific discourse on socio-environmental change; we also contribute to its real-world implementation. Instead of sitting in an ivory tower, we draw public attention to sustainability issues and develop ideas for solutions by collaborating with the affected stakeholders from the outset. This approach is what makes the Institute's work so special and unique.



**T**he challenges are immense – but so are the opportunities. The Wuppertal Institute is committed to realising the vision of a sustainable world where everyone can live and thrive. We work with passion and conviction to drive the necessary change and use research as a catalyst for transformation. We take a holistic approach that incorporates both technological innovations and social change, because it is only when we as a society are prepared to do things differently that we will overcome the major challenges of our time.

Global warming and the climate crisis, resource scarcity and social injustice all demand bold new answers. International instruments such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have set out the framework for a bright future. These guiding principles serve as a roadmap for creating a world in which over ten billion people can live in prosperity and peace within the planetary boundaries.

## Shaping the transition

Our mission is clear: we use science-based and implementation-oriented research to shape the necessary transition towards a sustainable, resource-efficient and socially just future – a sustainable world for everyone. We see ourselves as facilitators and drivers of change processes. Our role is not only to analyse problems, but also to develop tangible solutions and support their implementation.

The Wuppertal Institute aligns its research with real-life societal problems to gain a better understanding of change processes. This approach allows us to generate the knowledge needed to accelerate the transformation. We often develop viable concepts to achieve this in what are called real-world laboratories or living labs. In these experimental environments, we collaborate with partners working in the field to develop practical solutions and test their feasibility. We see ourselves as utopia-facilitators, as a scientific driving force behind the great transformation.



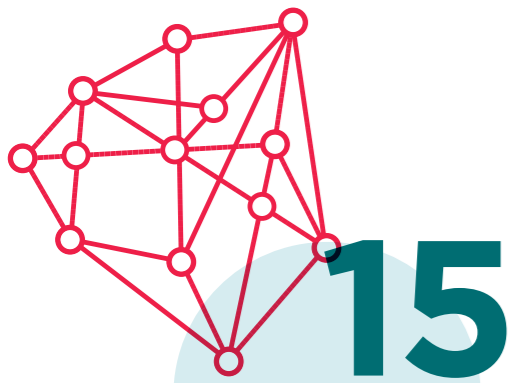
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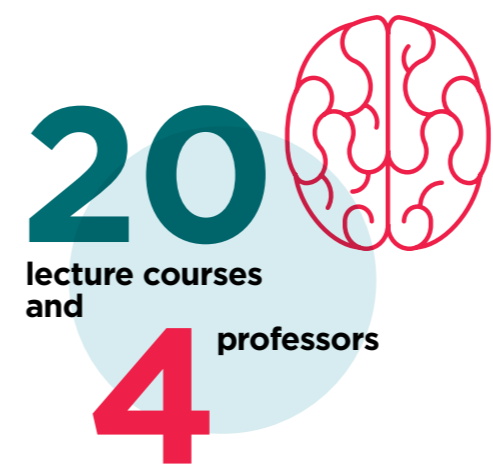
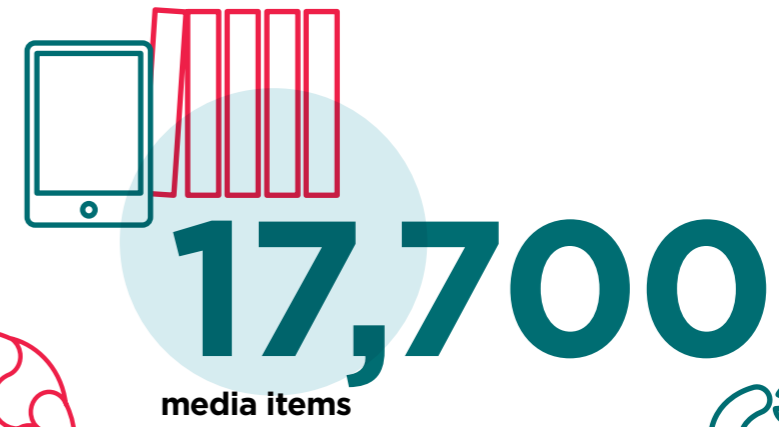
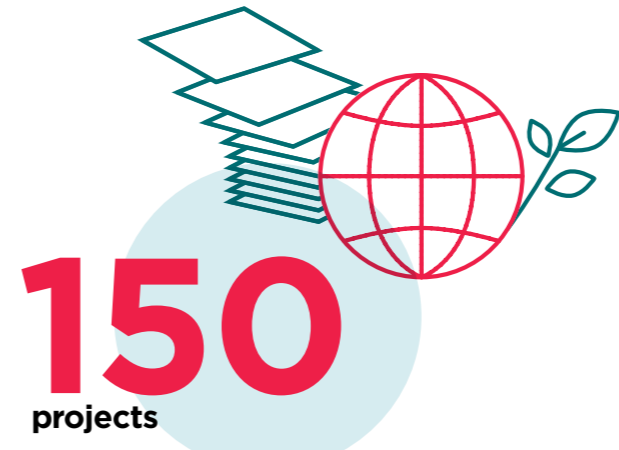
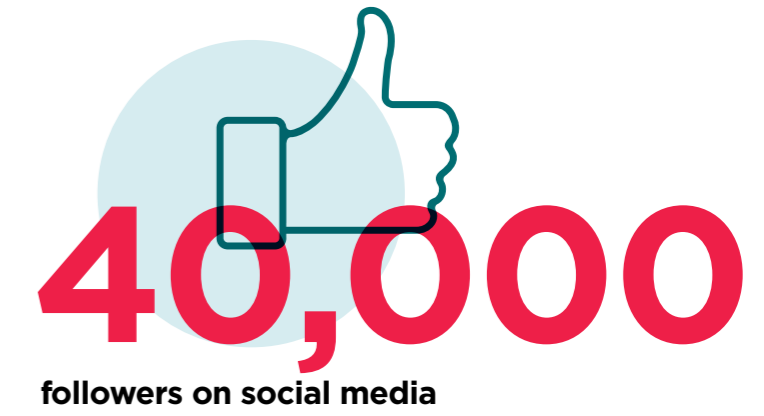
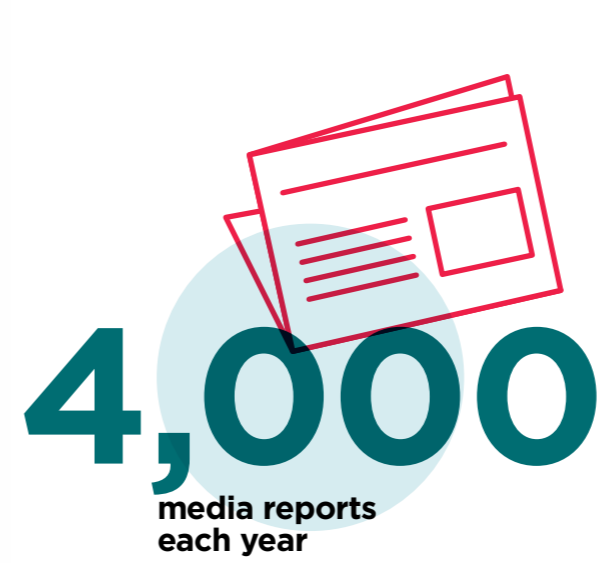
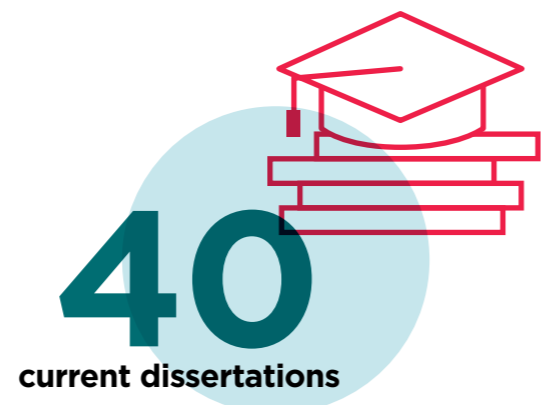
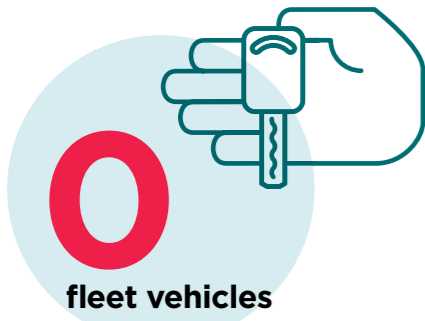
## Listen in:

Experts from the Wuppertal Institute have been exploring topical issues on the Zukunftswissen.fm podcast since 2020. They are joined by guests to discuss questions relating to transformation processes and innovations for sustainable development. Listen to the podcast – including all previous episodes – for free on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Podcast.de, as well as on the Wuppertal Institute's website.





Research Units within  
**4** Research Divisions



\* All figures rounded or given as an annual average

# Our Partners: Politics, and Society

We work closely with stakeholders from the worlds of politics, business, and civil society who want to take action in their respective areas of influence and responsibility to shape a successful transformation towards a global, sustainable and just world. The Wuppertal Institute sees itself as a partner and source of inspiration. Together, we develop solutions for a sustainable and just world that is capable of supporting future generations.



**P**ersuasive, knowledge-based concepts that have been carefully thought through and a better understanding of the interactions are prerequisites for politics, business, the scientific community, and society to be able to drive forward the necessary transformations towards sustainability. Our models often allow us to map out in advance what impact individual measures will have on the environment, how they will interact, what they will cost and what distributional and structural effects they are likely to have.

**Shaping the policy mix:** Providing scientific policy advice is one of the Wuppertal Institute's main areas of work. Since our foundation, we have advised and offered guidance to political actors from the parliamentary arena and every level

of government in Germany to European and global level. We produce analyses, develop strategies and innovative concepts to help shape the transformation and provide impetus for a goal-oriented, science-based policy mix. Our expertise makes the Institute a reliable and sought-after partner and adviser, both nationally and internationally. We always keep the balance between economic, environmental and social factors in mind. It is our firm belief that these three elements are crucial as the public will only accept and be satisfied with policies if they are coherent and their benefits are made clear.

**A sustainable economy:** If companies and organisations want to be competitive in the long term, protect their investments and safeguard their own

survival, they need to accept social responsibility and put their product portfolios on a sustainable footing. We provide them with assistance in the form of practical research projects, studies and independent expertise. We also offer support through our living labs, in which they can put their innovations to the test under real-life conditions in order to better understand their impact and avoid unintended effects and risks. Future users are heavily involved in these living labs, becoming co-developers with the ability to influence the design of new products and services.

### Achieving more together

**Joining forces to bring about change:** Many people want to counter the

# Business



growing threats posed by climate change, species extinction and dwindling resources by pursuing sustainable ideas and concepts. We support groups and stakeholders from civil society so that they can put their change-making competencies into practice.

We act as mediators, bringing all the agents of socio-environmental change from civil society, business and politics together. Helping to break down barriers and balance interests also facilitates our own transformation research. After all, given that each of the various actors has their own motivations and background, it is often the interplay between them that makes implementing change so complex. By guiding and supporting processes, we

accumulate a strong knowledge base that helps us to find genuinely viable solutions.



# Our Collaborations and Networks: A Diverse Range of (Research) Partners

The Wuppertal Institute works closely with renowned universities and research institutes outside the university system – at both national and international level. Alongside the informal exchange of ideas, knowledge and resources and cooperation on projects, these relationships also encompass formal collaborations, such as teaching positions for our scientists and the joint supervision of doctoral projects. However diverse these collaborations may be, our common goal is always clear: to change the world with sustainability in mind.



**B**ringing about sustainable change requires cooperation and intensive collaboration. Our transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to research means we have been working with numerous universities and institutes within and outside of Germany in a variety of (research) networks for many years. Together, we want to help make the world more sustainable. We have also entered into formal collaborations with some universities and research institutes and are involved in training young academics through numerous lectureships. In addition to this, we supervise doctorates and post-doctoral qualifications.

Not least among its many roles, the Wuppertal Institute is a sought-after partner to several national and international bodies,

including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The IPCC, as it is commonly known, is a United Nations institution that collates and evaluates the latest global research on the scientific, technical and socio-economic frameworks underpinning our understanding of climate change. The President and Scientific Managing Director of the Wuppertal Institute, Prof. Dr. Manfred Fischedick, is the coordinating lead author of several IPCC reports.

## Joint research

The Wuppertal Institute runs the TransZent research centre in partnership with the University of Wuppertal. The aim of this collaboration is to bring together interdisciplinary expertise in sustainability research in Wuppertal, a leading location for science.

The Wuppertal Institute is a founding member of the Johannes Rau Research Association (JRF). This non-profit initiative was established in 2014 as an umbrella organisation comprising a current total of 15 state-funded, legally independent, non-university and non-profit research institutes. Within the JRF, these institutes work closely together on key topics, contributing their particular expertise in order to achieve the best results.

A regular scientific evaluation process is organised via the JRF. In addition, the Institute's International Advisory Board provides support for strategic development and research planning. Both systems help to ensure the independence and scientific quality of the Institute's research.

All of the Wuppertal Institute's networks and memberships underline its commitment to sustainable development. We actively participate in interdisciplinary and intersectoral initiatives with the aim of bringing about positive change in the direction of a sustainable future.

Want to know more?  
<https://wupperinst.org/en/the-institute/networks>

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# A Shared Passion: Join us to Generate Zukunftswissen

With their wide range of skills, our more than 320 dedicated employees are our greatest assets. They have been fundamental to making the Wuppertal Institute the implementation-oriented transformation and sustainability institute it is today. Nevertheless, we are always on the lookout for fresh talent and new expertise.



we ensure that our application-oriented research achieves its full potential in terms of impact.

It goes without saying that our doors are open to everyone, regardless of nationality, disability, age, ethnic and social background, religion, ideology, family responsibilities, gender identity or sexual orientation. Equal opportunities officers support the Institute in ensuring that all employees experience equity and equal treatment. Our approach goes beyond eliminating structural discrimination and achieving gender equality. The Wuppertal Institute takes a broader view of the challenge: our declared objective is to put all employees on an equal footing and treat all genders equally.

Join our team – whether as a scientist or a doctoral student, in an administrative, IT or communications role, as an undergraduate or graduate research assistant or to work on a thesis.

**W**e need people who want to make the world more sustainable and drive forward action on climate change, people who look at the bigger picture and want to shape “Zukunftswissen” (future knowledge) as part of our team!

We are committed to developing talent and actively look after all our employees – not only to push our research to the highest level but also to bring out the best in ourselves. Intensive onboarding, regular dialogue with managers and close cooperation within our teams are standard practice at the Wuppertal Institute. We support the careers of the next generation and offer a wide range of professional development opportunities, such as one-to-one training, workshops, participation in specialist congresses, team-building activities and coaching.

We actively promote a respectful and open organisational culture and believe in the strength of diverse teams. We help, encourage and motivate everyone to turn ideas into reality and achieve ambitious goals. In addition, our doctoral programme provides supervision and support for dissertation projects – all the way from topic development to publication.

## Teamwork at every level

Our research is underpinned by team spirit, creativity, energy, ingenuity and tenacity, as well as the drive to discover new things. Equally vital to our success is the close collaboration between our scientists and their many expert colleagues in our Finance and Controlling, Research Funding Management, Human Resources Management and Development, Communications, IT and Library teams – only by working together can

Want to know more?  
<https://wupperinst.org/en/the-institute/careers>



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# Behind the Scenes: Practising What We Preach

At the Wuppertal Institute, sustainability isn't just our main line of business; it also guides our actions – both internally and externally. Moreover, our focus extends beyond environmental and economic sustainability to include social sustainability as well.



**W**e don't simply talk about sustainability; we actively practise it. Anyone who, like us, advises policymakers, the business community and the general public on issues relating to sustainable development should lead by example within their own organisation. It's also a question of credibility. Many of our employees work at the Wuppertal Institute for precisely this reason.

Climate change mitigation and resource efficiency have been key issues directing the Institute's development from the day it was founded. We have also further expanded our Sustainability

Management in recent years. Our sustainability officers and the Sustainability Working Group are constantly driving the topic forward.

### Socially sustainable

Social sustainability is also part of our organisational culture. We combine this with a willingness to try things out and learn collectively – and we actively encourage all employees to submit ideas. For example, since 2022, we have been turning part of our car park into a recreational area for our employees. Ten of the 25 staff parking bays in total are taken out of action

from spring to autumn. During this period, an attractive communal space is created here with minimal use of resources. Instead of buying ready-made outdoor furniture, the Institute sourced pallets from a local supplier. Employees worked together to build seating, tables and various containers, which they filled with insect-friendly plants. The addition of sunshades and a table tennis table has ensured that employees can spend time outside, working or relaxing in comfort. Up until now, the area has been restored to its original purpose in the winter months, but the Institute is now considering permanently depaving this

part of the car park and converting it into a green recreational space.

The health and social welfare of our employees are important to us as well. The Institute offers a company pension scheme and sponsors numerous sports groups organised by its staff, including football, yoga and beach volleyball. It also supports a professionally directed choir and its weekly rehearsals. The Wuppertal Institute's strong team spirit can be seen regularly at communal activities and celebrations.



Want to know more?  
<https://wupperinst.org/en/the-institute/sustainability-management>



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*Transformation pioneers: In 2024, we were presented with the German Sustainability Award in the "Research and Development" category for our dedication and exemplary contributions to the transformation.*

## Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie gGmbH

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### Date:

Dezember 2024

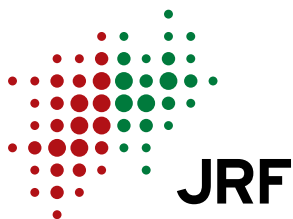
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MEMBER Johannes-Rau-  
OF Forschungsgemeinschaft

The institutes of the Johannes Rau Research Foundation are  
institutionally funded by the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia.



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