

Questions and Answers on the German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R)

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In the context of the animal welfare initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), the German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R) was founded in 2015 at the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR).

The centre's tasks include nationwide coordination of all activities with the aim of reducing animal experiments to an absolute minimum and guaranteeing the best possible protection of laboratory animals. In addition, the centre's work is intended to encourage national and international research activity and promote scientific dialogue.

The BfR has compiled selected questions and answers on the centre in the following paragraphs. You can find more information about the Bf3R on the BfR website at http://www.bfr.bund.de/de/deutsches_zentrum_zum_schutz_von_versuchstieren.html

What does "Bf3R" mean?

Bf3R is the short form for the "German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals". The abbreviation Bf3R is a reference to the "3R principle" of scientific animal protection according to which the centre works:

- *Replace*: Replacement of animal experiments by methods or testing strategies not entailing the use of living animals
- *Reduce*: Reduction of the number of laboratory animals used to a minimum
- *Refine*: Reduction of the laboratory animals' suffering

Which tasks does the centre carry out?

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

- Intensifying research on alternative methods
- Providing advice to authorities and research institutes
- Standardising alternative methods at an international level
- Supporting research on alternative methods
- Informing the public and specialists

What is the structure of the Bf3R?

The centre is an integral part of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment with three locations in Berlin. The centre is thus under the leadership of the BfR and its executive committee. The centre's tasks are carried out in a cross-disciplinary manner, mainly by the department "Experimental Toxicology and ZEBET".

The Bf3R is organised into the following five areas of competence:

1. Centre for Documentation and Evaluation of Alternative Methods to Animal Experiments (ZEBET)
2. Reduction of distress and improvement of living conditions of laboratory animals
3. Alternative methods in toxicology
4. National Committee
5. Coordination of research support for alternative methods

The Bf3R infographic provides an overview of the tasks and aims of the individual areas of competence: <http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/deutsches-zentrum-zum-schutz-von-versuchstieren-infografik.pdf>

Which role does ZEBET play in the Bf3R?

The Centre for Documentation and Evaluation of Alternatives to Animal Experiments (ZEBET) represents one of five areas of competence of the Bf3R. It was founded in 1989 with the aim of limiting the use of laboratory animals to the indispensable extent, and developing alternatives to animal experiments. ZEBET researches, develops and validates alternative methods in its own laboratory according to the 3R principle.

What financial resources are available to the Bf3R?

When the Bf3R was launched in 2015, the centre received 6 million euros from the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) for initial technical equipment. In addition to this, the Bf3R has financial resources to the value of approximately 1.5 million euros per year at its disposal.