

OUR PATH TO A **SUSTAINABLE** MDC

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Change History

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1. Sustainable development - the MDC's concept

The MDC is part of the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centers (HGF). With their research activities, the centers of the HGF aim to secure the basis of human life in the long term, to continuously improve living conditions and to preserve an intact environment for future generations.

Through its mission, the HGF is committed to the aims of the 2030 Agenda adopted by the United Nations in 2016, which defines 17 goals (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) for socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development (Fig. 1)^{1 2}. In breaking down the complex topic of sustainability, the HGF is guided by the handbook "Sustainability Management for Non-University Research Organizations" (LeNa)³. Through its commitment to sustainable development, the HGF calls on all centers to develop, actively implement and report on appropriate measures and goals.

At the MDC, we seek to understand the molecular basis of health and disease and translate our findings into clinical applications as quickly as possible. Through our research program "System-wide and Cardiovascular Diseases," we aim to better understand complex systemic disorders and develop new diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic approaches. In this way, we are making a very concrete contribution to the 2030 Agenda: *SDG 3 - Ensure healthy lives for all people at all ages and promote their well-being.*



Fig. 1: Agenda 2030 - 17 Sustainable Development Goals (1)

In addition, we particularly support the following goals in our day-to-day work:

- SDG 4 - Enable inclusive, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning
- SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- SDG 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- SDG 9 - Build resilient infrastructures, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and support innovation
- SDG 12 - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- SDG 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- SDG 17 - Strengthen the implementation of and breathe new life into the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

¹ <https://www.helmholtz.de/ueber-uns/die-gemeinschaft/nachhaltigkeit/>

² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/09/509732-un-adopts-new-global-goals-charting-sustainable-development-people-and-planet>

³ <https://www.nachhaltig-forschen.de/startseite/>

We view sustainable development not only as a social obligation, but also as an opportunity to ensure the long-term success and attractiveness of MDC.

2. Where we want to go – the MDC's strategy

The MDC strives to achieve excellent results in research while fulfilling its responsibility towards the environment and society as well as its employees. The basis for successful work is a common understanding of leadership, which was defined in the Leadership Guideline 2021⁴. All employees are required to consider research activities, structures and processes in the context of the MDC, but also in relation to their impact on society and the environment. Sustainable action offers the opportunity to advance the organizational and technological development of the MDC and thus create a basis for scientific success.

In accordance with the HGF's commitment (see Chapter 1), **we are guided by the LeNa handbook and aim to develop the MDC sustainably in the following areas of action:**

- **Organizational development**
- **Research**
- **Personnel**
- **Building and infrastructures**
- **Support processes**

At the same time, we aim to make a meaningful contribution to climate protection. Following the recommendations of the German Advisory Council on the Environment,⁵ we intend to make

- **work at the MDC greenhouse gas neutral by 2038.**

In Chapter 4, we present concrete goals and measures in the individual areas of action.

We aim to harmonize excellent research, sustainable development and greenhouse gas-neutral work in order to establish the MDC as a successful, attractive and responsible research center over the long term.

3. How we develop the MDC sustainably

The sustainable development of the MDC in the sense of the HGF's commitment (see Chapter 1) can only be successful if it is understood as a joint task (Fig. 2). Every employee is called upon to actively participate in contributing to positive change.

The **Board of Directors** is responsible for creating the best possible conditions for excellent research and in combination with developing the MDC in a sustainable way. It will ensure that the goals

⁴ Approval by the Board of Directors; publication in November 2021

⁵https://www.umweltrat.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/01_Umweltgutachten/2016_2020/2020_Umweltgutachten_Entschlossene_Umweltpolitik.html

described in Chapter 4 are integrated into a new, comprehensive strategy and anchored within the tasks, duties and responsibilities transferred to the leaders.

Leaders take on the tasks, duties and responsibilities delegated by the Board and ensure that staff act sustainably, for example by ensuring that resources are used sparingly. To support their task, they appoint sustainability ambassadors who promote sustainable behavior in everyday work (e.g. separating and avoiding waste, saving energy, using recyclable products) and try to sensitize their colleagues accordingly.

All employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the goals and measures described here (chapter 4) and to act in a sustainable and responsible manner. New employees will receive an information sheet at the beginning of their contract which conveys the essential goals and expectations of this concept.



Fig2: How we develop the MDC sustainably

3.1 Sustainability Coordinator

To strengthen sustainable development, the MDC 2020 has established a staff position entitled "Coordinator for Sustainability". The main areas of responsibility are idea management, coordination and communication and reporting in the context of sustainability. The Coordinator maintains a close cooperative exchange with those responsible for each field of action. Externally, he/she represents the MDC in the HGF working group Forum Sustainability and other sustainability networks. A budget, which is determined annually with the Board of Directors, is provided for the fulfillment of the tasks.

Ideas management

The Sustainability Coordinator collects and reviews new ideas and clarifies whether they can be implemented in collaboration with specialists from individual departments. Another task is to regularly inform employees about new developments.

Communication and reporting

The Sustainability Coordinator is a member of various committees (Admin. Boards, Scientific Council, Project Planning Conference) and aims to ensure that the sustainable development goals described here are incorporated into decision-making processes. Another task is to establish the formats of events and organize campaigns with colleagues to sensitize the staff.

In order to make the sustainable development of the MDC visible, the Sustainability Coordinator will regularly prepare a sustainability report in accordance with the criteria of the German Sustainability Code (DNK)⁶. The departments will provide the necessary input. If the HGF establishes its own reporting standards, this will be applied in the future.

HGF Sustainability Forum Working Group / Network Activities

The Sustainability Coordinator represents the MDC in the HGF Sustainability Forum working group. This working group promotes exchange between the centers and contributes to the sustainable development of the Helmholtz community by organizing events, including the Helmholtz Sustainability Summits in Berlin (2019) and Hamburg (2021), by publishing the brochure "Helmholtz Sustainably Active", and providing input to the management of the HGF, in the development of the commitment to sustainability and other areas.

In addition, the Sustainability Coordinator will maintain networking activities at the local and regional levels (e.g. Network Environment) to integrate best practice examples and to achieve synergy effects wherever possible.

3.2 Project development and Project Portfolio Management

Administrative departments and scientific working groups are invited to develop proposals for projects that improve work processes and framework conditions at the MDC and contribute to sustainable development. Both complete proposals and preliminary outlines will be presented in the Project Planning Conference, which is composed of representatives from science and administration. The project planning conference evaluates applications with regard to their strategic and legal relevance and makes a recommendation to the board of directors. It also clarifies which resources are necessary to achieve the projects. The Board of Directors then makes a final decision based on these criteria. The operational Project Portfolio Management (PPM), which is organizationally a part of the administrative Executive Board, coordinates the process, defines binding standards for project management and supports and monitors the development of ongoing projects. If required, tailored practical training will be provided for project managers. In addition, the operational PPM provides information to employees to promote transparency and the marketing of ongoing projects.

⁶ <https://www.deutscher-nachhaltigkeitskodex.de/en-gb/>

3.3 Sustainability Committee

The MDC is establishing a Sustainability Committee in which representatives from science and administration develop measures for the conservation of resources and, where possible, CO₂-free work. The committee will propose recommendations for action to the Board of Directors. To optimize decision-making, the Sustainability Commission will be integrated into the new governance structure to be established at the MDC.

The goals and measures proposed in the following Chapter will serve as the basis for the commission's work. The focus is on the responsible use of existing resources, the effective use of space, intelligent energy-saving measures, sustainable concepts for purchasing, logistics and mobility, and forward-looking office and laboratory management. The commission consists of scientists, technical assistants and representatives from the departments of Purchasing & Logistics, IT, Communication, TFM-Operation and TFM-Construction and is headed by the Sustainability Coordinator.

4. Fields of action, goals and measures

As a part of becoming a sustainable research center, in recent years the MDC has initiated concrete measures in all LeNa fields of action and in the area of climate protection. To further advance the process of sustainable development, numerous goals and measures were proposed in 2020/21 in a dialog between the Board of Directors, the Sustainability Coordinator, and representatives from science and administration (4.1 - 4.6.).

In parallel, the project "Development and Establishment of an MDC Leadership Culture" was initiated in 2020 to establish a common understanding of leadership. As results, guidelines, a catalog of standard tools for leaders, and perspectives for the future attractiveness of the MDC were developed⁷. Since these topics overlap with the LeNa fields of action, some of the results were integrated into the present concept.

The following chapters summarize the established activities as well as the newly formulated goals and measures. Further sharpening of our goals as well as the concrete planning and development of associated measures (in the appendix) will take place in the Sustainability Commission (see 3.3) and in specific projects of the specialist departments.

4.1. Organizational development

Long-term scientific success requires a value-oriented and effective organizational and leadership culture that clearly defines roles and processes, creates opportunities for creativity, and encourages employees to be innovative.

⁷ Publication of the project results is targeted for the fourth quarter of 2021.

Establishing a common understanding of leadership

The MDC published leadership guidelines in 2021 and defined a common understanding of leadership on the basis of six principles:

- Excellence requires leadership
- Leadership is performance
- Courage to innovate
- Promoting diversity and thinking diversely
- Trust through honesty and appreciation
- Assume responsibility and act responsibly

Like a compass, the leadership guidelines offer employees orientation in their daily interactions with each other and thus establishes a basis for successful cooperation. To support leaders in their tasks, standard leadership tools have been defined that are used and tracked at MDC. The Board of Directors communicates its expectations, ensures that they are implemented accordingly, and ensures that there are regular training opportunities for leadership skills.

Design organizational structures and decision-making processes in a participatory manner and communicate them in a transparent manner

Cooperation, openness, trust and recognition of the diversity of achievements in science and administration are core values for the MDC. The Board of Directors ensures that mutual understanding is strengthened by promoting exchange between science and administration and by establishing participatory governance that involves all leaders. It ensures that tasks, competencies and responsibilities, starting with the Board of Directors and extending to committees, functionaries, leaders and their employees are presented in a comprehensible manner in a function diagram.

To make the best possible use of the diverse strengths of the employees, representatives from the various MDC areas are involved in operational change and development processes (e.g., the development of new service agreements, and the planning of new construction and renovation projects). Employee surveys are used to identify needs for change. In the new MDC governance, formats are being developed for a regular exchange with representatives from science and administration, in which new perspectives are discussed and recommendations are made to the board.

The MDC attaches great importance to transparent communication and the creation of trust through an open feedback culture. Internally, the Board of Directors, the scientific divisions and the administrative departments regularly inform each other about new developments, goals and plans, e.g. in town hall meetings. Externally, the Board of Directors fulfills its accountability to the funding agencies and the Supervisory Board as well as the Scientific Advisory Board, pays attention to potential organizational risks and regularly prepares a risk report. Management Board reports are visibly supplemented with aspects of sustainability.

Communicate rules and guidelines and ensure compliance

To ensure respectful and fair treatment in everyday work, all MDC employees are required to comply with legal regulations and organization-specific standards of conduct (compliance). As an organization, we respect the basic principles of good and responsible corporate governance⁸. The Management Board ensures that all employees are well informed about applicable rules through the transparent communication of valid service agreements, guidelines and legal regulations. All employees are required to familiarize themselves with the applicable regulations and to act accordingly. Compliance with the rules is supported by positive reinforcement measures (nudging, incentivization). Any non-compliance with the rules is sanctioned by internally defined or legally prescribed measures.

4.2. Research

The MDC is committed to socially responsible research and strives to create a work environment that provides opportunities for innovation while allowing its employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Adhering to good scientific practice

Mutual trust is the prerequisite for successful scientific work. The MDC ensures compliance with the rules of good scientific practice by publishing documents on ethical standards on the homepage⁹ and by regularly carrying out qualification events for staff members. Everyone has the opportunity to report observed scientific misconduct to an ombudsperson in confidence. Sanctions regarding proven misconduct are carried out by the Board of Directors¹⁰.

Sustainable use of research data - Open Science

At the MDC, research data is documented transparently to secure and further develop scientific findings and to make processes traceable. Scientists are encouraged to document experimental work using electronic laboratory notebooks and to handle data according to discipline-specific standards, from collection to publication and subsequent provision^{11, 12}. We support the "Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Scientific Knowledge"¹³ and are committed to making the data generated at the MDC available to interested researchers, taking into account the interests of our employees and compliance with legal and ethical framework conditions. We support the international exchange of research materials by making plasmids, cell lines, etc. accessible via suitable platforms. In addition, the MDC encourages the publication of research software as open source and supports corresponding

⁸ https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/EN/Standardartikel/Press_Room/Publications/Brochures/principles-good-corporate-governance.html

⁹ <https://www.mdc-berlin.de/good-scientific-practice>

¹⁰ <https://www.mdc-berlin.de/media/16006>

¹¹ <https://doi.org/10.2312/os.helmholtz.002>

¹² <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

¹³ <https://os.helmholtz.de/en/open-science-in-the-helmholtz-association/eng-open-access/berlin-declaration-on-open-access-to-knowledge-in-the-sciences-and-humanities/>

recommendations of the HGF Open Science Working Group¹⁴. The newly established Research Data Management team develops guidelines for the structured storage of research data and helps scientists manage their data efficiently. To increase the quality, reproducibility, and utility of its research, the MDC provides a research data infrastructure that meets the latest technical and environmental standards.

Responsible research

Research tasks often require a holistic view. In addition to interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches, ethical issues, an assessment of potential impact and questions of applicability must be taken into account. To prepare young scientists for the complexity of research processes, we teach competencies for responsible action. One example is our participation in the social dialogue concerning animal experimentation. The MDC has signed the "Basel Declaration on Animal Experimental Research,"¹⁵ addresses ethical issues and communicates transparently about research activities. Our scientists and animal caretakers ensure the consistent implementation of the 3R principle¹⁶. To provide the most resource-efficient and fair use of the animal house, its capacities are regularly evaluated by the animal house commission.

Communicating and discussing scientific findings in an understandable way

The MDC communicates its research activities to target groups outside the scientific community and strives to position itself in societal debates in a fact-based and comprehensible manner. Our activities include dialogues with representatives from the domains of business and politics, the use of social media, participation in the "Long Night of Science" and the "Berlin Science Week," programs for teachers, and our support for the student laboratory "Gläsernes Labor" on the Campus Buch.

4.3. Human resources

The MDC fulfills its legal duty of care towards its employees, promotes their professional development and formulates goals for sustainable human resources strategies, management and development as well as for corporate culture. The relevant areas were merged in 2021 to form the department "People and Culture," creating an agile organizational unit that develops innovative and sustainable concepts.

Protecting and promoting employee safety and health

With regard to the safety and health of employees, specific departments at the MDC ensure our compliance with statutory regulations and provide advice on health, occupational and fire safety and accident prevention. Through the delegation of duties and appropriate training measures, the Board of Directors ensures that leaders are aware of and act responsibly with regards to the legal regulations

¹⁴ <https://os.helmholtz.de/de/open-science-in-der-helmholtz-gemeinschaft/stakeholder-und-ihre-rollen/task-groups/task-group-forschungssoftware/empfehlungen-zur-implementierung-von-leit-und-richtlinien-zum-umgang-mit-forschungssoftware-an-den-helmholtz-zentren/>

¹⁵ <https://de.basel-declaration.org/basel-declaration/>

¹⁶ <https://www.mdc-berlin.de/research-animal-experiments-3r/3r-principles>

on occupational health and safety. The MDC attempts to adapt working conditions to the needs of employees and strives to ensure a high level of performance and satisfaction. The center offers occupational integration and health management¹⁷ as well as psychosocial counseling¹⁸.

Ensuring equal opportunities, valuing diversity and promoting inclusion

The MDC values the diversity of its employees as an important resource for innovative research and sustainable organizational development. We respect aspects of diversity as defined in the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG)¹⁹ and cultivate a corporate culture characterized by respect, fairness, appreciation and openness. Our claim is manifested by numerous measures, including bilingual communication, the Welcome & Family Office,²⁰ the "berufundfamilie" Audit²¹, and published Guidelines against discrimination, mobbing and harassment at MDC²². To ensure gender equality, we are committed to the fair participation in committees and in leadership positions and formulate reliable targets and indicators in the equality plan²³. Both the proportion of women (approx. 60% in science and administration, as of 2021) and the proportion of foreign female scientists (56.2%, as of 2021) show that diversity is well established at the MDC. Nevertheless, there is a need for development in some areas. We aim to further promote diversity in the administrative departments and increase the proportion of women in scientific leadership positions. To make our commitment to diversity visible, the MDC will sign the Diversity Charter²⁴.

The MDC strives to design framework conditions and modify existing structures accordingly so that each person in his/her individual diversity feel integrated from the very beginning. In particular, we want to promote the integration of people with disabilities and proactively consider their needs regarding participation in work processes.

Developing potential and promoting lifelong learning

Motivated, qualified and satisfied employees are the basis for productivity and excellence. In order to meet this demand and to remain internationally competitive, the MDC relies on long-term personnel planning and development, to establish appropriate measures for the entire career of employees (recruitment, on-boarding, qualification and development, off-boarding, alumni management). The personnel development guidelines, as drawn up through an interdisciplinary project, serve as the basis for the structured planning of personnel development²⁵. The quality of the personnel development measures that have been implemented is regularly evaluated.

¹⁷ http://www.campusvital.de/en/bgm_modellprojekt

¹⁸ <https://www.mdc-berlin.de/news/news/sometimes-it-helps-analyze-things-together>

¹⁹ <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/agg/BJNR189710006.html>

²⁰ <https://www.mdc-berlin.de/welcome-center>

²¹ <https://www.mdc-berlin.de/content/work-and-family>

²² <https://www.mdc-berlin.de/media/34875>

²³ <https://www.mdc-berlin.de/media/33741>

²⁴ <https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/>

²⁵ [https://www.mdc-](https://www.mdc-berlin.info/36093844/de/organisation/staff_development/personnel_development/Leitlinien_der_Personalentwicklung)

berlin.info/36093844/de/organisation/staff_development/personnel_development/Leitlinien_der_Personalentwicklung

We ensure that new employees feel welcome and provide them with the necessary orientation for processes at the MDC, with the help of training programs and other measures. We want to deploy employees in a strength-oriented manner, promote their potential and retain successful employees for as long as possible.

Leaders are encouraged to continue to pursue regular training in their leadership skills and are supported by standardized leadership tools (see also 4.1). Junior group leaders, junior team leaders and postdocs are supported in planning their next career steps through a career development plan with qualified mentoring programs and specific training (in areas such as technology transfer). PhD students are offered a clearly structured PhD program with documented project planning and regular evaluations by a committee. The scope of the PhD thesis is chosen so that it can be completed in four years. The training of specialists in research and administration is based on the MDC's own needs. The MDC strives to provide trainees with a permanent career option after successful completion of their programs. All employees are encouraged to develop professionally. Leaders support their commitment by addressing career perspectives in annual reviews and facilitating appropriate qualification measures.

Simplifying administrative processes and making them transparent

The MDC strives to organize administrative processes in a transparent and service-oriented manner. We use the possibilities of digitalization to establish smart working tools such as an E-Learning platform, electronic travel expense accounting and a cross-departmental document management system. In order to make mutual wishes and requirements understandable, the Board of Directors ensures a regular and constructive exchange between administration and science (e.g. through "Lunch and Learn" events).

4.4. Construction and infrastructure

When constructing, renovating and operating its buildings, MDC aims to harmonize functionality, user satisfaction, efficiency in energy and resources, cost-effectiveness and the quality of designs.

Designing and operating research buildings in a resource-efficient and sustainable manner

The MDC determines its needs for research space on the basis of a long-term scientific strategy. In order to minimize soil sealing and construction-related emissions (gray emissions), we will use existing space as effectively as possible and avoid new construction wherever possible. Building development planning is carried out in a participatory dialogue process that involves not only the relevant departments and the Board of Directors, but also the employees concerned and the Sustainability Coordinator. If new buildings are necessary, we are guided by the "Sustainable Building for Federal Buildings" (BNB) rating system and aim for a gold certificate²⁶. In line with the new building energy

²⁶ <https://www.bnb-nachhaltigesbauen.de/>

law²⁷, in future construction projects and renovations, the MDC will invest in measures that reduce the energy consumption of buildings or permit independent CO₂-free energy production (e.g. photovoltaics, ice storage and solar air absorbers, cold heat networks or hydrogen technology). In addition, we plan to take advantage of building greening in the future²⁸. The MDC already produces about one-third of its own energy needs with the help of a high-efficiency cogeneration plant and the installation of solar panels. Certified green electricity is used for the remaining electricity requirements. Further heat supply is provided by a climate-friendly gas and steam turbine plant of the local energy supplier. The MDC is committed to achieving a climate-neutral building stock by 2038 through the increased use of renewable energy and the application of innovative technologies, and will seek to take advantage of available funding opportunities.

Creating spaces for creative collaboration and innovation

Communication is an important basis for innovation. The MDC provides an inspiring working atmosphere and creates spaces that promote interaction and communication between employees.* In addition to designing attractive offices and research laboratories, we create meeting places and spaces that are technically equipped so that they can be used for diverse purposes, e.g. for meetings, as a co-working spaces or flexible offices, for video conferencing or streaming lectures. In addition, as a contribution to occupational health management (see 4.3), we create opportunities for sports activities. The MDC strives to continuously develop its infrastructure and adapt it to new forms of communication and changing needs.

Monitoring energy consumption and identifying potential savings

The MDC is creating an energy management office with the tasks of monitoring and optimizing the consumption of resources (water, electricity, heating and ventilation), working with users to identify potential savings, and providing advice on the procurement of energy-intensive equipment. A standardized energy management system (ISO5001) is being established to continuously improve the energy efficiency of work processes at the MDC.

Bundling technology to accelerate research processes

To make efficient use of sophisticated analytical techniques and accelerate research processes, the MDC has established numerous technology platforms. These facilities provide standardized and scientifically exploratory technologies, conduct technology development and support research groups. In addition, we provide central funding to enable research groups to purchase strategically relevant large-scale equipment that can subsequently be used jointly. The application process is managed by an equipment committee.

²⁷ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/bauen-wohnen/bauen/energieeffizientes-bauen-sanieren/energieausweise/gebäudeenergiegesetz-node.html>

²⁸ <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/bau-r-2-das-indikator#bau-r-2-dachbegrenzung-von-bundesgebäuden>

Resource-efficient use of operating and research funds

The MDC aims to make all work processes resource-efficient and sustainable. Research groups are required to establish laboratory management systems that allow for anticipatory demand planning and efficient use of consumables. The MDC is optimizing its office communications technology, establishing equipment management for the central freezers and liquid hydrogen tanks, and creating opportunities to share existing technologies by inventorying laboratory equipment using Open Iris. The Equipment Committee manages a repair fund to fund costly repairs and the maintenance of laboratory equipment.

4.5. Supporting processes

In the future, the MDC will pursue the most environmentally friendly and socially responsible solutions when purchasing products and services and in relation to work-related mobility.

Considering social and ecological procurement criteria

When purchasing services and goods, the MDC pays attention to sustainable concepts for transport and logistics and uses all legal means to take into account social and environmental aspects in addition to simple economic efficiency when awarding contracts. The organization and implementation of central events is carried out in accordance with the standards proposed by the Federal Environment Agency²⁹. All organizers of MDC events are encouraged to follow these guidelines as well.

Making mobility behavior low-emission

The MDC strives to reduce emissions caused by employees' mobility behavior. We strive to enable mobile working and subsidize job tickets for public transport within the scope of legal possibilities. By using a variety of sharing concepts (including rental bikes) and setting up charging stations for e-cars, we are contributing to low-emission individual transportation. Our employees are encouraged to use video conferencing to reduce the number of business trips and to make necessary business trips as environmentally friendly as possible. The MDC encourages the use of rail for trips of up to 6 hours. Air travel is only allowed in exceptional cases. The cost of a privately purchased BahnCard will be reimbursed as soon as the fare reductions for business trips reach the purchase price. In the future, we will compensate for the CO₂ footprints caused by air travel by voluntarily supporting climate protection projects. We are open to novel and sustainable mobility concepts and will take advantage of them wherever possible.

4.6. Making work at the MDC greenhouse gas neutral

The Federal Climate Protection Act³⁰ emphasizes the exemplary role of public institutions and obliges them to take climate protection goals into account in planning and decision-making. The MDC

²⁹ <https://www.bmu.de/publikation/leitfaden-fuer-die-nachhaltige-organisation-von-veranstaltungen/>

³⁰ <https://www.bmu.de/gesetz/bundes-klimaschutzgesetz/>

acknowledges its responsibility here. Together with the Sustainability Commission, the Board of Directors will establish a process that targets the development of a greenhouse gas-neutral MDC. When goals conflict, we will solve them through appropriate compromises.

Guidance will be provided by guidelines published by the Federal Environmental Agency³¹. First, the sources of greenhouse gas emissions are recorded and balanced in accordance with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol³². A materiality analysis is used to quantitatively define areas that can be influenced. On this basis, ambitious and verifiable climate protection targets are set and implemented, taking into account cost minimization requirements. Remaining CO₂ emissions will be compensated for if budgetary authorization is available.

MDC employees will be continuously informed about the initiative and involved in the process wherever possible. In particular, they are called upon to contribute actively to achieving climate protection goals. Reporting is carried out in accordance with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and is based on generally accepted standards. With the help of a climate protection audit, the MDC will review the functioning and adequacy of its greenhouse gas neutrality activities and identify opportunities for improvement. If necessary, the Board of Directors and the Sustainability Commission will take corrective action in order to achieve long-term climate protection goals and, in the medium term, to be able to act in a greenhouse gas-neutral manner even without compensation.

5. Concluding remarks

The sustainable development of the MDC can only be successful if employees actively contribute to its success. We expect our employees to behave honestly and considerately in their interactions with colleagues, to be responsible and forward-looking in their everyday work, with equipment and resources, and to avoid unnecessary energy consumption. Together, we want to make the process of sustainable development active and comprehensible and resolve any conflicts that arise in meeting these goals.

³¹ <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/der-weg-zur-treibhausgasneutralen-verwaltung>

³² <https://ghgprotocol.org/corporate-standard>