

Our Principles Mission Statement

Freiburg, Darmstadt and Berlin, June 2005

The Öko-Institut e.V. was founded in 1977 to play the role of expert advocate for the environmental movement. It has since established itself as one of the leading independent research and consultancy bodies in Europe working towards a sustainable future.

VISION

Our work is guided by the vision of a world where people are free to develop according to the principles of sustainability. Sustainable development is at risk from rapid change in society and technology and from globalization. Yet these very dynamics also provide opportunities to improve our protection of the environment and of life-sustaining natural resources while taking account of economic and social concerns, and to lay the groundwork for greater equity.

We are convinced that the life-sustaining resource base and development opportunities for everyone in today's and tomorrow's world will improve as a result of democratic, responsible action and peaceful cooperation, involving all sections of a society so rich in different cultures, interests and ways of life. Cultural and gender equality and equity are key to progress, as are cooperation and open access to knowledge. Conflicting aims will be debated and reconciled through fair societal discourse.

MISSION

In our value-driven scientific research and consultancy work, we join with our partners and clients to build foundations and strategies that make the vision of sustainable development a local, national and global reality. We deploy our ideas, understanding and knowledge to convince stakeholders that change is required and to help them make that change.

We challenge society

We identify the consequences of society's actions before they occur. We then raise awareness among decision makers and the public of the challenges which lie ahead for policymakers, industry, the scientific community and civil society.

We are visionaries

We are creative in our depictions of positive futures. The pictures we paint speak to people and convince them that it is worth working towards change in society.


We are trailblazers

We find viable pathways from the present to a future that everyone wants. We focus on finding solutions in key areas where we see that developments are on the wrong track and urgently need a new direction, areas where we believe we can make a significant contribution.

We are honest brokers

We support strategic alliances and coalitions which work towards preserving the environment and the natural resource base on which life depends. Yet we also initiate debate in society and approach those whose





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interests conflict with this goal. We are committed to ensuring that the groundwork for important decisions in society is laid transparently and fairly. All stakeholder groups, including those affected by the decisions, must be involved to guarantee long-term success.

VALUES

Credibility is key. It is essential if our work is to be effective. We establish our credibility by committing to shared values, both in our work within the Institute and in our dealings outside the Institute.

Independence

We are proud of our independence of thought, process and output. We consider it our duty to deliver unbiased and non-partisan assessments. We make a point of letting our partners and clients know this.

Transparency

We are convinced that open access to knowledge drives change towards sustainable development in society. That is why we undertake to make our scientific methods and results as transparent as possible. We want both the experts and the wider public to discuss our findings.

Creativity

Innovative approaches to scientific research and creative solutions to practical problems are essential to our success. We are protective of individual freedom to think differently. We promote exchanges of experience and opinion within and beyond the Institute, and between different cultures, as a means of maintaining and refreshing this creativity.

Respect

The mutual respect and trust we share with one another and with partners and clients forms the basis for all our working relationships.

OPERATIONS

We work at the interface between research and consultancy on the natural and social sciences and technical, legal and economic matters.

A firm scientific foundation

Robust scientific findings and recommendations form the keystone of our work. We use our outstanding expertise and interdisciplinary cooperation to craft our own methodologies and analytical tools. We expand on findings from the world of academic science and translate these into practice. We thus foster carefully considered action among policymakers, industry leaders and members of civil society.



Independence

Transparency

Creativity

Respect

A transdisciplinary approach

As pioneers of cross-disciplinary research, we actively involve stakeholders in analysing the issues at hand and in developing solutions. Through such processes, we have developed our ability to handle, in an appropriate fashion, the gaps and uncertainties in the available knowledge of an area. Our approach provides methodologically sound, ecologically effective, socially equitable, economically beneficial and politically appropriate solutions.

An international network

In order to meet our global responsibilities, we participate in national and international networks, help them grow, and initiate new ones. We aim in particular to forge strategic partnerships with organizations that share our vision and values.

Quality is assured

To ensure that our work is of a high quality, we welcome constructive criticism of our methods, analyses and assessments, both from within and beyond the Institute. Continuous learning is our way of ensuring that we keep up to date with the latest scientific and technological developments.

Skilled communicators

When we appoint members of our project teams, we look for an ability to communicate concisely and convincingly with other professionals, experts and the public. Our ability to find the right way of addressing these different groups helps secure us broad support throughout society.

PEOPLE

Our staff and their skill, commitment and flexibility are the Institute's most valuable assets. Our contribution to shaping a sustainable future derives from the scientific work performed by our employees; the conducive setting provided by our overall and divisional coordination bodies is equally important. Our employees' fellow-feeling and cooperation as equals are signs that they respect and value one another. This is the driving force behind our success.

What we expect

We look for outstanding qualifications, high commitment, courage and exceptional motivation. All our employees bear great personal responsibility for their work and for the reputation of the Institute.

What we provide

We offer an attractive working environment, in which both experienced, outstanding researchers and talented, committed newcomers can find great scope to make their mark. We are committed to maintaining gender balance in all roles at the Institute. We aim to address employees' individual work-life balance needs wherever possible, for example by al-



lowing flexible working. We are keen to keep a diverse mix of personalities, ways of life and points of view, as this contributes to the creativity and robustness of our work. We give parents the scope to combine family and work successfully.

ORGANIZATION

An independent non-profit association

Our Institute is intentionally organized as a non-profit association, with all our income going towards our own work or benefiting the organization.

We finance our work primarily through commissioned projects and grants from public and private clients.

If we consider a project to be of particular strategic importance or benefit to society, but are unable to fund it fully through commissions and grants, we seek independent finance in the form of membership contributions and donations.

An organization which benefits society

Our aim as a non-profit body is to benefit society through our work. This principle determines which subjects we focus on, and motivates our efforts to share the results with as wide an audience as possible. The association is underpinned by its members, many of whom have been supporting us for years.

Exchange with the members is part of our networking. The Institute's supervisory and executive bodies, in which staff sit alongside members, facilitate and foster the Institute's value-driven contribution to the public good, as well as its scientific work.

At the Institute, we seek to keep to our own high environmental standards wherever possible, both in the practical organization of our day-to-day work and in our travel arrangements.

Our internal organization

Our internal organization aims to keep pace with the demands of the ever-changing research and consultancy environment, while simultaneously inspiring motivation and commitment in our employees. The Institute is structured according to the principles of decentralized responsibility, employee participation, efficiency and transparency. The main pillars of our structure are the scientific divisions, which are largely independent, each with a different thematic focus. Our organization has a flat management structure, with the coordinating bodies determining overall strategy, safeguarding operational capability, and performing an essential monitoring role.



Freiburg Head Office

P.O. Box 50 02 40
79028 Freiburg, Germany
Address for visitors:
Merzhauser Strasse 173
79100 Freiburg, Germany
Tel.: +49-(0)761-4 52 95-0
Fax: +49-(0)761-4 52 95-88

Darmstadt Office

Rheinstrasse 95
64295 Darmstadt, Germany
Tel.: +49-(0)6151-81 91-0
Fax: +49-(0)6151-81 91-33

Berlin Office

Novalisstrasse 10
10115 Berlin, Germany
Tel.: +49-(0)30-28 04 86-80
Fax: +49-(0)30-28 04 86-88

www.oeko.de