

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

PRELIMINARY VERSION

according to VSME (Voluntary Sustainability Reporting Standard for non-listed small and medium-sized enterprises)

FUNDING PERIOD
2023-2026



Know Center is a COMET competence center that is financed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure (BMIMI), the Austrian Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism (BMWET), the Province of Styria, the Steirische Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft m.b.H. (SFG), the Vienna business agency and the Standortagentur Tirol. The COMET programme is managed by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency FFG.



Know Center Research GmbH

Sustainability Report 2023 - 2026

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Sustainable Development Goals

On 25 September 2015, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development was adopted by all 193 member states of the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda entails 17 Sustainable Development Goals called SDGs, which include the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.





Intro

Management Statement

At the Know Center, sustainability is a core element of our work and organisational identity. We believe it is important to consider the long-term impact of our decisions and to share openly about our progress and fields for improvement.

Guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, we are committed to transforming business, science, and society through trustworthy AI and data science. Our first COMET funding period (2023–2026) laid a robust foundation, characterised by strategic partnerships, the signing of Graz's climate pact, and the integration of sustainable HR practices to reduce our carbon footprint.

Looking ahead to the second COMET funding period (2027 – 2030), our strategy is defined by a dual focus: technological excellence and societal responsibility. We aim to solidify our position as one of Europe's leading research partners for trustworthy AI. Our research directly addresses critical challenges, from developing bias-free algorithms to fostering human-centred AI that empowers marginalised groups. By embedding fairness and transparency into our core, we ensure our innovations prevent societal biases and enable equitable public services.

Our impact is amplified through four pivotal business ecosystems: green (energy/environment), blue (production/logistics), white (health), and red (public sector), where data science drives the circular economy and intelligent energy management. To translate our research into tangible impact, we prioritise research transfer to business and valorisation of our innovations. This ensures that our findings are not only published in academic venues but also implemented in real-world applications, creating measurable value for industry partners and society at large. Through collaborations with national networks and international alliances across Europe, we are scaling sustainable transformation.

This report outlines our current status, achievements, and areas for improvement. As we embrace digital sovereignty and energy-efficient models, the Know Center remains dedicated to creating lasting value for industry, academia, and society, turning sustainability into systemic change.



Oliver Bernecker, Roman Kern, Norbert Grassell



From left to right: Norbert Grasselli (Chief Operating Officer), Simone Kopeinik (designated Area Head), Oliver Bernecker (Chief Executive Officer), Angela Fessl (designated Area Head) and Roman Kern (Chief Scientific Officer)

Sustainability in Research & Development



The following success stories highlight Know Center Research GmbH's contribution to sustainable development during the 2023–2026 funding period. While our portfolio encompasses a broad spectrum of initiatives with strong Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)¹ alignment, this section focuses on four flagship Sustainability Lighthouse Projects. Selected from our wider range of activities, these projects exemplify how our interdisciplinary research creates tangible value across diverse sectors—from waste management and steel recycling to advanced manufacturing and public health.

Sustainability at the Know Centre is defined by AI that is both trustworthy and resource efficient. This dual commitment is structured around five pillars that chart a clear path from foundational research to practical application:

- 1. Trustworthy AI:** Establishing verifiable and robust systems.
- 2. Knowledge Management:** Delivering actionable knowledge directly at the point of decision.
- 3. Data Analysis:** Enabling the measurement of resource impact and environmental footprints.
- 4. Model Training & Development:** Creating efficient models that minimise computational and energy costs.
- 5. Open Science:** Ensuring reproducible methods and transparent knowledge transfer.

These pillars integrate EU Horizon Europe research with Austrian COMET industry projects, ensuring that our innovation drives the transition towards a climate-neutral future. The four lighthouse projects presented below illustrate this framework in action, demonstrating how data-driven modelling, explainable AI, and advanced optimisation algorithms deliver measurable outcomes that support economic competitiveness, social resilience, and environmental stewardship.

Flagship Sustainability Projects

1. Waste Collection Tour Planning

 2/2024 to 12/2025

COMET project HEINZ Entsorgung GmbH & Co. KG

Modern waste collection operators offer their customers a tailored solution that times waste collection so that it perfectly fits in with their business operations. This means the collection tours cannot be planned and stay unmodified, but that the tours need to be adapted and each lorry gets a customised tour for every collection run. Therefore, great flexibility is requested by the customers that increases the difficulty for the planning done by the waste collection operators. Hence, the waste collection operators need the necessary tools to schedule and



quickly re-schedule tours to satisfy customers, while at the same time the different waste fractions must be collected separately to avoid contaminations.

The solution lies in tour planning algorithms that can find the best possible route for each collection lorry and respecting all boundary conditions. Some of these boundary conditions are shared with standard tour planning problems, for instance, pickup time restrictions. Others are specific to the waste collection business, like mixing prohibitions of different waste types, or travel bans for certain types or lorries. The customised solution is able to find the best possible route for each lorry while respecting all boundary conditions. Scalable implementations can utilise modern parallel computing systems to provide short runtimes, even for complex scenarios.

The optimised waste collection tours achieve reduced journey times for the collection lorries and therefore reduce their fuel consumption. Furthermore, by preventing unnecessary mixing of waste fractions, recycling companies get purer and uncontaminated inputs for the recycling process. This contributes to sustainable cities and communities and their efforts to improve recycling in the transition to a circular economy and a general effort to reduce the climate impact.

SDGs on which the project has a positive impact:



¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

2. InSpecScrap

InSpecScrap – Intelligent multi-SPECTral characterisation for material analysis on SCRAP yards

 4/2023 to 2/2025

Funded by the Future Fund of the State of Styria ('Zukunftsfonds Steiermark') under grant no. 1510.

Consortium Lead: JOANNEUM RESEARCH Forschungsgesellschaft mbH

Partners

- ☐ Know Center Research GmbH
- ☐ Institute of Computer Graphics and Vision, Graz University of Technology
- ☐ K1-MET GmbH

Steel is an important material in many industries, but the steel production needs to become more climate friendly. The steel industry is looking to achieving this with, firstly, moving from blast furnaces and basic oxygen furnaces to electric arc furnaces, and secondly, by increasing the share of recycled steel scrap. However, steel scrap is only available in different quality and often contaminated with non-iron metals and other non-metal particles. Hence, the steel recycling industry is looking for solutions to automatically characterise the quality and composition of steel scrap and use this information to adapt the steel recycling process accordingly.

InSpecScrap implements a three-part processing pipeline, where the first part records hyperspectral images of the available scrap. Next, a deep learning-based image recognition determines the materials of the scrap particles. Finally, a mixed integer optimisation is used to select the best scrap mix for the steel recycling process.

The solution of InSpecScrap supports the steel industry in their transition to a circular economy where steel can be recycled almost indefinitely, closing the consumption and production loop. This is needed for an innovative industry, since steel will remain an indispensable input to industry and infrastructure for the foreseeable future. Hence, the recycling of steel with minimal climate impact is an important capability for the steel industry of the future.

SDGs on which the project has a positive impact:



3. REDUCE

REDUCE - Reduced Carbon Footprint using Explainable AI for Human Empowerment in Design/Engineering and Production

 3/2025 to 2/2028

REDUCE has received funding from the FFG in the program "Kreislaufwirtschaft und Produktionstechnologien 2024" under the contract no. 925795.

Partners

- ☐ Consortium Lead: Pro2Future GmbH
- ☐ Know Center Research GmbH
- ☐ HARATECH GmbH
- ☐ SYRION - Institute for Systemic Research and Innovation
- ☐ TRIPAN Leichtbauteile GmbH & Co KG
- ☐ Institute of Visual Computing, Graz University of Technology

The manufacturing industry needs to offer competitive prices on an international market, while at the same time comply with climate goals and reduce its emissions. The competitiveness of the manufacturing industry can only be kept, when the manufacturing process is as material and energy efficient as possible. Therefore, the resource consumption has to become a design objective, so that the product can be efficiently manufactured. However, currently product designers and engineers are missing tools to predict the impact of their design decisions on energy and material consumption in the manufacturing process.

REDUCE is researching machine learning models that are able to predict the energy and material consumption of the manufacturing process already in the design phase. Therefore, reference products are designed and manufactured at the partner companies, and the resource consumption is recorded while these reference products are made. The resulting data is the base to create the needed machine learning models for the energy and material consumption prediction. These models are embedded in decision support systems that are helping product designers and engineers to design their products with maximum resource efficiency.

The results of REDUCE allow for more resource-aware product design at early stages in the product development phase, empowering the manufacturing industry to be more innovative in their product design but achieving minimal resource consumption. Hence, REDUCE makes contributions to economic and climate-related sustainability of the manufacturing industry.

SDGs on which the project has a positive impact:



4. EDIAQI

EDIAQI – Evidence Driven Indoor Air Quality Improvement

 12/2022 to 11/2026

EDIAQI has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the grant agreement No. 101057497.

Consortium Lead: The Lisbon Council - think tank for the 21st century

Partners

- ☐ Know Center Research GmbH
- ☐ Ascalia
- ☐ WINGS ICT SOLUTIONS
- ☐ Leibniz-Institut für Troposphärenforschung
- ☐ Institute for Anthropological Research
- ☐ Institute of Environmental Biotechnology, Graz University of Technology
- ☐ Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Food Sciences, University of Molise
- ☐ Architectural Structures I, University of Seville
- ☐ Srebrnjak Children's Hospital
- ☐ Deda Next s.r.l. Soc. unip.
- ☐ FinEst Centre for Smart Cities, Tallinn University of Technology
- ☐ LabService Analytica Srl
- ☐ Department of Genetic Toxicology and Cancer Biology, National Institute of Biology
- ☐ Environmental Research, Center for Physical Sciences and Technology
- ☐ COPSAC, Region Hovedstaden
- ☐ Institut za medicinska istraživanja i medicinu rada
- ☐ Thinnect OÜ

Indoor AIR Quality (IAQ) has a significant effect on peoples' health and EDIAQI is working on tools and data to quantify the influence of IAQ on children with underlying medical

condition. Firstly, EDIAQI investigates the accuracy and reliability of low-cost sensors that can be widely adopted to quantify IAQ. Secondly, the role of IAQ is investigated and correlated with asthma pathophysiology and specific diseases. Thirdly, EDIAQI creates a large database of IAQ measurements in homes and educational facilities across Europe. Fourthly, EDIAQI providing standardized guidelines to improve IAQ for teachers and parents as well as supports policymakers in revising IAQ standards and regulatory measures for IAQ control and monitoring.

The key to the success of EDIAQI is the unified data collection and data analysis reaching across the pilots in Europe and research domains. This makes it possible to identify patterns and discover coherences that are not recognisable if the analysis is done only for selected regions or for a specific IAQ aspect. The resulting knowledge is published in scientific venues, documented in the EDIAQI wiki and edited to be accessible to the general public in training materials available in various European languages. Moreover, the results are also the basis to create Digital Twins for analysing IAQ in selected rooms and the simulation tool which allows everyone to rate health risks based on IAQ influences.

The time an average human spends indoors has increased in the last decades and reaches values of about 90 % each day. Hence, good IAQ is important due to the considerable exposure time, but IAQ was long neglected. The data and the education provided by EDIAQI is therefore important to increase awareness and support health and wellbeing activities with reliable materials. Low-cost monitoring solutions that are combined with exploration and simulation for IAQ empower cities and communities to improve IAQ in their jurisdictions. EDIAQI's interaction with policy makers focuses on statutory changes to create a movement for better IAQ.

SDGs on which the project has a positive impact:



Five Pillars of Our Sustainability Work

Trustworthy AI

AI systems increasingly decide who gets a loan, a place, a service or a second look. Our Trustworthy AI pillar combines EU Horizon Europe projects with Austrian COMET projects to make those systems assessable: to establish what fairness, transparency and reliability mean in a given application, and how they can be demonstrated rather than asserted.

Qualification frameworks. We develop comprehensive frameworks for assessing AI systems against defined requirements; covering data quality, model behaviour, documentation and human oversight. As obligations under the European AI regulation take effect, these frameworks give organizations a practical route from abstract principle to evidence they can put in front of an auditor, a customer or a regulator.

Mitigating systemic bias. Bias enters AI systems through the data they learn from, and it reproduces historical disadvantage at scale and at speed. We develop methods to detect, measure and reduce such bias in datasets and models, and to document what remains, because fairness is not a single metric but a property that has to be defined for each context of use.

Robustness under real-world conditions. Models that perform well on clean benchmark data can still fail once conditions drift or edge cases pile up in production. We stress-test models against distribution shift and adversarial inputs and monitor for when operating conditions move outside what was validated. A fair, transparent model that breaks under real-world variation isn't yet a trustworthy one.

Human-centred systems. Trustworthy AI keeps people in a position to understand, question and override it. We work on transparency and oversight mechanisms that give users an intelligible account of how a result came about, and organizations the means to intervene when it is wrong.

Trust is not a property of a model, but of the process that surrounds it. These frameworks also govern the AI we develop in our other pillars.

SDGs on which the project has a positive impact:



Projects in the Trustworthy AI pillar:

- Bias in Datensätzen | Bundesrechenzentrum GmbH | 2023 | COMET CP²
- Risk Dimensions of Trustworthy AI | SGS Digital Trust Services GmbH | 2023 | COMET CP
- Plattform für Zertifizierung von KI-Trustworthiness | Leftshift One Software GmbH | 2023 - 2026 | COMET CP
- Fairness-aware Algorithmic Decision Support Systems | Johannes-Kepler-Universität Linz | 2023 - 2026 | COMET SP³
- ENFIELD | EU Horizon Europe | 2023 – 2026

Knowledge Management

Organisations rarely lack information; they lack access to the right information at the moment a decision is made. Our Knowledge Management pillar combines EU Horizon Europe projects with Austrian COMET projects to make institutional knowledge findable, verifiable and usable directly in the workflows where it is needed, across audit, logistics and enterprise information management.

Automated audit support. Audits are document-heavy and repetitive, and the effort spent locating evidence is effort not spent assessing it. Our tools automate evidence collection, cross-checking and pre-assessment, so that specialists can concentrate on judgement. Every result remains traceable to its source document, keeping the process itself auditable.

Logistics knowledge integration. In logistics, the knowledge required for a decision is scattered across systems, partners and the experience of individual staff. We integrate these fragmented sources into a coherent basis for planning and exception handling, making opera-



² COMET Company Partner
³ COMET Scientific Partner

tions faster to adapt and less dependent on who happens to be available.

Trustworthy search technologies. Retrieval only creates value if its answers can be relied upon. Our search technologies are built for verifiability and control: results carry their sources, access rights are respected down to the level of the individual document, and confidential information stays within the boundaries the organization has set.

The measure of success is not how much an organisation stores, but how reliably the right knowledge reaches the person who needs it.

SDGs on which the project has a positive impact:



Projects in the Knowledge Management pillar:

- AI Support for Audit Reviews | SGS Digital Trust Services GmbH | 2023 | COMET CP
- KI gestützte Angebotserstellung-Forschungsprojekt | Unitec Energietechnik GmbH | 2024 – 2026 | COMET CP
- KI Unterstützung CAMPUSonline | Technische Universität | 2024 – 2025 | COMET CP
- Pdf-Accessibility-Transformation | FFG | 2025 – 2026
- TILDE | OpenWebSearch.EU | 2024 – 2025
- AID-CC | FFG | 2025 – 2027
- CareLLM | FFG | 2026

Data Analysis

Sustainability decisions are only as good as the data behind them. Our Data Analysis pillar combines EU Horizon Europe projects with Austrian COMET projects to give municipalities and companies a precise picture of their resource consumption, and the analytical tools to act on it. Working with public bodies and industry partners means the tools are built around the data these organizations actually hold, not around ideal datasets.

Digital twins for municipalities. We build virtual representations of municipal infrastructure and resource flows, from energy and water to traffic and waste. A digital twin lets a municipality test the effect of an intervention before committing budget to it: which measure reduces consumption most, where the network reaches its limits, and how scenarios play out under changing demand or climate conditions. In one deployment, field-level forecasting of frost risk reduced frost damage by up to 90%.

Calculators for sustainability metrics. Heterogeneous data from different systems, departments and suppliers rarely adds up to a comparable figure. Our calculators turn it into consistent indicators that can be tracked over time, compared across sites and used as the evidence base for reporting obligations and investment decisions alike.

Responsible production and smart waste logistics. In industry and municipal services, the same analytical foundation supports concrete optimization: material flows that keep resources in use, collection routes planned by actual fill levels rather than fixed schedules, and production processes tuned to consume less for the same output.

Measurement is not an end in itself. Every indicator we produce is designed to point towards a decision someone can actually take.

SDGs on which the solution has a positive impact:



Projects in the Data Analysis pillar:

- Digitaler Zwilling Kreuzfahrtschiff | MarineXchange Software GmbH | 2023 – 2025 | COMET CP
- AI @ SERVUS Waste Logistics | SERVUS ABFALL Dienstleistungs GmbH | 2025 – 2026 | COMET CP
- Digitaler Zwilling in Gemeinden | Comm-Unity EDV GmbH | 2023 – 2025 | COMET CP
- Tourenplanung | Heinz GmbH | 2024 | COMET CP
- Deploytour - Sustainability Calculator | Verein Österreich Werbung | 2025 – 2026
- Strategic AI Roadmap for Mobility | FFG | 2024 – 2025



Model Training & Development

Not every problem needs the largest model, and not every physical system needs a full simulation to understand it. Our Model Training & Development pillar combines EU Horizon Europe and Austrian COMET projects to build models sized to the task, from lightweight anomaly detectors to physics-informed surrogates that replace expensive simulations, for domains like urban mobility and energy. Working with industry partners means they're trained and validated on real operational data, then developed into production-ready tools.

Physics-informed and surrogate modelling. Full physical simulations are often too expensive to run at the scale real decisions require. We build surrogate models that reproduce simulation results at a fraction of the cost, trained on a handful of reference runs instead of exhaustive sweeps, turning hours of compute into seconds, without the energy cost of repeated full-scale simulation.

Advanced mobility analyses. Our models reconstruct how people and goods actually move through cities and regions, turning fragmented sensor, transport and usage data into a coherent picture of demand. This gives planners and operators an evidence base for infrastructure decisions, for demand-responsive services, and for measuring whether a measure genuinely shifts traffic towards low-carbon modes.

Robust anomaly detection in the energy sector. In grids and industrial plants, faults, deviations and irregular consumption patterns are expensive when they are found late. Our anomaly detection models identify them early and reliably enough to act on, reducing unplanned downtime and wasted energy, and supporting the integration of volatile renewable generation into systems that were not designed for it.

Intelligent optimization of critical systems. Models only create value if they stay accurate. Continual refinement, retraining, monitoring for drift, validation against changing operating conditions, keeps them dependable in the field, where efficiency gains translate directly into lower emissions and lower operating costs.

We size models to the task rather than defaulting to the largest available, so that the efficiency gained downstream is not consumed by the training itself.

SDGs on which the solution has a positive impact:



Projects in the Model Training & Development pillar:

- Erweiterte Mobilitätsanalysen | Invenium Data Insights GmbH | 2024 – 2025 | COMET CP
- Know-Mobility4AI | Technische Universität Graz (Institut für Straßen- und Verkehrswesen) | 2023 – 2025 | COMET CP
- Workshop Anomalieerkennung für die Energiewirtschaft | Energie Steiermark GmbH | 2023
- RegDTAIP | FFG | 2025 – 2028

Open Science

Open Science democratizes access to research. Our Open Science pillar combines EU Horizon Europe projects with Austrian COMET projects, working on the infrastructure, practices and policies that determine who can take part in research and how far its results can be trusted. What is developed in European research consortia is disseminated directly to the wider public, and the practices proven there flow back into the scientific community, guided by the principle „as open as possible, as closed as necessary“: methods, tools and code are published even where partner data cannot be. Connecting knowledge across domains. Our user-driven multidisciplinary exploration networks link researchers, datasets and services that would otherwise remain siloed, from the social sciences and humanities to earth system science. Designed as collaborative environments for reflective learning, they make methods and assumptions visible across disciplinary boundaries, so that findings from one field become usable material in another.

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Making results reproducible. Results that cannot be reproduced cannot be trusted, and untrustworthy evidence weakens every institution that depends on it. We respond with pilot studies, co-created tools, training and policy recommendations that respect the epistemic diversity of different disciplines, and with reproducibility networks that extend these capabilities to under-represented research regions.

Engineering research software that lasts. Open results require open, maintainable code. Version control, testing, documentation and long-term stewardship are standard practice, so that the tools behind published findings remain usable long after a project ends.

Openness is not a compliance obligation for us, but an operating principle.

SDGs on which the solution has a positive impact:



Projects in the Open Science pillar:

- Open Science and Reflective Learning | ZBW – Leibniz-Informationszentrum Wirtschaft | 2023 - 2024 | COMET SP
- LUMEN - Linked User-driven Multidisciplinary Exploration Network | EU Horizon Europe | 2025 - 2027
- TIER2 - Increasing the reproducibility of scientific results | EU Horizon Europe | 2023 - 2025
- AIDEA - Artificial Intelligence for a new Design Education Approach | EU Horizon Europe | 2025 – 2028



48%

Percentage of high-quality publications

193

Total number of scientific works (Theses)



196

Community services

202

Total publications in relevant venues



30

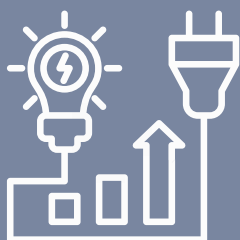
Projects with sustainability impact

195

MWh Total energy consumption 2025

2047

Electricity consumption [kWh] per employee (market-based)



181,78

t CO2e Total GHG Emissions 2025 (market-based)



2,46

t CO2e GHG emissions [t] per employee (market-based)



29%

Go to work by bike

58%

Go to work by public transport



Scientific and Sustainability KPI⁴s

The first table shows the scientific KPIs required by the FFG for the COMET funding period (FP) 2023–2026, covering publications, quality metrics, community services, and graduate training. The final column displays the achievement rate as of August 2026 (values >100% indicate targets exceeded).

The second table presents the sustainability-related KPIs, tracking the Know Center's environmental footprint (energy consumption, GHG emissions per employee) and sustainable mobility (bike, public transport). Energy data is based on 2025 measurements from ClimCalc, while mobility data comes from an employee survey conducted in August 2026.

	2023	2024	2025	8/2026	Status quo 08/2026 for FP 2023-26 (in %) ⁵
Total publications in relevant venues	60	62	50	30	202 (112%)
Thereof in peer-reviewed journals	23	29	32	11	95 (112%)
Thereof in peer-reviewed conferences	37	22	22	11	98 (75%)
Thereof co-publications science/industry	12	7	10	3	32 (160%)
Percentage of high-quality publications	57%	46%	45%	43%	48% (106%)
Community services	50	67	60	19	196 (490%)
Total number of scientific works (Theses)	67	61	36	29	193 (214 %)
Habilitations in total	3	2	1	0	6 (150%)
PhDs in total	34	6	4	18	62 (155%)
Master Theses in total	30	43	28	11	112 (224%)

Projects with sustainability impact	30
Total energy consumption 2025	195 MWh
Total GHG Emissions 2025 (market-based)	181,78 t CO ₂ e
Total GHG Emissions 2025 (location-based)	201,78 t CO ₂ e
GHG emissions [t] per employee (market-based)	2,46 t CO ₂ e
GHG emissions [t] per employee (location-based)	2,73 t CO ₂ e
Electricity consumption [kWh] per employee (market-based)	2047 kWh
Go to work by bike	58%
Go to work by public transport	29%

⁴ Key Performance Indicators

⁵ Based on 2025 data (ClimCalc); it was not possible to retrieve all the data for 2023 & 2024

General Information



B1 – Basis for preparation

This section provides an overview of the company's organisational structure and key economic characteristics. The information serves as a foundation for the sustainability disclosures presented in the subsequent sections and enhances comparability with other undertakings.

Company Name	Know Center Research GmbH
Undertaking's legal form	Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung
ÖNACE	N72.10-0
EU NACE	M72.1-9
Country of primary operations	Austria
Full-time equivalents 2023 (average)	95.9
Full-time equivalents 2024 (average)	78.6
Full-time equivalents 2025 (average)	74.0
Full-time equivalents 15.08.2026	
Sustainability Certifications	None (company); Certified CSR- and Sustainability Officer (Ingund Rosales Rodriguez; certificate valid until 31.12.2027)

Locations	Addresses / Coordinates
Graz (Main Location)	Sandgasse 34 A-8010 Graz 47,05876°N;15,56786°O
Wien (Branch Location)	Hintere Zollamtsstraße 17/3 A-1030 Wien 48,20903°N;16,38696°O
Klagenfurt (Branch Location)	Lakeside B08/39 A-9020 Klagenfurt am Wörthersee 46.61430°N;14,26369°O
Innsbruck (Branch Location)	Bozner Platz 1, Top 4 A-6020 Innsbruck 47,26524°N;11,39747°O

	2023	2024	2025
Turnover incl. R&D tax credit	9 607 172,63 €	10 851 676,86 €	11 209 695,54 €
Turnover excl. R&D tax credit	9 033 732,31 €	10 334 722,90 €	10 612 797,76 €
Balance Sheet (AKTIVA/PASSIVA)	4 238 946,81 €	4 091 705,26 €	4 199 718,08 €



C1 – Strategy: Business Model and Sustainability – Related Initiatives

Company profile

The Know Center is an Austrian research center specialising in trustworthy artificial intelligence, data science, and digital technologies. Our mission is to bridge the gap between excellent research and practical application by developing innovative solutions that create value for businesses, public organisations, and society. We work closely with national and international research partners, industry, and the public sector through collaborative research projects, contract research, and technology transfer activities.

Significant products and services

The Know Center provides applied research and innovation services in the fields of artificial intelligence, data science, and digital technologies. Our activities include collaborative national and European research projects, contract research, feasibility studies, prototype development, data analytics, AI consulting, and technology transfer.

Our research focuses on trustworthy and explainable AI, data-driven decision support, secure data management, privacy-preserving technologies, and human-centred AI solutions. These technologies help organisations make better use of data, improve resource efficiency, optimise processes, strengthen cybersecurity, and support informed decision-making across application areas such as manufacturing, energy, healthcare, mobility, public administration, and digital services.

Significant markets

Know Center primarily operates in the business-to-business (B2B) and public sector. Our customers and project partners include companies of different sizes, public authorities, research organisations, universities, and European research consortia. While our core activities are based in Austria, we participate in numerous international and European research and innovation projects and collaborate with partners across Europe.

Main business relationships

Know Center's business model is based on long-term collaboration with research, industry, and public sector partners. Key stakeholders include funding organisations, research institutions, universities, industry partners, public authorities, employees, and research project consortia. Close collaboration with these stakeholders ensures that our research addresses practical needs while creating value for businesses, society, and the scientific community.

Sustainability strategy

Sustainability is an important part of Know Center's long-term strategy. As a research center for trustworthy artificial intelligence and data science, we develop

technologies that strengthen innovation while helping to address societal and environmental challenges. Sustainability considerations are therefore integrated into our research activities, collaborations, and organizational development.

Our contribution to a more sustainable economy is primarily driven by research and innovation. We develop trustworthy and explainable AI, fair and transparent algorithms, secure data management, privacy-preserving technologies, and human-centred AI solutions. These technologies help organizations make better use of data, improve resource efficiency, optimize energy use, strengthen cybersecurity, and support informed decision-making. Through projects in areas such as manufacturing, energy, healthcare, mobility, and the public sector, we support the digital transformation with solutions that create long-term value for businesses and society. Our work is closely aligned with the European Union's priorities of strengthening competitiveness, fostering innovation, and accelerating the green and digital transition⁶.

B2/C2 - Practices, policies and future initiatives for transitioning towards a more sustainable economy

Know Center implements a range of practices, policies, and initiatives that support its sustainability strategy and contribute to the transition towards a more sustainable economy. Our approach combines responsible research and innovation with measures to continuously improve our environmental, social, and governance performance. These activities are integrated into our daily operations and organisational development and are regularly reviewed and further developed.

Beyond the impact of our research activities, we are committed to reducing our own environmental footprint, promoting an inclusive and healthy workplace, and acting responsibly towards our employees, partners, and the wider community. As a signatory of the Graz Climate Pact, we also support local efforts to achieve climate neutrality and encourage climate-conscious action within our sphere of influence.

The table below provides an overview of the sustainability topics addressed by existing practices, policies, and future initiatives, indicating whether these are publicly available and whether they include defined targets.

⁶ https://commission.europa.eu/priorities-2024-2029_en



Do you have existing sustainability practices/ policies/ future initiatives that address any of the following sustainability issues?		Publicly available?	With Targets?
Climate Change	yes	no	yes
Pollution	yes	no	no
Water and Marine Resources	no	no	no
Biodiversity and Ecosystems	yes	yes	yes
Circular Economy	yes	no	yes
Own Workforce	yes	no	yes
Workers in the Value Chain	no	no	no
Affected Communities	yes	no	yes
Consumers and end-users	yes	no	yes
Business conduct	yes	no	yes

Looking ahead, Know Center will continue to strengthen its sustainability management by further developing ESG reporting in line with the VSME Standard, improving the collection of sustainability-related data, and identifying additional opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of its operations. We will also continue to advance responsible research and innovation and develop trustworthy AI solutions that help our partners address future economic, environmental, and societal challenges.

The following sections describe our main practices, policies, and initiatives for each sustainability topic.

Climate Change

Our commitment is demonstrated through the signing of the Graz Climate Pact for a Climate-Neutral Graz by 2040 („CONNECT“), underlining our active contribution to achieving the city's climate goals and supporting collaborative action towards a sustainable future. As our offices are located in a building owned by Graz University of Technology (TU Graz) and managed by the Austrian Federal Real Estate Company (BIG), we benefit from the environmental and sustainability measures implemented as part of the TU Graz Climate Neutrality Roadmap 2030.

Pollution

To help prevent pollution and reduce waste, we promote responsible resource use and environmentally conscious practices in our daily operations. We have implemented modern waste separation systems throughout our premises, making recycling as simple and intuitive as possible for employees, visitors, and students. In most kitchen areas, we use fully automatic coffee machines to minimise packaging waste. Where capsule coffee machines are in use, we exclusively use compostable coffee capsules to further reduce the environmental impact of our operations.

Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Our commitment to biodiversity and ecosystem protection is reflected in local initiatives that contribute to enhancing urban green spaces and supporting pollinator populations. We sponsor three trees in the Sandgasse through the City of Graz's tree sponsorship programme. These initiatives contribute to increasing urban biodiversity, strengthening ecosystem resilience, and raising awareness of the importance of healthy ecosystems.

Circular Economy

To support the principles of a circular economy, our IT asset management policy focuses on extending the useful life of electronic equipment. Laptops remain in service until they reach the end of their functional life, helping to reduce electronic waste, conserve resources, and maximise the value derived from existing devices before replacement becomes necessary.

Own Workforce

Know Center is committed to providing a supportive, inclusive, and attractive working environment that promotes employee well-being, equal opportunities, and long-term employment. Stable employment relationships, particularly for researchers, are reflected in a high proportion of permanent employment contracts. Employee participation and co-determination are ensured through the Works Council, which serves as an important platform for dialogue between employees and management.

To support work-life balance, Know Center offers flexible working arrangements, including flexible working hours, part-time employment, and the possibility to work remotely for up to 40% of regular working hours in accordance with the company's hybrid working policy.

Employee well-being is promoted through a range of initiatives addressing both physical and mental health. These include regular psychosocial risk assessments in accordance with Austrian occupational safety legislation, annual employee development dialogues to support feedback and career development, and subsidised on-site massage services.

Know Center is committed to fostering equal opportunities, diversity, and equal treatment for all employees. These commitments are supported through dedicated policies and initiatives, including the implementation of the new Gender Equality and Diversity Plan⁷.

The organisation also promotes sustainable mobility by providing a company bicycle for business travel within Graz, access to electric vehicles through TU Graz's Family of Power fleet and the TIM car-sharing service, and a subsidy towards the Austrian Klimaticket for employees who voluntarily waive or return their parking permit.

⁷ https://de.linkedin.com/posts/oliver-bernecker_knowcenter-diversity-genderequality-activity-7498330646088654848-yVCn



Affected Communities

Know Center aims to create positive impacts for society through research, innovation, and collaboration. By developing trustworthy artificial intelligence and data-driven solutions, we contribute to addressing societal challenges in areas such as healthcare, manufacturing, energy, mobility, and the public sector. We actively collaborate with universities, research organisations, public institutions, and industry partners to promote knowledge transfer and innovation. In addition, our participation in the Graz Climate Pact and local biodiversity initiatives contributes to the sustainable development of the local community

Consumers and end-users

As a research centre for trustworthy artificial intelligence and data science, Know Center is committed to developing technologies that are transparent, explainable, secure, and human-centred. Internal guidelines, including our Social Media Guidelines and other company policies as well as our Bulletin, support responsible communication and the protection of confidential information. Through

responsible research and innovation, we aim to develop AI solutions that create value for users while respecting ethical principles, privacy, and data protection.

Business conduct

Know Center is committed to conducting its activities in a responsible, transparent, and ethical manner. A confidential whistleblower system enables employees and external stakeholders to report concerns. The organisation promotes integrity, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, responsible research and innovation, with a dedicated focus on GreenAI and energy-efficient AI models, and the principles of equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion. Employee participation is supported through the Works Council, which provides an additional channel for dialogue and feedback.

A scenic landscape photograph featuring a vibrant green field in the foreground, rolling hills in the middle ground, and a bright blue sky filled with fluffy white clouds. A dense line of dark green trees is visible on the right side of the frame.

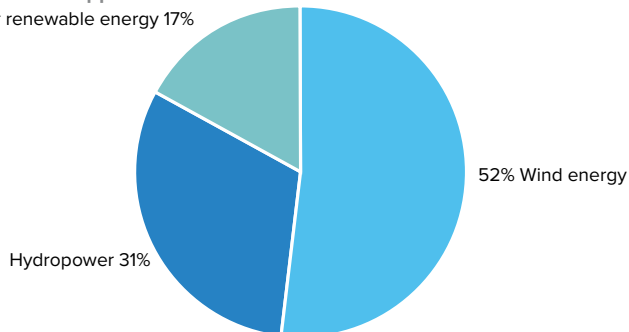
Environment Metrics

B3 – Energy and greenhouse gas emissions

The disclosures in this section are based on the methodologies of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol Corporate Standard, an internationally recognised framework for measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are reported as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e). The GHG Protocol distinguishes between direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by the organisation (Scope 1) and indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, heating, or cooling (Scope 2). Scope 3 arise from activities across the value chain. Greenhouse gas emissions were calculated using ClimCalc 2023, a tool originally developed for the GHG accounting of Austrian universities and higher education institutions.⁸ For the purposes of this report, data from 2025 was used as a case study, as it was not possible to obtain all historical data for the years 2023 and 2024.

Know Center Research GmbH is headquartered at the Campus Inffeldgasse of the Graz University of Technology (TU Graz), where it is a tenant. As a tenant of TU Graz, Know Center sources its electricity from the Austrian energy supply company m.b.H. Naturkraft. The supplier mix consists of 52.06% wind energy, 31% hydropower, and 16.94% from other renewable energy sources, and it holds the UZ-46 certification.

Naturkraft Supplier Mix
Other renewable energy 17%



For the calculation of the total net usable floor area, rented office and storage spaces located at Sandgasse 34 and Sandgasse 36 were included, along with two server rooms of TU Graz, each housing one of our rented server racks. The district heating for the rented premises is supplied to Know Center, as a tenant of TU Graz, by Energie Graz AG, which uses 50% renewable energy and 50% from fossil natural gas⁹.

Total energy consumption

Energy carrier	Consumption of renewable energy [MWh]	Consumption of non-renewable [MWh]	Total energy consumption [MWh]
Electricity (Naturkraft)	151,448	0	151,448
Fuels (natural gas for heating)	0	0	0
District heating (Energie Graz AG)	21,775	21,775	43,550
Total	173,223	21,775	194,998

GHG Emissions [t CO₂e] by Category

Category	Sub-Category	Accounting Method	[t CO ₂ e]
Energy	Electricity Consumption (Grid)	Market-based	1,83
	Electricity Consumption (Grid)	Location-based	22,03
	PV Electricity (Self-Consumption)	-	0,26
	District Heating	-	12,09
	Subtotal Energy	Market-based	14,18
		Location-based	34,38
Mobility	Business travel	-	39,70
	Commuting (Employees)	-	28,75
	Foreign Assignments (Outgoing)	-	3,19
	Subtotal Mobility	-	71,65
Material	Paper	-	0,75
	IT-Equipment	-	95,20
	Subtotal Material	-	95,95
TOTAL		Market-based	181,78
		Location-based	201,98

Note:

The Market-Based Method calculates emissions based on the specific contractual arrangements a company has made for its energy consumption (e.g., green power purchase agreements, renewable energy certificates, or direct supply contracts). It reflects the impact of the company's purchasing decisions and allows for a lower emission factor if renewable energy is procured.

The Location-Based Method calculates emissions based on the average emission intensity of the local electricity grid where the energy is consumed. It reflects the physical reality of the energy mix in the specific region or country, regardless of any specific

⁸ <https://nachhaltigeuniversitaeten.at/arbeitsgruppen/co2-neutrale-universitaeten/>

⁹ https://www.klimaschutz.graz.at/cms/dokumente/10377924_11269117/78fef959/Klimaschutzplan_Zweiter_Fortschrittsbericht_20241029.pdf

green energy contracts the company may hold.

The greenhouse gas emissions of the Know Center for the reference year 2025 were calculated, as mentioned above, using the ClimCalc 2023 tool. The calculation follows the GHG Protocol Corporate Standard. Scopes are defined as follows:

Scope 1: No direct emissions were recorded, as the Know Center operates without a company fleet or on-site combustion sources.

Scope 2: Includes emissions from purchased electricity (grid consumption and direct portion of district heating).

Scope 3: Includes all other indirect emissions, encompassing:

- **Mobility:** Business travel, employee commuting, and foreign assignments.
- **Material Use:** Purchased goods (IT equipment, office supplies) and the upstream portion of district heating (transport/infrastructure)
- **PV Self-Consumption:** Treated as avoided emissions.

The tool categorizes District Heating (Fernwärme) based on its specific emission factors and the nature of the supply chain. Consequently, the emissions from district heating are split between Scope 2 (directly attributed to purchased energy) and Scope 3 (attributed to upstream supply chain activities or transport losses).



GHG Emissions 2025 [t CO2e] by Categories & Scopes

	Category	Sub-Category	Accounting Method	Scope1 [t CO2e]	Scope2 [t CO2e]	Scope 3 [t CO2e]	Total [t CO2e]
Energy	Electricity Consumption (Grid)	-	Market-based	-	0,18	1,65	1,83
	Electricity Consumption (Grid)	-	Location-based	-	17,81	4,22	22,03
	PV Electricity (Self-Consumption)	-	-	-		0,26	0,26
	District Heating	-	-	-	8,17	3,92	12,09
Mobility	Business travel	Car	-	-		5,26	5,26
		Electric Car	-	-		0,002	0,002
		Train	-	-		0,29	0,29
		Bus	-	-		0,36	0,36
		Plane (≤ 1000km)	-	-		1,23	1,23
		Plane (≤ 4000km)	-	-		9,58	9,58
		Plane (> 4000km)	-	-		22,98	22,98
	Commuting (Employees)	Car	-	-		24,04	24,04
		Electric Car	-	-		2,69	2,69
		Train	-	-		1,51	1,51
		Bus	-	-		0,85	0,85
		Tram	-	-		0,08	0,08
		Bicycle	-	-		0,23	0,23
		E-Bike/E-Scooter	-	-		0,12	0,12
	Foreign Assignments (Outgoing)	Car	-			0,034	0,034
		Train	-			0,002	0,002
		Bus	-			0,016	0,016
		Plane (> 4000km)	-			3,14	3,14
Material	Paper	Copy paper	-	-		0,17	0,17
		Toilet paper	-			0,18	0,18
		Paper towels	-			0,40	0,40
	IT-Equipment	Multifunction devices (network printers for every 10–30 people)	-	-		1,20	1,20
		Laser printers and inkjet printers				0,25	0,25
		Printer cartridges/ toner for laser and inkjet printers				0,22	0,22
		Notebooks				17,00	17,00
		Desktop PCs				1,16	1,16
		Screens				70,60	70,60
		Internal servers (number of individual computers in the server system)				2,90	2,90
		Mobile phones				1,92	1,92
	TOTAL		Market-based		8,35	173,43	181,78
			Location-based		25,98	176,00	201,98

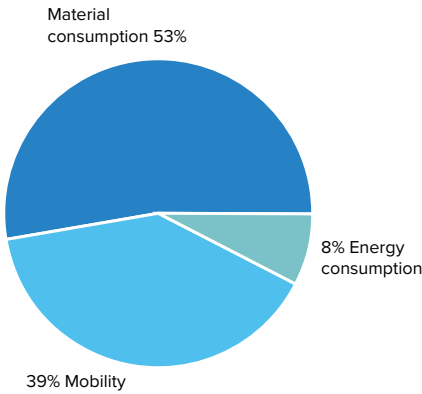
GHG Emissions according to Emissions Categories

Option 1 (market-based calculation)

Absolute values

Emissions category	[t CO2-eq]
Energy consumption	14
Mobility	72
Material consumption	96
Total	182

Relative values

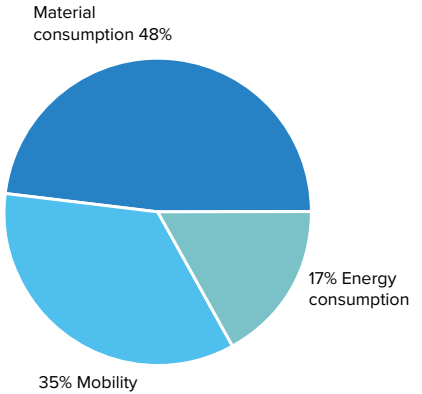


Option 2 (location-based calculation)

Absolute values

Emissions category	[t CO2-eq]
Energy consumption	34
Mobility	72
Material consumption	96
Total	202

Relative values



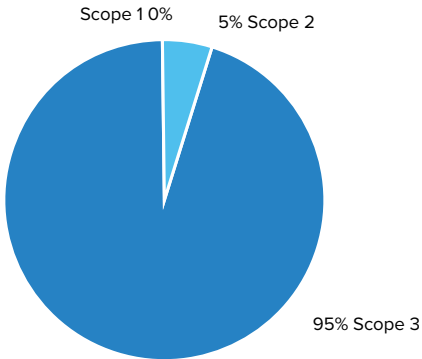
GHG Emissions according to Emissions Categories

Option 1 (market-based calculation)

Absolute values

Scopes	[t CO2-eq]
Scope 1	0
Scope 2	8
Scope 3	173
Total	182

Relative values

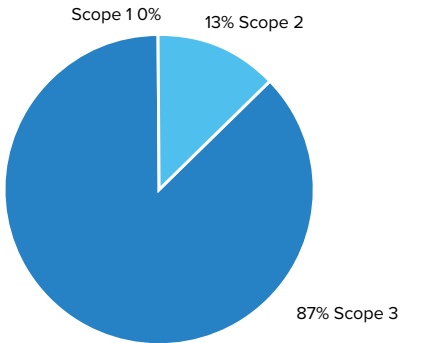


Option 2 (location-based calculation)

Absolute values

Scopes	[t CO2-eq]
Scope 1	0
Scope 2	26
Scope 3	176
Total	202

Relative values



Official environmental KPIs - to be reported to the BMWFW (if required)		
	Accounting Method	
	Market-based	Location-based
GHG emissions [t] per employee	2,46	2,73
GHG emissions [t] per m2 net floor area	0,13	0,15
Other environmental KPIs		
Heat demand [kWh] per m2 of net floor area	32	
Electricity consumption [kWh] per employee	2047	

Emissions from employee commuting were determined through an internal survey conducted in August 2026. The survey collected weekly commute distances for all transport modes (Car, Train, Bus, Tram, Bicycle, etc.). The response rate was 51,6%, since 48 out of 93 employees replied to the survey. Data were extrapolated to the full workforce using an inverse weighting factor of 1.9375 (93/48) to ensure representativeness. A conservative factor of 50 effective commuting weeks per year was applied to account for holidays and sick leave. Based on the methodology described above, the total annual commute distance for the Know Center workforce is estimated at 397000 person-kilometres (pkm). The survey asked for the total weekly kilometres travelled, thereby automatically accounting for individual variations in working days (e.g., home office days, sick leave) within the reporting week.

The breakdown by transport mode is as follows:

Mode of Transport	Weekly km (Survey sum)	Extrapolated annual km (pkm)
Car (Petrol/Diesel)	1100,2	106582
Electric Car (E-PKW)	263,3	25510
Plug-in Hybrid	0	0
Motorcycle/Moped	0	0
Train	1723	166966
Bus	15,7	1524
Tram	176,3	17083
Bicycle	583,7	56546
E-Bike/E-Scooter	76,8	7440
Electric Moped	0	0
On Foot	158,2	15325
Total	4097,3	397000

Note: Values are rounded to the nearest whole kilometre.

Modes such as Plug-in Hybrid, Motorcycle, and Electric Moped were not recorded in the survey data.

Note on Data Accuracy: The estimate is based on a survey with a response rate of 51.6% (48 out of 93 employees). Due to the low response rate, a statistical uncertainty of approximately $\pm 15\%$ should be expected. The reported figures therefore represent a rough estimate and should be refined through a comprehensive survey if greater accuracy is required.

C3 - GHG reduction targets and climate transition

Current Status and Baseline

The Know Center has established a baseline for its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across Scope 1, 2, and 3 categories. Our initial assessment was conducted based on 2025 data, capturing emissions from direct operations, energy consumption, and key indirect sources including travel and supply chain activities.

Reduction Targets

Aligned with the Paris Agreement¹⁰ and the EU Climate Law¹¹, the Know Center has set the following interim targets:

Period	Reduction Target	Baseline Year
2027	10% reduction	2025
2030	30% reduction	2025
2040	80% reduction	2025

These targets are reviewed annually and adjusted based on technological developments and organisational growth.

Climate Transition Strategy

Our climate transition approach is structured around three pillars:

1. Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

- Transition to 100% renewable electricity for all operations
- Implementation of energy-efficient IT infrastructure and data center cooling
- Adoption of energy-efficient models in all research projects

2. Sustainable Operations

- Continued integration of sustainable HR practices
- Reduction of business travel through digital collaboration tools
- Green procurement policies for all vendors and partners

3. Research and Innovation

- Development of AI solutions that optimise energy systems and support the circular economy

¹⁰ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1119>



- Integration of sustainability criteria into all research projects
- Knowledge transfer to industry and public sector partners

Governance and Monitoring

Climate targets are embedded in the Know Center's strategic governance. Progress is monitored through quarterly reviews, with annual reporting to the management board. The Graz climate pact provides additional accountability through external commitments.

Next Steps

During the 2027–2030 period, the Know Center will:

- Expand Scope 3 data collection to improve accuracy
- Integrate digital sovereignty principles into all climate initiatives
- Strengthen collaboration with national and European networks on climate action

Our commitment to climate transition is not only a compliance matter but a core part of our mission to create lasting value for industry, academia, and society.

B4 – Pollution of air, water and soil

The Know Center's operations have minimal direct impact on air, water, and soil pollution. As a data science and AI research institution, our primary environmental footprint relates to energy consumption and electronic waste. We maintain a proactive approach to prevent and minimise any potential pollution through renewable energy use, sustainable mobility options, green procurement policies, and proper waste management.

C4 – Climate-related Risks

As a research and innovation organisation providing research services, conducting national and international research projects, and educating students and early-career researchers, Know Center is exposed primarily to climate-related transition risks rather than significant physical climate risks.

Increasing regulatory requirements related to sustainability and climate reporting, as well as growing expectations from funding organisations, public authorities, industry partners, and customers regarding environmental performance, may require additional organisational resources and the continuous adaptation of internal processes. Furthermore, changes in research funding priorities towards climate-related and sustainability-focused topics may influence future research activities and funding opportunities.

Physical climate risks are currently assessed as comparatively low. Nevertheless, extreme weather events, heatwaves, transport disruptions, or temporary power outages could affect business continuity, the availability of digital infrastructure, and the organisation of research activities, workshops, training events, and collaboration with national and international partners. Rising energy

costs may also increase the operational costs associated with office facilities and IT infrastructure.

Overall, Know Center considers climate-related transition risks to be more relevant than physical climate risks. The organisation continuously monitors regulatory developments, funding priorities, and stakeholder expectations and integrates sustainability considerations into its research activities, operations, and strategic planning where appropriate.

HORA (Natural Hazard Overview and Risk Assessment Austria)¹²
assessment of our sites:

Location	Graz	Wien	Klagenfurt	Innsbruck
Flood risk	++	-	-	-
Surface runoff risk	+	+	+	+
Landslide risk	+	-	+++	++
Hail risk	++	+	+	+

B5 Biodiversity

As an office-based research and innovation organisation, Know Center Research GmbH has no manufacturing activities, significant land use or operations that are likely to adversely affect biodiversity. The company's direct impact on biodiversity and ecosystems is therefore considered negligible. Environmental measures such as digital collaboration and reducing business travel where feasible contribute to minimising its indirect environmental footprint.

B6 – Water

According to the Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas¹³, all four Know Center locations are situated in regions with low water stress. Water consumption is limited to sanitary facilities, cleaning, kitchen operations, and basic technical requirements (e.g., cooling in data centers). Water supply for the Graz location is provided entirely through the municipal network of Holding Graz Wasserwirtschaft, with all consumed water sourced from regional drinking water. Wastewater is discharged into the public sewer system. On a per-employee basis, the water consumption of the main location in Graz corresponds to the average level of comparable institutions.

B7 – Resource use, circular economy and waste management

Since the Know Center Graz is housed in a building leased from the Graz University of Technology, the existing waste management concept has been adopted. The goal is to further optimise resource use and reduce waste. Disposal is carried out by certified waste management companies that are also responsible for reuse and recycling. Data on the actual quantities redirected for reuse or recycling are currently not available.

The most important material streams include office paper, electronic devices (laptops, monitors), and packaging from the daily operations of a research center. Digital signature processes and, in general, increasing digitalisation are progressively reducing consumption. Within procurement, investments in devices are evaluated not only based on acquisition costs but also in terms of lifespan and repairability.

¹² <https://hora.gv.at>

¹³ <https://www.wri.org/applications/aqueduct/water-risk-atlas>





Social
Metrics

B8 – Workforce – General characteristics

Employee gender by reporting year (annual average)

Gender	HC/FTE 2023	HC/FTE 2024	HC/FTE 2025	HC/FTE 01-07/2026
Man	81.9 / 66.9	68.1 / 53.1	59.8 / 46.2	51.7 / 40.6
Woman	39.7 / 29.1	35.5 / 25.5	37.2 / 27.5	43.1 / 30.6
Non-binary	- / -	- / -	1 / 0.4	- / -
Total	121.6 / 95.9	103.6 / 78.6	97.9 / 74.0	94.9 / 71.2
Turnover rate	38.7 %	24.1 %	37.8 %	29.5 %

FTE – full-time equivalent

Employee contract types by reporting year

Contract type	Headcount 2023			Headcount 2024			Headcount 2025			Headcount 01-07/2026		
	M	W	NB	M	W	NB	M	W	NB	M	W	NB
permanent	97	48	-	75	45	-	68	40	-	55	41	-
temporary	4	1	-	4	2	-	7	8	1	8	8	-

M – Man, W – Woman, NB – Non-Binary

Percentage of employee age groups by reporting year (annual average), gender and type of employment

Employee age groups [years]	Headcount 2023						Headcount 2024					
	M		W		NB		M		W		NB	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
0-29	9.3	8	2.7	3.3	-	-	6.3	10.3	1.6	5.6	-	-
30-39	16	10.7	5.3	10	-	-	10.3	11.1	5.6	13.5	-	-
40-49	6	8.7	2	4.7	-	-	5.6	11.9	0.8	6.3	-	-
50-59	2	4.7	0.7	4	-	-	4	2.4	2.4	1.6	-	-
60+	-	2	-	-	-	-	0.8	-	-	-	-	-

Employee age groups [years]	Headcount 2025						Headcount 2026					
	M		W		NB		M		W		NB	
	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT	FT	PT
0-29	4.8	11.3	1.6	9.7	-	0.8	6.3	8.9	5.4	7.1	-	-
30-39	9.7	8.1	4	8.9	-	-	10.7	4.5	5.4	8.9	-	-
40-49	4.8	12.9	4	5.6	-	-	5.4	12.5	6.3	5.4	-	-
50-59	4.8	3.2	2.4	2.4	-	-	4.5	2.7	2.7	2.7	-	-
60+	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.9	-	-	-	-

M – Man, W – Woman, NB – Non-Binary; FT – full-time, PT – part-time

C5/C6/C7 Additional Workforce Characteristics and Human Rights Information

Know Center is committed to promoting equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion among its workforces. A new Gender Equality Plan¹⁴ has been established to support gender equality and to provide a framework for identifying and addressing potential inequalities. The implementation and further development of gender equality measures are supported by a dedicated Gender Equality Working Group, which contributes to raising awareness, promoting dialogue, and supporting equal opportunities within the organisation.

Employee participation and co-determination are ensured through the Works Council. The Works Council represents employee interests and provides an important channel for dialogue between employees and the organisation. It offers regular consultation hours and additional opportunities for employees to raise concerns, provide feedback, and seek advice. The Works Council currently (July 2026) consists of four members (three men and one woman).

Know Center actively promotes employee well-being and a healthy working environment through various workplace health promotion initiatives. These include regular provision of fresh fruit and vegetables, subsidised massage services, and initiatives supporting a positive workplace culture. In addition, Know Center regularly evaluates psychosocial risks and workplace-related stress factors through employee surveys and assess-

ments conducted every two to three years. The results are used to identify potential areas for improvement and to further develop measures supporting employee health, well-being, and a sustainable working environment.

Gender distribution of employees at management level (below the Board of Directors) by reporting year

Headcount	2023	2024	2025	2026
Man	12	10	9	7
Woman	2	1	1	1
Non-Binary	-	-	-	-
Gender ratio				

Gender distribution in the Supervisory Board (Aufsichtsrat)

Headcount	2023	2024	2025	2026
Man	8	8	9	
Woman	1	1	1	
Non-Binary	-	-	-	
Gender ratio				

B9 – Workforce – Health and safety

Know Center offers flexible working arrangements to support work–life balance and employee well-being. The standard full-time working week comprises 38.5 hours. Employees benefit from flexible working hours, allowing them to determine the start and end of their working day

14 https://de.linkedin.com/posts/oliver-bernecker_knowcenter-diversity-genderequality-activity-7498330646088654848-yVCn



within an agreed flexitime framework, taking operational requirements into account.

Hybrid working is supported through the possibility of working remotely for up to 40% of the normal weekly working time, in accordance with the company's internal policies. Overtime work requires prior approval by the respective supervisor.

Know Center has established a whistleblower reporting system that enables employees and other stakeholders to report concerns confidentially.

In addition, employee representation is ensured through the Works Council, which provides an important channel for dialogue, participation, and the representation of employee interests. The Works Council offers regular consultation hours for employees and provides additional opportunities for employees to raise concerns or share feedback, including an anonymous suggestion and feedback channel ("Kummerkasten").

Currently, no formal Code of Conduct specifically addressing human rights has been established. Nevertheless, Know Center is committed to respecting human rights and to promoting the principles of equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion.

No cases related to child labour, forced labour, human trafficking, or discrimination among the company's workforce have been reported. Furthermore, no confirmed human rights incidents within our value chain, affected communities, consumers, or end-users have been identified based on the information currently available.

The following indicators show the development of the sick-leave as well as the work-related accident rate over the reporting years.

Year	Work-related accident-rate (VSME standard)	Sickness Rate (%)
2023	0	3,52
2024	3,16	2,46
2025	1,72	4,45
08/2026	2,55	2,25

During the reporting period, no fatalities resulting from work-related injuries occurred. Among its own employees, four work-related accidents were recorded.

The accident rate is calculated using the following formula (VSME Standard)¹⁵:

$$\text{Rate of Recordable Accidents} = \frac{\text{Number of Recordable Accidents} \times 200.000}{\text{Total Hours Worked}}$$

It should be noted that according to ESRS/VSME standards, only genuine work accidents are counted, not commuting accidents, i.e., accidents on the way to or from work.

For the sickness absence rate, the following formula applies:

$$\text{Sickness Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Days Lost Due to Illness} \times 100}{\text{Total Available Working Days}}$$

When calculating, only actual absence days from Monday to Friday are considered. For full-time employees, approximately 250 working days per year are assumed as planned working days. For the calculation of working hours, full-time employees are assumed to work 1,720 hours per year, with part-time employee hours added additionally.

B10 – Workforce – Remuneration, collective bargaining and training

Know Center applies the Austrian Collective Agreement for "Employees of service providers in the field of automatic data processing and information technology" (IT Collective Agreement) to all employees (100%). Employment conditions, including working time, remuneration, annual leave, overtime compensation, and other employment-related rights and obligations, are governed by the collective agreement and complemented by internal company policies where applicable.

Employee development is supported by a structured level system, annual employee dialogues, clearly defined career stages, and targeted internal and external training opportunities. This framework is designed to ensure transparency, comparability, and consistency in career development and progression.

In 2025, employees received an average of 11.3 hours of training per year for men and 9.8 hours for women. From January to June 2026, the average training time amounted to 5.1 hours for men and 6.2 hours for women.

An analysis of the gender pay gap based on 2025 data shows a difference in total annual salaries of €44,376.40 across the workforce. When adjusted for Full-Time Equivalents (FTE), thereby standardising for differences in working hours, the gap decreases to €32,427.96. The analysis also shows that the pay gap is not evenly distributed across the organisation but increases considerably at higher salary levels. This is primarily related to the underrepresentation of women and non-binary employees in Manager and Director positions. The composition of the workforce at senior levels therefore represents an important structural factor contributing to the overall gender pay gap.

¹⁵<https://www.efrag.org/sites/default/files/sites/webpublishing/SiteAssets/VSME%20Standard.pdf>

Governance Metrics





B11 – Convictions and fines for corruption and bribery

Know Center Research GmbH provides an anonymous whistleblowing mechanism through its website. Reports are handled by the responsible unit in accordance with the applicable internal procedures and legal requirements.

During the reporting period, no reports falling within the scope of the Austrian Whistleblower Protection Act (Hinweisgeber – HSchG) were received. Furthermore, no convictions or fines related to breaches of anti-corruption or anti-bribery laws were recorded, and no legal proceedings relating to corruption or bribery were pending during the reporting period.

C8 – Revenues from certain sectors and exclusion from EU reference benchmarks

Know Center Research GmbH does not generate any revenue from activities in the sectors specified under the VSME Standard, namely controversial weapons, the cultivation or production of tobacco, the fossil fuel sector (coal, oil and gas), or the manufacture of pesticides and other agrochemical products.

Accordingly, 0% of Know Center Research GmbH's revenues are derived from these activities.

Know Center Research GmbH is not excluded from any EU reference benchmarks aligned with the Paris Agreement.

C9 – Gender diversity ratio in the governance body

As of the end of the reporting period, the Management Board consisted of three members, all of whom were male. Accordingly, the share of women and non-binary persons in the Management Board was 0%, and no gender diversity was represented at this governance level.



A Look Ahead

Know Center will continue to further develop its sustainability activities and VSME reporting in the coming years. A particular focus will be placed on establishing a reliable ESG data management process to improve the collection, evaluation, and monitoring of relevant sustainability indicators. In the future, Know Center aims to collaborate closely with TU Graz to strengthen its sustainability reporting capabilities and benefit from their expertise in this field. Based on these data, Know Center aims to define realistic targets and develop a structured action plan to continuously improve its environmental, social, and governance performance.

At the same time, ESG considerations will be further integrated into research activities, organisational development, and the company culture. As a research center for trustworthy artificial intelligence and data science, Know Center is committed to embedding sustainability and responsibility into its daily operations and long-term strategic development. This includes advancing responsible research and innovation, strengthening awareness of sustainability across the organisation, and continuously responding to the evolving expectations of funding bodies, shareholders, research partners, employees, and other stakeholders.

Imprint

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