

OPEN FOR PROGRESS

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS REPORT 2023

SPRINGER NATURE GROUP



WE'RE UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF OPEN SCIENCE AND RESEARCH TO ACCELERATE SOLUTIONS TO THE WORLD'S URGENT CHALLENGES

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Springer Nature's Sustainable Business Report details our management approach and the progress we are making to address our most material environmental, social and governance (ESG) challenges, in line with our sustainable business strategy. We also detail actions we are taking that support the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in line with our commitment to the SDG Publishers Compact.

This report covers performance and progress from 1 January to 31 December 2023. Sometimes we refer to activities that began before this timeframe – these are either ongoing projects or relate to our most material issues.

Our reporting covers all entities that are part of the Springer Nature Group, and has been prepared with reference to the

Universal Standards of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The Appendix includes more information on the materiality matrix and management approach of the topics that fall within its scope.

LIMITED ASSURANCE ENGAGEMENT

Our auditor, EY, performed a limited assurance engagement on selected non-financial indicators in the area of diversity and carbon reporting marked in the data charts on [pages 32-33](#) of this report and the data table on [pages 44-47](#) with † in accordance with the International Standard on Assurance Engagement (ISAE) 3000 (Revised). The full statement can be read on [page 42-43](#).

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE PREPARE THIS REPORT AND OUR AUDIT PROCESS IN THE APPENDIX ON [PAGE 41](#) →

OPENING DOORS TO DISCOVERY FOR 180 YEARS

WHO WE ARE

Springer Nature Group is a leading publisher of research, professional, health and education content, with more than 180 years of heritage and an unmatched reputation as custodians of quality and integrity. Our trusted brands, talented people and advanced technologies provide verified insights that are easy to find, understand, use and build on.

Every day, around the globe, our imprints, books, journals and platforms reach millions of people. As the largest academic book publisher, we inspire learning in classrooms and universities, and bring insights into workplaces, hospitals and doctors' surgeries. And we are helping connect the world using technology and innovation, as guided by our purpose: to open doors to discovery.

OUR VISION

To accelerate solutions to the world's urgent challenges.

We are unlocking the potential of open science and research across all disciplines to accelerate solutions to the world's urgent challenges and improve the lives of generations to come.

OUR COMPLEMENTARY BUSINESS SEGMENTS



RESEARCH



EDUCATION



HEALTH



PROFESSIONAL

SOME OF OUR TRUSTED BRANDS

SPRINGER NATURE IN 2023

9,400+ EMPLOYEES

45+ COUNTRIES OF OPERATION

1.85 BILLION IN REVENUE

14,000+ RESEARCH BOOKS PUBLISHED

420,400 ARTICLES PUBLISHED

AROUND 3,000 JOURNALS

183,800 OPEN ACCESS (OA) ARTICLES PUBLISHED

1.8 MILLION+ RESEARCH SUBMISSIONS

8.5 MILLION CONTENT DOWNLOADS PER DAY¹

WORKING WITH AROUND 750,000 PEER REVIEWERS AND 100,000+ EDITORS

¹ Total item requests, using COUNTER 5 code of practice, journal articles and book chapters.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

See how we are supporting progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the halfway point to 2030.

SPRINGER NATURE GROUP SDG Programme



supporting the Sustainable Development Goals

READ MORE ON [PAGES 7-10](#) →

FIND OUT MORE

We share our business performance and community work through our suite of annual reports and our YouTube channel:

[Annual Progress report](#) →

[Sustainable Business reports](#) →

[Open Access report](#) →

[YouTube channel](#) →

OUR 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLISHING

940,000+ ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS RELATED TO THE SDGs PUBLISHED SINCE 2015

ADDED 86 NEW SERIES OF EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS TO OUR PORTFOLIO, ALTOGETHER SUPPORTING 30 MILLION + LEARNERS.

CONTENT IN OUR OA JOURNALS CONTINUES TO BE CITED MORE FREQUENTLY THAN OTHER PUBLISHERS



PEOPLE

60,000 TRAINING HOURS DELIVERED VIA OUR ONLINE LEARNING PORTAL

1,800 MEMBERS OF OUR EMPLOYEE NETWORKS

WOMEN NOW MAKE UP 44% OF OUR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP COHORT



PLANET

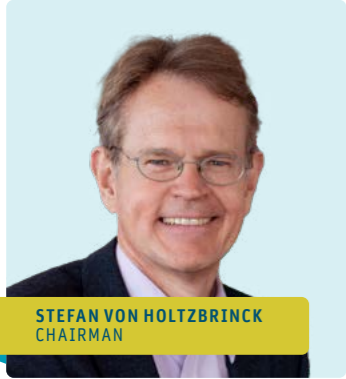
SCIENCE-BASED TARGETS VALIDATED

SILVER ECOVADIS RATING

62 MENTIONS OF NATURE-BRANDED JOURNALS IN UNEP 2023 EMISSIONS GAP REPORT



JOINT STATEMENT FROM OUR CHAIR AND CEO



STEFAN VON HOLTZBRINCK
CHAIRMAN

2023 was a significant year for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as it marked the halfway point towards their 2030 end point. *Nature* took stock of progress in a special [supplement](#), which was edited by the UN scientists appointed to assess progress and recommend how to move forward. In the supplement, these researchers delivered a stark message: the world is not on track to achieve any of the 17 goals and cannot rely on change to happen organically.



FRANK VRANCKEN PEETERS
CEO

At Springer Nature, we remain steadfast in our commitment to accelerating solutions to the world's greatest challenges, based on the discovery and dissemination of trusted knowledge. It is the unifying mission for our 9,400+ colleagues around the world, informs many of our external outreach activities and is supported by our extensive publishing programme across research, professional, health and education.

Our colleagues share a passion to make a difference to the world. To reflect this, we launched our new employer brand 'Be Part of Progress' this year, which captures why our people choose to work for us, as well as what new and current employees can expect from a career with us. We also saw more colleagues commit to sustainability this year by signing up to our Green Office Network, which doubled in size to over 400 active members.

We regularly use the convening power of our trusted brands, such as *Scientific American* and *Nature*, to facilitate discussions between policymakers and scientists and in 2023, this included events such as the UN Science Summit in NYC and our seventh annual 'Science on the Hill' event in Washington D.C. Also this year, we collated the views of nearly 5,000 researchers to analyse their perception of diversity, equity and inclusion, with a view to making science and research more equitable and accessible in order to speed up progress towards the goals.

SINCE 2015, WE HAVE PUBLISHED MORE THAN 940,000 ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS WITH SDG-RELATED CONTENT AND A MAJORITY OF THE CONTENT OF ALMOST 500 OF OUR JOURNALS IS RELATED TO THE SDGs.

Of course, the most significant contribution we can make to progressing the SDGs is through the trusted content we publish.

In education too, we celebrated 180 years of the global brand Macmillan Education, which continues to inspire children and students across the globe with their Advancing Futures programme introducing sustainability and citizenship.

Clearly, we can't talk about 2023 without mentioning artificial intelligence (AI). The opportunities presented by the emergence of generative AI was the subject of analysis in *Nature*, which heard directly from the research community about their use of available tools as well as their hopes and fears for the future. This report explores the delicate balance we must strike between acceleration and patience and the importance of keeping humans in the loop to protect the integrity of the scientific record.

The assessment of impact, risk and opportunity also sits at the heart of any sustainability and ESG reports. In the following chapters, you'll read more about the topics we need to manage effectively, working closely with our people, our partners and our peers to have a positive social and environmental impact and continue to deliver on our mission to accelerate solutions to the world's urgent challenges.

SUSTAINABILITY AT SPRINGER NATURE

OUR MISSION: OPENING DOORS TO DISCOVERY

Research and learning are the cornerstones of progress, and publishing is an essential link in the process. At Springer Nature, we open the doors to discovery by enabling millions of researchers, educators, clinicians and other professionals to access, trust and make sense of the latest insights. Through our sustainable business strategy – and through the content we publish – we commit to addressing the urgent challenges presented by the SDGs, with a particular focus on the goals where we believe we have the biggest impact. By doing this, we are contributing to an agenda for global sustainable development that improves and enriches lives, and protects our planet for future generations.

QUALITIES REQUIRED TO DELIVER OUR MISSION



PARTNERSHIP
EMPATHY AND COLLABORATION



INTEGRITY
INDEPENDENCE AND ACCURACY



DRIVE
ADAPTABILITY AND DYNAMISM



RESPONSIBILITY
COMMITMENT AND PURPOSE

OUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY



ACCELERATING SOLUTIONS TO URGENT SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

Content and events that make a meaningful difference to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Learn how we're doing this with 'The SDG midpoint: home stretch or out of reach?' on [page 7](#) →



CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

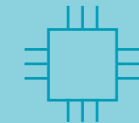
Increasing representation in our organisation, content and external communities.

Learn how we're doing this with 'At the heart of a network' on [page 19](#) →



RESPONSIBILITY

We do the right thing for all our communities and champion diversity and inclusion. We act as a responsible business, driving sustainable progress and recognising the ideas and opinions of all.



USING TECHNOLOGY TO ADVANCE DISCOVERY AND LEARNING

Deploying advanced technologies responsibly to open doors to discovery.

Learn how we're doing this with 'AI and research: a question of trust' on [page 12](#) →

LIVING OUR VALUES

BEING A RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYER

[PAGE 20](#) →

MEETING NET ZERO COMMITMENTS

[PAGE 32](#) →

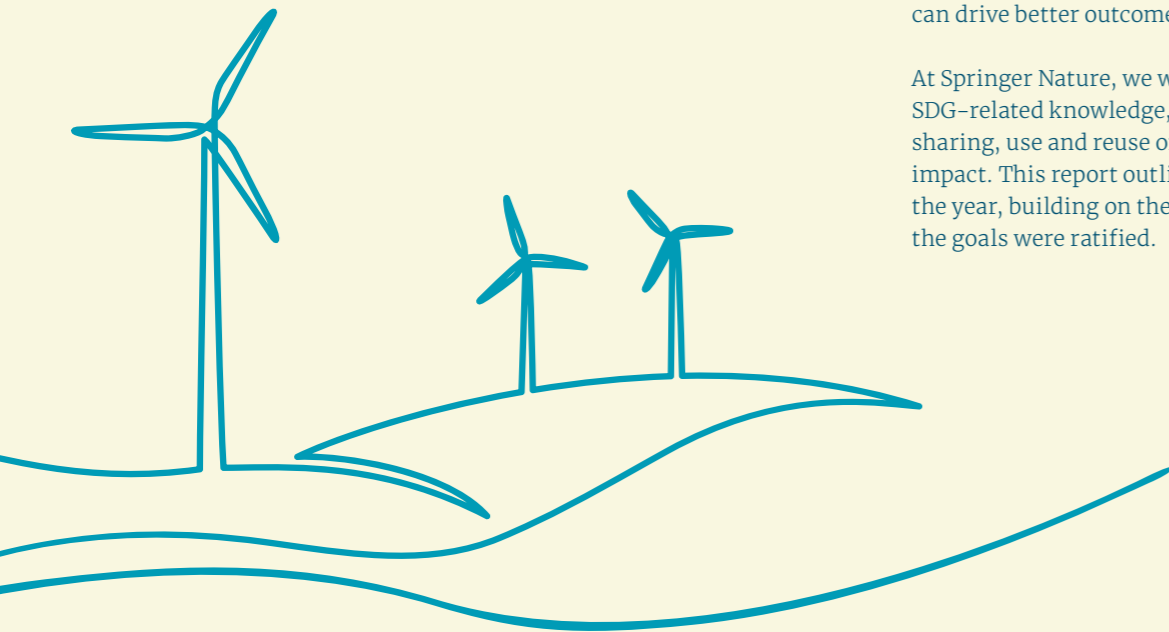
GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

[PAGE 39](#) →

PARTNERING RESPONSIBLY

[PAGE 40](#) →

THE SDG MIDPOINT: HOME STRETCH OR OUT OF REACH?



2023 marks the midpoint of the SDGs. Despite concerns about meeting the goals on time by 2030, we remain committed to them. We are intensifying our efforts to amplify the SDGs among our research audiences, creating new routes (journals, books and collections) for researchers to publish relevant insights, and developing engagement programmes for teachers and children worldwide.

Why? Because the SDGs remain the most visible and concrete way to highlight where governments, businesses and civil society can collectively address urgent global challenges with local, evidence-based solutions. We believe the goals provide a framework for new research, partnerships and collaborations that can drive better outcomes for people and the planet.

At Springer Nature, we want to provide a home for SDG-related knowledge, facilitating the discovery, sharing, use and reuse of research that has true impact. This report outlines our activities throughout the year, building on the past eight years of work since the goals were ratified.

To mark their halfway point, we hosted Science Storytelling for the SDGs, an event with the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and The Story Collider. This took place alongside the UN General Assembly Science Summit, where Magdalena Skipper, Editor in Chief of *Nature*, delivered the opening plenary. We also launched a joint collection from 44 journals across the Nature Portfolio, featuring articles showcasing effective interventions related to the goals at a local, regional and national level to track progress and amplify successes.

SDG ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN 2023 WERE DOWNLOADED AROUND 123 MILLION TIMES.

While we publish across all 17 SDGs, there is a subset where we believe Springer Nature has a more direct role to play. This year, we expanded this group to include SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). This reflects our dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion and the interdisciplinary nature of each goal and its solutions. We believe we can make a powerful difference in these areas, given our existing priorities.

OUR SDG FOCUS AREAS



SINCE 2015, OUR SDG CONTENT HAS BEEN CITED MORE THAN 13 MILLION TIMES.



Behind every piece of research we publish is a team of talented, dedicated editors, without whom world-changing research discoveries would remain undiscovered. We work with more than 100,000 external academic editors, who champion their subjects and uphold the scientific record, ensuring the highest levels of quality and integrity.

Academic and editorial communities facilitate knowledge exchange, encourage global dialogue and identify solutions to worldwide issues – all essential components for realising the SDGs. Our role is to ensure researchers and editors know the impact they can have, and that the world sees the effects of their work.



RITU DHAND, CHIEF SCIENTIFIC OFFICER



MAGDALENA SKIPPER, EDITOR IN CHIEF, NATURE

ADVANCING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

EXTERNAL INFLUENCE

The most significant contribution we can make to achieving the SDGs is through the content we publish. We disseminate new knowledge on the wide variety of issues represented within the goals beyond academic circles, and seek to be the publisher of choice for researchers tackling global challenges. We also take into account the impact of our business operations on the SDGs.



OF 2,500 RESEARCHERS SURVEYED, 58% WERE FAMILIAR WITH SPRINGER NATURE'S SDG PROGRAMME

We know that the SDGs are important to many of our communities and colleagues. Each year, we commission research to help us better understand how the communities we work with perceive Springer Nature and our priorities. In 2023, more than 2,500 individuals responded, including authors, editors, reviewers, librarians and other users of our content. Of those surveyed, 58% were familiar with our SDG initiatives and 46% agreed that Springer Nature is advancing the SDGs. While these figures have dipped since 2022, there has been an overall upward trend since we started measuring. A new question this year found that around half were familiar with Springer Nature's net zero commitment.

SDG CONTENT HUBS

OUR 17 SDG CONTENT HUBS WERE VISITED MORE THAN 157,000 TIMES IN 2023. THE HUBS ARE MAINTAINED AND SUPPORTED BY INTERNAL EXPERT NETWORKS COMPRISING COLLEAGUES FROM DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES AND BUSINESS AREAS.

THIS IS JUST ONE WAY WE INNOVATE TO SUPPORT THE SDGs, MAKING RELEVANT PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES AND CONTENT MORE VISIBLE TO PRACTITIONERS IN POLICY, BUSINESS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS.

CASE STUDIES

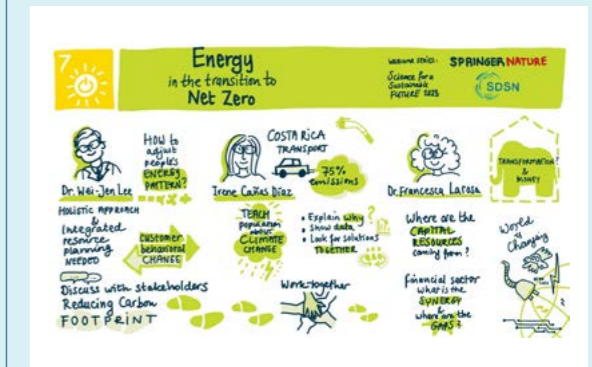
BRITISH DENTAL JOURNAL'S SDG-THEMED FRONT COVERS

While dentistry might not seem like a field immediately associated with the SDGs, the *British Dental Journal* chose to highlight a different goal in each issue from July to December 2023. In doing so, the special series provided a space for authors to discuss how dental professionals, institutions and policymakers alike can make a difference to the goals. See two examples from the cover series, highlighting SDGs 10 and 4, below.



SCIENCE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Now in its fourth year, the 2023 Science for a Sustainable Future event – a joint initiative with the UN SDSN – brought together key stakeholders, policymakers and researchers to discuss and advance the objectives of SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy. We hosted three webinars – on energy and science communication, social justice, and the transition to net zero – and published a [briefing of the key policy recommendations for progress](#). This was shared with key stakeholders in the policy space, and featured in the SDSN's COP28 resource hub. See a visual summary of a Science for a Sustainable Future session by Suzanne Seton, below.



SDG SPOTLIGHTS



SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

[Change Makers](#), part of Macmillan Education's [Advancing Futures](#) programme, invites students of all ages and abilities to create and share their vision for a fairer, more sustainable future. Change Makers helps teachers introduce sustainable development concepts into their classrooms and communities, and enables students to develop critical thinking, citizenship and language skills.



SDG 5: GENDER INEQUALITY

In India, one-third of all conferences related to science, technology, engineering or maths (STEM) have no women in attendance, according to [reports in Nature](#). Springer Nature India launched Her Research, Our Future in 2023, a flagship campaign to highlight and empower female researchers making a difference, motivate the next generation of female scientists and foster connections across the research community. So far, the campaign organisers have met and engaged with more than 1,000 female researchers across 10 states in India through a series of outreach events and workshops.

MORE THAN 450 COLLEAGUES VOLUNTEER IN SDG WORKING GROUPS ON PROJECTS TO ADVANCE THE GOALS.



SDG 10: REDUCING INEQUALITIES

Springer Nature is committed to diversifying its peer reviewer pools and editorial boards to improve representation by geographic location, ethnicity and gender. With that aim in mind, *Communications Biology* developed a six-week editor training programme to introduce PhD students or postdoctoral fellows to editorial careers. More than 150 trainees from 40 countries applied to be part of a final cohort of eight participants that learnt more about editorial tasks through weekly assignments, such as assessing a manuscript or evaluating reviewer feedback, and received personalised feedback from editors. Participants were also given the opportunity to write a research highlight for publication in the journal.



SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION

For International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2023, Springer Nature supported the [Global Indigenous Youth Summit on Climate Change](#) by amplifying the voices of participants via a social media takeover. *Nature* published a special feature about how Indigenous young people and researchers can assist each other. We also learn from the research we publish to help us minimise emissions and mitigate environmental impacts in our operations and supply chain. Examples of our efforts can be found in the [Our carbon approach](#) section.



SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

We have sought new partnerships across our business and with other organisations, harnessing the power of brands such as *Nature* and *Scientific American*. This includes collaborating on the [Sustainable Development Knowledge Cooperative](#), hosted by Kudos, to identify, explain, showcase and publicise plain English summaries of research that can help achieve the SDGs. From its launch in September 2023 to the end of the year, the Cooperative received over 330,000 views.

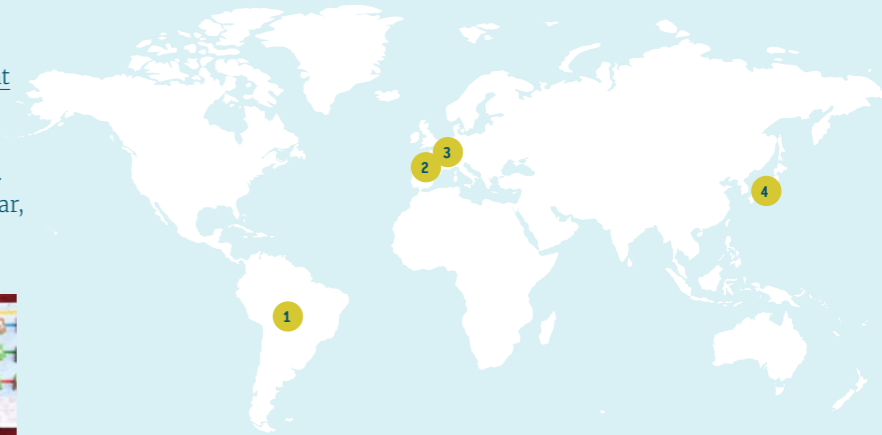


ABOVE: HER RESEARCH, OUR FUTURE 2023.



LEFT: A QUOTE FROM A PARTICIPANT IN THE GLOBAL INDIGENOUS YOUTH SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

SUPPORTING THE SDGs ACROSS THE WORLD



1

Our second [Latin America and Caribbean Sustainable Development Summit](#), which bridges science, policy and social impact to address the region's greatest challenges, attracted nearly 700 participants from 39 different countries.

2

Together with [Tara Océan](#), we hosted a joint French press briefing on the two-year continuous expedition exploring Pacific coral reef biodiversity. The briefing attracted over 50 journalists and marked the launch of a [research collection](#) from across the Springer Nature portfolio from the project.

3

To reflect Springer Nature's German-language SDG content, we launched a dedicated [SDG programme page in German](#).

4

Together with the University of Tokyo, we hosted our [fourth SDG symposium](#) on the topic of 'Cities and Nature: Exploring Linkages and Designing Solutions for Sustainability'.

ADVANCING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

In our employee engagement survey, we asked colleagues for the second year in a row if they think Springer Nature makes a positive social and environmental impact. This question scored 75, an increase of two points since 2022.

SDG IMPACT FESTIVAL

In 2023, to coincide with the UN's Global Goals Week, Springer Nature held its third SDG Impact Festival for employees, to raise awareness of the goals. The festival celebrates and recognises projects and colleagues across the business that contribute to the goals, through the SDG Impact Awards.




In addition, the SDG Impact Challenge encourages colleagues to take more personal action relating to the goals in a fun and competitive way, and to learn more about them through virtual and in-person events. In 2023, the Challenge focused on SDG 3: Health and Well-Being, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 13: Climate Action. More than 1,000 colleagues participated in the Challenge.

Through a leaderboard on the [Giki Zero app](#), colleagues could keep track of the collective impact of their actions. They could also join one of nine global teams, each led by two senior leaders, and compete for prize money to donate to their team's chosen charity.

THE 2022 SDG IMPACT CHALLENGE WON A BRONZE AWARD IN THE 'BEST ENVIRONMENTAL OR SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMME' CATEGORY AT THE CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT AWARDS 2023.



OUR COMBINED ACTIONS THROUGHOUT THE THREE WEEKS OF THE SDG IMPACT CHALLENGE SAVED:

			
243 TONNES OF CARBON EQUIVALENT TO HEATING 100 HOMES FOR A YEAR	60,000 M² OF LAND EQUIVALENT TO THE SURFACE AREA OF 306 TENNIS COURTS	7.2 MILLION LITRES OF WATER EQUIVALENT TO THREE OLYMPIC-SIZED SWIMMING POOLS	30,313 SINGLE-USE PLASTIC ITEMS



**PUBLISHING**

ADVANCING DISCOVERY

At Springer Nature, we publish peer-reviewed research, and we're continuing to lead the transition to open access (OA) – to enhance the research process and drive discoveries that address the world's biggest challenges. Reforming and improving publishing processes through new platforms and standards has also been a focus. We're using artificial intelligence (AI) to support us in generating books, reviewing literature and collecting data, as well as working to address the risks that AI may pose to the accuracy and integrity of the scientific record.

IN THIS SECTION

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- 13 OPEN ACCESS
- 15 SCIENCE COMMUNICATION
- 16 RESEARCH INTEGRITY
- 17 HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY

AI AND RESEARCH: A QUESTION OF TRUST

The progress made in AI, and especially the use of generative AI and large language models, has been one of the biggest news stories of 2023. Although we aren't new to AI and machine learning, we've been considering the new opportunities but also the associated risks for our business. This includes establishing new governance to ensure that, as custodians of the scientific record, we make use of AI responsibly and ethically. Here, our Chief Risk and Compliance Officer, Dinah Spence, and Vice President of AI, Thomas Sütterlin, discuss our approach.

Thomas: When I joined Springer Nature seven years ago, we were very much at the beginning of our AI journey. Since then, we've piloted numerous exciting developments, such as automatic translations that enable scientists to share their research more widely, opening the door to a global audience for scientific content. We have created machine-generated books and auto-generated literature reviews, and developed [Nature Research Intelligence](#). This uses *Nature's* 150 years of research expertise and AI to bring information and data to decision-makers, helping them make progress, faster. But we're conscious that, with things moving so quickly, there are concerns about whether companies are allowing AI to do too much, or whether it might generate false information or be used by those who want to undermine research with fake content.

Dinah: There are some really exciting opportunities with AI, such as how we are harnessing technologies to improve the service we can provide to researchers. But when deciding what to develop, we have a lot more to consider. We are guided by ethics, a rapidly changing regulatory environment and the need to pay attention to both the evolving competition and the potential risks associated with new technologies.

Thomas: That's true. The integrity of the scientific record is of paramount importance to our community and to us at Springer Nature. Threats to research integrity have always existed – for example, through plagiarism. But with generative AI, fabricated non-factual content can be harder to detect. You have to take a much more thorough look at the manuscript and the science behind it to see if something has been made up. That may include the people in the process: fake editors and reviewers, for example. We're now using different AI services to detect this sort of integrity issue. It's also helping us identify appropriate peer reviewers for research more quickly, which can expedite the process of scientific discovery and publication.

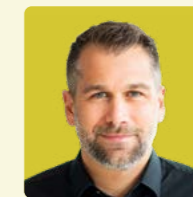
Dinah: Fabrication and deception are clearly issues we need to explore but, as with any other digital tool, there are other risks we need to consider too. While regulatory approaches continue to evolve, we can already see and implement some common principles, including accountability, equity, data privacy, risk management and transparency. Within our AI governance structures, we have created an Ethics Forum and a Legal and Policy Forum to align on these topics across the company. Fortunately, at Springer Nature, we can call on great minds – experts across all scientific fields as well as editors, publishers, compliance and risk teams – working to make sure we're taking the right approach to developing and adopting new technologies. Ultimately, humans need to be in the loop – and the driving seat – when it comes to the progression and application of AI.

▶▶ **As we navigate the AI landscape, we do so with caution, continuously evaluating its benefits and addressing any concerns raised by the research community. Security and ethics are even more essential to us in the era of AI.**

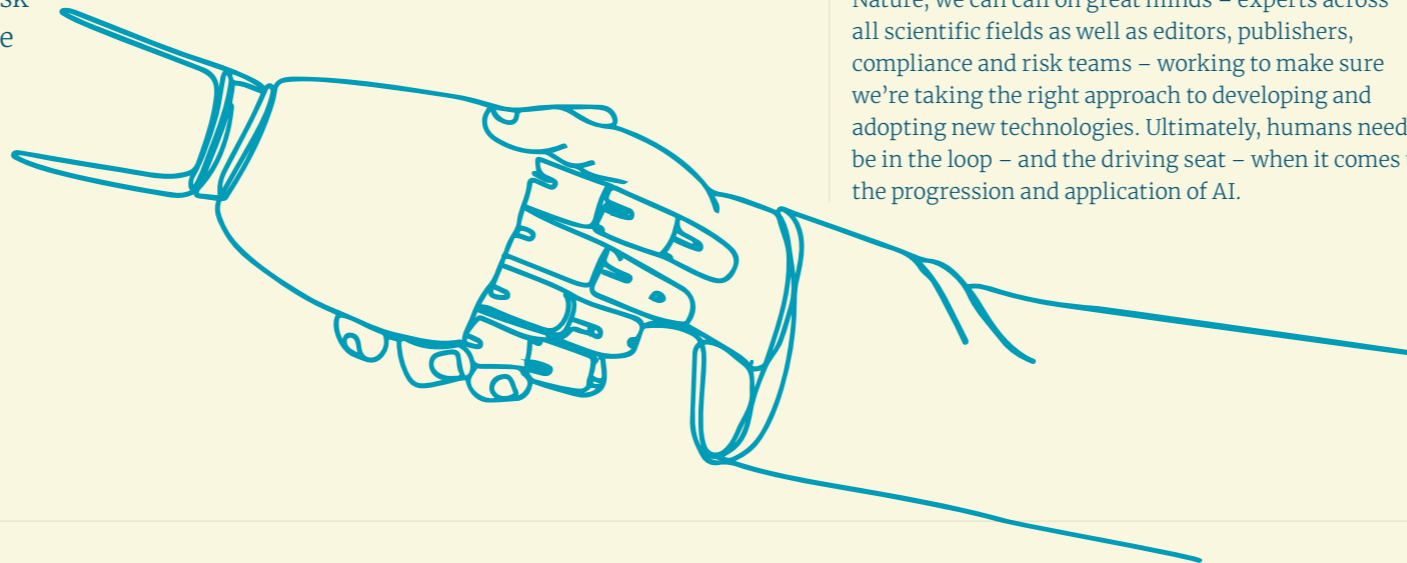
Thomas: And for those great minds across Springer Nature, we're at an exciting moment in our AI journey. From a strategy point of view, we're looking at five key areas: personalised recommendations, ensuring research integrity, easing discovery, enhancing peer review and one-click content conversion such as immediate summaries and translations. There's so much we can do to benefit researchers and customers. We have opportunities to speed up publishing timelines so that scientific results are released sooner, and AI can truly help us accelerate solutions to contribute to global sustainable development – a key part of our mission.



DINAH SPENCE,
CHIEF RISK AND
COMPLIANCE OFFICER



THOMAS SÜTTERLIN,
VICE PRESIDENT OF AI



OPEN ACCESS

We have been driving the transition to OA for more than 20 years and were the first in our sector to publish 1 million OA articles. We believe that gold OA, which gives immediate access to the final published peer-reviewed research, is the most viable and sustainable path to open science.

OA AT SPRINGER NATURE

We are progressing our commitment to improve the speed, reproducibility and efficiency of the entire research process. We aim to help our customers to transition their budgets from funding access to read research towards funding OA publishing, through new commercial models, practical approaches, use of technology and the development of suitable policies. This is because having easy and open access to all parts of research is essential to driving forward a more reproducible research ecosystem that impacts and accelerates solutions to the world's pressing challenges.

We support authors from over 200 countries to publish OA in our 600+ fully OA journals and around 2,100 hybrid journals, including *Scientific Reports*, the largest and most downloaded OA journal.

Springer Nature's commitment to increasing public access to scientific research and data through OA was called out by *TIME* magazine as an example of how the world got better in 2023.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR OA PUBLISHING, READ OUR LATEST OA REPORT.](#)

We have published more OA books on SDG-related topics than other research publishers. Content in our OA journals continues to be cited more frequently than other publishers.

IN 2023

WE PUBLISHED 183,800 OA ARTICLES, AND ARE ON TRACK FOR HALF OF OUR RESEARCH ARTICLE OUTPUT TO BE OA BY THE END OF 2024.

AROUND 44% OF OUR PRIMARY RESEARCH CONTENT IS OA.

AROUND 54% OF OUR SDG-RELATED JOURNAL ARTICLES WERE OA.

TRANSFORMING ACCESS

Since 2014, we have been pioneering transformative agreements (TAs) as the best way to accelerate the transition to OA globally, and at scale. TAs, which are centrally negotiated with research funders, individual institutions or groups of institutions, enable authors to publish OA in most journals at no cost to themselves while still being able to access subscription content. Discipline-neutral, they are of great benefit to authors active in less-well-funded research areas, such as humanities and social sciences. Our TAs now support researchers from more than 3,600 institutions around the world to publish OA.

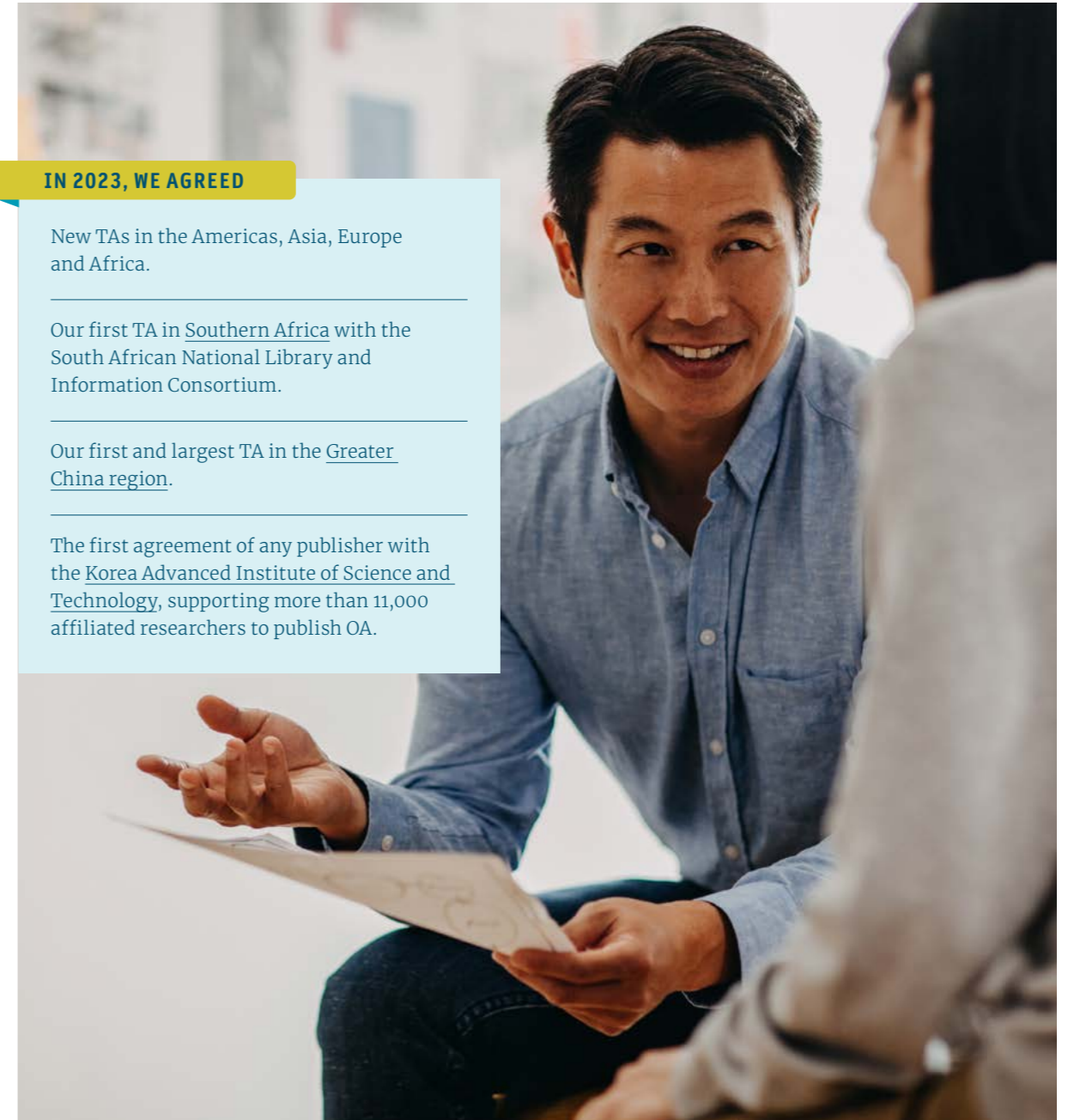
IN 2023, WE AGREED

New TAs in the Americas, Asia, Europe and Africa.

Our first TA in Southern Africa with the South African National Library and Information Consortium.

Our first and largest TA in the Greater China region.

The first agreement of any publisher with the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, supporting more than 11,000 affiliated researchers to publish OA.



OPEN ACCESS

ENABLING EQUITABLE OA

We know that some researchers are concerned about whether the sustainable transition to OA might create new inequities because of the need to fund publishing costs via article processing charges (APCs). This is something we care about too, which is why, in low- and lower-middle-income countries (LICs and LMICs) and some research disciplines where APCs and TAs can be difficult to finance, we operate an APC waiver and discount policy.

In addition to our long-standing waiver programme, as of January 2023, primary research by authors from more than 70 LICs or LMICs, accepted for publication in either *Nature* or one of the *Nature* research journals can now be [published OA at no cost using a dedicated fund](#).

Our fully OA journals waived fees of over €26 million to authors in 2023. This included over €8.5 million for articles with corresponding authors based in countries or regions on the World Bank's list of LICs and LMICs.

We are also long-standing partners of and active contributors to [Research4Life](#), which offers subscription research content to scholars in these countries for free or at low cost, and provides a range of other support and services to enable more equitable access to publishing.

A grant from Springer Nature is currently being used for Research4Life's Country Connectors programme, which aims to heighten awareness of the availability of this content and strengthen capacity of information use and management. With Springer Nature's support, the programme was implemented in a French-speaking country, Senegal, for the first time.

Our commitment to enabling equitable OA forms part of a broader effort to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across the research publishing landscape. We work to eliminate barriers to creating, discovering and using knowledge, and we support equitable outcomes in learning and advancing scholarships from young learners to PhD level and beyond.

See the [People](#) section for more about how we are advancing DEI in research publishing, through our internal approach to DEI in our organisation and our external-facing approach in our communities and content.

EARLY SHARING AND ENHANCED ACCESS

Scientific advancement depends on data credibility and work that can be verified, built upon and reproduced. [Studies show that a lack of awareness of existing work or negative results lead to unnecessary duplication](#) and could waste up to €26 billion per year in Europe alone.

Researchers tell us overwhelmingly that they are still not getting the support they need to share their data openly. At Springer Nature, our vision for open science encompasses a set of open outputs such as data, code and protocols (or detailed step-by-step instructions for research methods).

Our aim is to standardise the process, ensure accuracy of results and enable research to be easily reproduced. In 2023, we acquired [protocols.io](#), a secure platform for developing and sharing reproducible methods. This enables researchers to make their protocols openly available, as well as publishing them in peer-reviewed publications (searchable via [Springer Nature Experiments](#)).

We also expanded [In Review](#), a service that integrates early sharing and increased transparency with the journal submission and peer-review process, across [more than 1,000 Springer Nature journals](#). To make data sharing easier, we also introduced a [single data policy](#) across all journals and books.



SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

By publishing peer-reviewed research and disseminating it via high-quality channels and platforms, we can play an important role in combatting the rise of misinformation and ensuring accurate understanding of the latest scientific discoveries.

SCIENCE IN THE MEDIA

Our content reaches millions of people through news, analysis and other communications, including:

WEBSITES



AROUND 60 MILLION VISITS PER MONTH TO NATURE.COM AND SCIENTIFICAMERICAN.COM

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE



375,000 FOLLOW SPRINGER NATURE'S CORPORATE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

PODCASTS



SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN LAUNCHED 'SCIENCE, QUICKLY', A BITE-SIZE VARIETY SHOW DOWNLOADED OVER 9.9 MILLION TIMES IN 2023

NEWS COVERAGE



IN 2023, THE RESEARCH WE PUBLISHED AND THEN PROMOTED GENERATED NEARLY 180,000 NEWS ARTICLES GLOBALLY

Springer Nature has provided financial support for the infrastructure, project management and communications of the [global network of Science Media Centres](#). Bringing together these expert organisations helps ensure the public has access to the best evidence and media expertise when science hits the headlines.

NATURE BRIEFING SERIES

In 2023, we launched [Nature Briefing: Anthropocene](#), covering updates on vital research related to sustainability and climate change. The newsletter reached 16,000 readers in its first two months.

REACHING POLICYMAKERS

We aim to connect the world of science and policy, bridging the gap and enabling everyone to benefit from the knowledge the research community generates. We've been working to foster [closer partnerships between researchers and policymakers](#). Our aim is to deepen our understanding of what policymakers need from the research and academic community to make decisions, and demonstrate that policies based on peer-reviewed, published evidence are the most effective.

We also share a variety of tools to help policymakers access and understand complex research matters, including [Nature Energy's Policy Briefs](#) and [Nature Sustainability's expert panels](#).

CASE STUDIES

CONNECTING SCIENCE AND POLICY IN THE US, GERMANY AND UK

Our [Science on the Hill](#) event in Washington, DC – now in its seventh year – saw 40 congressional politicians and staffers explore ways to better prepare for severe weather events. We also took this series to Germany with our first [Science on the Spree](#) event during Berlin Science Week, with policymakers and researchers discussing how politics can shape the future of nutrition.

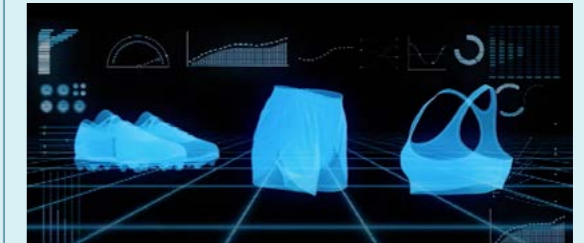
In the UK, Dr Michael Fell from the UCL Energy Institute joined Nicky Dean, Chief Editor of *Nature Energy*, and Thea Sherer, Director of Sustainability at Springer Nature, at [Evidence Week](#). They delivered individual briefings to parliamentarians in Westminster, on how [evidence from frontline research can inform policymaking in the UK Parliament](#). Similarly, the Rt Hon. Lord Deben, former Chair of the UK's Climate Change Committee, joined our ['In Conversation' interview series](#) to talk about climate research and policymaking.



SCIENCE STORIES

Our award-winning [Science Stories](#) series grew in 2023, with 68,000 views on our YouTube channel. We released a [new short film on research into women's sport](#) from authors including Leah Williamson, captain of the England women's national football team, in time for the latest FIFA Women's World Cup.

In the paper, the authors conclude that, while some progress has been made in addressing the equipment requirements of female players, essential gaps in research, development and production remain in women's football. The findings caught the attention of manufacturers looking to address these issues, and [the paper was one of the journal's most read articles](#).



RESEARCH INTEGRITY

At Springer Nature, we know how important it is to be able to trust and rely on research. It plays a pivotal role in our daily lives and advances our understanding of how humankind will address climate change, reduce inequality and solve its most challenging problems.

We are committed to protecting the integrity of research. This includes supporting the research community in ensuring rigour and best practice, protecting the publication record and equipping our editors with the tools they need to remove problematic content.

Our policy teams and Springer Nature's Research Integrity Group (SNRIG) are dedicated to ensuring that our policies and practices keep up to date with changes affecting research, including technology developments and ethical concerns.

Recognising that challenges to research integrity affect the entire publishing community, we played a key part in establishing the [STM Integrity Hub](#) and chair the STM Research Integrity Committee. This shared resource responds to the challenges posed by the increasing volume of submissions that fail to reach accepted research integrity standards.

IN 2023:

We launched our own [Research Integrity webpage](#) for all related resources, including a multi-language overview of our commitment to publishing trustworthy, reliable research.

Springer Nature's Research Integrity Director, Chris Graf, was appointed to the UK Committee on Research Integrity, hosted by UK Research and Innovation, to help deliver its [2023-2025 strategic plan](#).

We implemented a tool – at scale – to screen submissions for indicators, including generated text, that the manuscript has or may have originated from a paper mill.

Nature Masterclasses on-demand began offering the course [Research Integrity: Publication Ethics](#) for free and for all researchers of any level of experience to access.

SNRIG identified and prevented publication of over 8,000 submitted papers with major integrity problems, and reviewed more than 1,700 other cases related to published papers, overall representing a small proportion of total papers submitted to us. These cases included questions regarding authorship, data, plagiarism, duplicate submissions and publications, research ethics and research participant consent. Where issues are confirmed, we act by publishing corrections, editors' notes and expressions of concern, or retracting articles.



SPRINGER NATURE ACQUIRED THE [SCIENCE DIVISION OF SLIMMER AI](#) IN 2023 AND WE ARE NOW USING ITS AI TOOLS TO AUTOMATE THE IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH PAPERS, SUCH AS PLAGIARISM.

PROTECTING CONTENT AUTHORSHIP

We proactively identify, monitor and act against potential legal infringements in all content published, ensuring that threats are identified, targeted, disrupted and, where possible, countered.

We work with other publishers to help higher education institutions protect themselves against cybercrime through the Scholarly Networks Security Initiative. Any concerns about online piracy or physical counterfeiting can be reported to our [anti-piracy team](#).

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY

From matching papers with the most appropriate peer reviewers to creating tailored, AI-supported research summaries, technology is threaded throughout our business. It is also a key factor in driving forward open science and unlocking the power of knowledge faster.

Technology has always played a significant role at Springer Nature. It enabled us and other academic publishers to transition from print to digital earlier than other content industries, and fuelled our transition to OA. Our research-centric platforms are central to our ability to serve our communities and are key to speeding up the process of publishing.

AI: THE POTENTIAL TO ACCELERATE RESEARCH PROGRESS

AI was at the centre of our technological development in 2023 and we continue to unlock its potential by combining our tech know-how and commitment to ethics. Working with our communities and partners, we have been piloting ways in which AI and other emerging technologies can help us meet our mission to accelerate solutions to the world's urgent challenges, always with human oversight.

[WATCH A SHORT VIDEO ABOUT HOW SPRINGER NATURE IS APPROACHING AI.](#)



By helping editors find the right peer reviewers faster and by supporting scientists for whom English is not their first language, AI can expand the reach of science and promote equitable access. AI-driven automation also frees up researcher time to focus on making discoveries.

AI SAFETY AND ETHICS

To help us mitigate risks, we have a strong focus on safety and ethics. Springer Nature is committed to adopting an ethically focused approach while designing, developing and deploying AI-based solutions. We use AI solutions responsibly, making sure that we consider and mitigate any negative societal or environmental impacts. See more on our AI principles in the [Governance](#) section.



CASE STUDIES

FIRST PUBLISHER TO CREATE A NEW ACADEMIC BOOK USING GenAI

As part of an innovative experiment, Springer Nature was the first publisher to [create an academic book with generative AI](#). Developed during a 'hack day' that brought together authors, editors and experts from across Springer Nature, the German-language book [Einsatzmöglichkeiten von GPT in Finance, Compliance und Audit](#) ([Applications of GPT in Finance, Compliance and Audit](#)) has now been published. It took less than five months from inception to publication – about half the time normally taken.

AI-SUPPORTED RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

We're using AI to experiment with ways to communicate science more effectively. This includes summaries of editorially selected papers, which we draft using an internally developed Springer Nature AI tool. This is then reviewed, fact-checked and revised by a human editor to ensure it meets our high quality and accuracy standards. [Nature Aging](#) and [Nature Reviews Microbiology](#) were the first journals from the Nature Portfolio to publish these AI-supported research highlights in 2023.



PEOPLE

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

Around the world, Springer Nature aims to be a great company to work for, dedicated to living our values and unlocking the full potential of our people. Our commitment to our colleagues extends to fostering an inclusive culture, as well as offering opportunities for continuous learning and development so that they enjoy rewarding, enduring careers with us.

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AT THE HEART OF A NETWORK



Springer Nature is truly a people business. Our work touches millions of people every day: our fantastic colleagues; the communities of researchers and educators we work with; and the wider public who read or benefit from the research we publish.

Our company is made up of dedicated, curious, passionate and highly skilled people. Without them, we simply wouldn't be able to deliver on our overall business mission to help solve the world's greatest challenges.

We want Springer Nature to be a place where our people can be themselves and learn, develop and thrive in an inclusive culture. We asked our people what's important to them about the work we do and why they enjoy working for us. This led to the creation of our first employer brand, Be Part of Progress, which helps us talk consistently about what we offer, attract the best candidates and present to our existing employees what they can expect from working here.

Throughout this section, we share examples of what we offer our staff, from extensive learning and development opportunities to 'workations' – particularly relevant given the global background of our colleagues. We are also working to build an inclusive culture with a more diverse workforce and equitable structures that enable all our colleagues to thrive. In 2023, we strengthened our focus on data, using employee feedback to inform our strategic decisions, and we increased opportunities for personal development with the new DEI Learning Journey.

We celebrate the work our people do every day to be sustainable, inclusive and forward-looking. This ranges from trailblazing conversations about representation and allyship, to 'hack days' on how to use AI to support book authors, to committing time to implement green initiatives in our offices.

Ultimately, we firmly believe that better representation of the communities we serve leads to better research. In this section, you'll see how we consider the people behind the research through

▶▶ **At our core lies our support for the people in our research and education communities – the bridge builders of human understanding. In the research community, we build deep connections with authors and bring global visibility to their work.**

initiatives such as surveys to better understand researchers' experience of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). It also includes our commitment to expanding the talent pipeline to new voices and perspectives on publishing and research, with our Opening Doors internship programme. We also know that we have the ability to positively impact the world around us with the content we publish, and we're proud to highlight a few examples of how our brands have taken the lead in broadening conversations about diversity, using their platforms to pioneer new ways of thinking about inclusion.

We are very much at the heart of a network of people who believe in the benefits of a values-driven business. Together, we can contribute to making the world better.



GREGOR KAROLUS,
CHIEF HUMAN
RESOURCES OFFICER



JESSICA GEDAMU, VP
GLOBAL DIVERSITY,
EQUITY AND INCLUSION

BUILDING A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Every day, our people work to help researchers, clinicians and educators find solutions to the world's greatest challenges. Our open and ambitious culture gives our colleagues space to develop their curiosity and stretch their horizons, as well as everything they need to be themselves and perform at their best.

SETTING OUT OUR APPROACH AS AN EMPLOYER

We want all our colleagues to continually seek to stretch their horizons and grow their long-term career with us. We also want people embarking on a career with us, and those who have been here for some time, to be clear about what we stand for and what they can expect as an employee.

THERE ARE SIX KEY ELEMENTS IN THE PEOPLE AND PLANET AREAS OF OUR GROUP STRATEGY:



Working at Springer Nature means being part of progress and making a real impact on society. In return, we offer a place to work that enables colleagues to develop their curiosity by challenging themselves in a collaborative, nurturing environment that prioritises wellbeing, flexibility, opportunity and inclusion.

To create a workplace that allows our colleagues to follow their passions and be themselves, we listen to them through engagement surveys and employee forums, and act on their feedback.

ENGAGING OUR PEOPLE

In 2023, 74% of our colleagues took part in our annual employee engagement survey and shared more than 8,000 comments to contextualise their feedback. The score for the main engagement question “How happy are you working at Springer Nature?” went up by one point to 74 out of 100, while the score for the question “I would recommend Springer Nature as a great place to work” went up two points to 75. Other scores remained stable or saw positive changes.

The insights we gather from this survey help us shape future initiatives, deliver on our employer brand promises and create a workplace where people feel engaged, supported and motivated. The executive committee goes through the results in detail every

year to identify any topics that need to be addressed at a global scale. In 2024, as a result of the survey feedback, we will take further action on career development opportunities and support managers to create greater understanding of how the company strategy relates to specific areas and roles in the business.

LOOKING AFTER OUR PEOPLE

We strive to support wellbeing and promote good mental health by making wellbeing guidance and resources available to all colleagues. Our global Employee Assistance Programme offers short-term counselling as well as information and resources on emotional, financial, legal and work-life issues. The confidential, free-to-use service is available 24/7 for employees and immediate family members.

In 2022, we announced that we would make significant additional payments to 6,000 employees earning below a certain threshold in high-inflation countries, to help with the increased cost of living. The second of two payments was made in 2023.

BE PART OF PROGRESS

INTRODUCING OUR EMPLOYER BRAND

We developed Be Part of Progress, our new employer brand, by listening to our colleagues. It reflects the strongest overall message that we heard from them about why they work at Springer Nature – knowing that what they do every day helps solve the world's greatest challenges.

Be Part of Progress is supported by three promises that help us shape and deliver plans to put our employer brand into practice.



**BE
YOURSELF**

Make a positive impact and have your contribution recognised, working on varied, purposeful and rewarding projects that support our customers and their communities.



**STRETCH
YOUR
HORIZONS**

Enjoy working for an ambitious and truly global business, full of talented people that want you to do well.



**DEVELOP
YOUR
CURIOSITY**

Work alongside smart and inspiring colleagues in a collaborative and innovative environment, which celebrates intellectual curiosity.



**BE
YOURSELF**

OUR CULTURE AT SPRINGER NATURE

We want everyone at Springer Nature to make a positive impact, while working on varied, rewarding projects that support our customers and their communities, and to have their contributions recognised. Our open, welcoming and supportive culture – with thriving employee networks – invites our employees to fully participate, perform at their best and be themselves at work.

HOW WE PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE IN 2023

Workations

Our workation programme allows staff to work remotely from another location and combine it with a holiday or an extended visit to see friends and family. 723 colleagues took a workation in 76 countries in 2023.

Employee networks

Our 10 employee networks focus on fostering dialogue around diversity, community building, advice, advocacy and sustainability.

The DEI employee networks unite people and create strong communities and safe spaces for employees who share common experiences, interests, backgrounds or identities, and face marginalisation or underrepresentation. All networks also welcome allies who want to support members of these communities and learn more about the perspectives and experiences within the network.

The Green Office Network brings colleagues together to help reduce our environmental impact and raise awareness around the environmental challenges we are experiencing at a global level. [See more on the Green Office Network on page 36.](#)

Our networks are also strategic partners for the business, offering invaluable insights and guidance to help us better understand diverse markets, customer needs and emerging trends.

Given the networks' impact and the role their members play in our company culture, in 2023, we introduced new initiatives to offer network organisers enhanced structural support and professional development opportunities. This included additional training and a greater connection with senior leaders.

EMPLOYEE NETWORKS IN 2023

10	EMPLOYEE NETWORKS, INCLUDING A NEW NETWORK: SN MUSLIMS
1,800+	MEMBERS
120	DEI NETWORK EVENTS
230	INTERNAL BLOG POSTS
36	LOCAL CHAPTERS



BE PART OF PROGRESS



TALENT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We want everyone at Springer Nature to be able to enjoy working for an ambitious and truly global business. Our people have a drive and a passion to perform, and can discover a culture that believes in identifying, developing and promoting talent.

HOW WE PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE IN 2023

Develop your career at Springer Nature

In response to feedback from our 2023 employee engagement survey, the executive team agreed to focus on career opportunities. This led to the creation of a new internal career hub that brings together resources, training and events to help our people take ownership of their careers with the support of their manager.

We've also made internal vacancies more transparent. Around 17% of our advertised vacancies in 2023 were filled internally, but we'd like to see this increase. We aim to help every colleague drive their career development through planning, acquiring new skills and discovering opportunities to grow.

SN Leader Programme

Our new SN Leader Programme aims to build a shared leadership community and culture across our business. The programme helps colleagues become aligned, committed and jointly accountable for delivering our group strategies, and works to ensure they're equipped to attract, retain and develop the talent in their teams.

During this inaugural year, 500 participants spent time developing and practising approaches on topics such as leading hybrid teams, and behavioural and values-based leadership.

IN 2023, AS PART OF OUR SPRINGER NATURE EMPLOYER BRAND AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME, #SNAMBASSADORS, WE TRAINED 40 COLLEAGUES, HELPING THEM DEFINE THEIR PERSONAL BRAND, GROW THEIR NETWORK AND INCREASE THEIR INFLUENCE ON LINKEDIN. WE EMPOWERED THEM TO BRING OUR COMPANY CULTURE, VALUES AND MISSION TO LIFE AUTHENTICALLY. THIS WAY, OUR OWN EMPLOYEES ACT AS BRAND AMBASSADORS, HELPING TO BUILD BRAND TRUST, AND TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT.

DEI Learning Journey

Also new for 2023, the DEI Learning Journey is a training programme for colleagues, with an annual theme and a specific focus for each quarter. Activities range from virtual, instructor-led training and workshops, to discussions, e-learning modules and events organised by the DEI employee networks.

This year, we focused on inclusive behaviours. This provided opportunities for colleagues to strengthen their knowledge, get practical tips on how to be more inclusive in the workplace and exchange ideas on DEI best practice.



INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION

Our employees work alongside smart, inspiring colleagues in a collaborative and innovative environment that celebrates intellectual curiosity. Our extensive range of resources helps them accelerate discovery by keeping up with the latest thinking and staying open to new ideas.

HOW WE PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE IN 2023

All employees are encouraged to spend up to five days a year undertaking training and development activities. These include online and in-person courses, mentoring, job shadowing and other on-the-job training, as well as our mandatory values and conduct training. Other training opportunities include our employee-generated learning programme, which taps into internal knowledge and empowers colleagues to create their own specialist training programmes.



IN 2023, AS ONE PART OF OUR CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFER, WE DELIVERED MORE THAN 60,000 HOURS OF TRAINING VIA OUR ONLINE LEARNING PORTAL

RECOGNISING INNOVATION

The Springer Nature Innovation Tournament is an internal competition that recognises and celebrates innovative work aligned with our strategic pillars. In 2023, we had more than 80 submissions, almost twice as many as in 2022. The winning entry this year is an internally developed tool that enables editors to quickly create engaging social media posts to increase the impact of published content via social media promotion. All finalists visited the Heidelberg Innovation Lab and enjoyed inspiring talks and Q&As about innovation with two AI start-ups: Paretos and Rabbit.ai.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Springer Nature is deeply committed to DEI within our organisation, in our content and across our communities.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

We want to build an inclusive organisation with a diverse workforce and equitable structures that enable everyone to thrive.

One of the ways we focus on diversity is by setting aspirational goals for representation in our senior leadership roles.



Gender representation is an important component of our DEI strategy. Women now make up 44% of our global leadership cohort¹. In 2018, 39% of our global leaders (those in the top three tiers of the organisation) were women. We set a goal to reach 45% by the end of 2023. We're proud to have seen a significant increase of 5% in gender representation in this group over the period covered by the goal. The increase is largely driven by internal promotions and reporting line changes, and we're pleased that our investment in talent has led to greater opportunities for women to grow their careers into senior leadership positions. This is also reflected in our Management Board, which, as of January 2024, is now 50% female.

After widening the perspective and scope of our DEI activities in 2021 to increase our focus on representation across the company, we set new global representation goals for race and ethnicity in senior leadership roles. We also set goals to make sure our senior leaders reflect our global footprint. You can learn more about these goals on [our group website](#).

We are always looking for ways to improve our approach, especially after completing a full cycle of reporting on our gender representation target in 2023. In early 2024, this will include a review of how we define the senior leadership cohort that our goals and targets are based on.

¹Data in this statement reviewed by auditors; see audit statement on [page 42](#).



CASE STUDY

DEI INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME: OPENING DOORS

In 2023, Springer Nature launched a new internship programme to support DEI and provide opportunities to students and recent graduates from historically underrepresented groups.

The [Opening Doors](#) scheme, initially available in the UK and US, offers training and career development, and a chance to learn more about our recruitment processes and other business areas.

This initiative aims to invest in a diverse talent pipeline, helping kick-start a successful career in research publishing for the next generation shaping our industry.



This has truly been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional career thus far, and it has been an honour to be part of the pilot cohort. I can't wait to see what the future holds!



MICHELLE HE,
OPENING DOORS INTERN

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

LISTENING TO OUR PEOPLE

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY SURVEY

Around 59% of our workforce took part in our third global inclusion and diversity survey in 2023, 6% more than in 2022. We use the feedback to make sure our programmes respond to colleagues' needs and our actions foster an inclusive work environment.

Through this survey, we aim to ensure that colleagues are asked to self-report, rather than making assumptions based on previously collected or assumed demographic data. This is an essential and progressive methodology that allows us to collect DEI insights.



SURVEY RESULTS

For Springer Nature as a whole, scores for inclusion questions remain favourable and stable, and mostly at or above benchmark levels, with only minor changes since 2022. Additionally:

Most inclusion scores remain favourable (75 points or greater) among women, LGBTQ+ colleagues, parents and carers, as well as each race and ethnicity group.

Scores among respondents with disabilities or neurodivergent conditions showed a positive trend since 2022, but are as much as eight points lower than the company average.

A larger proportion of non-binary colleagues are happy working at the company compared to last year (score of 76, an increase of four points).

The survey also shows that respondents who are part of our employee networks consistently report higher inclusion scores.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

INFLUENCING POSITIVE CHANGE

Our approach to DEI extends to how we work beyond our business, with partners and our research and education communities, to ensure we serve our customers and others in a fair and inclusive way.

We are data-driven, collecting and using reliable information on DEI opportunities in our communities to measure, monitor and further our progress. In 2023, we commissioned a [study of 5,000 researchers](#) to understand how the research community perceives and experiences DEI. The study found widespread discrimination, harassment and bullying reported by respondents across all demographics. There is also a notable gap in perceptions of DEI and a lack of sufficient discussion on the specific challenges facing those in different geographic regions. While this survey is not unique, this new data offers further evidence of the need to reform the research culture – something Springer Nature prioritises.

WE HAVE SET OUT AN INTENTIONAL CONTENT STRATEGY FOR BOOKS ACQUISITION EDITORIAL STAFF TO EXPLORE HOW CONTENT PORTFOLIOS CAN BE ADJUSTED TO IMPACT INCLUSION AND REPRESENTATION MORE POSITIVELY.

CASE STUDIES

INCLUSIVE HEALTH RESEARCH AWARDS

Nature's [Inclusive Health Research Awards](#), in partnership with Takeda, celebrate those who are driving a more inclusive approach to health research and demonstrate the benefits of the research community working collaboratively across the world, for better outcomes in health equity.

The 2023 award winners included the [HEALTHcaRe needs of Deaf \(HEARD\) project](#) from Monash University on health inequity facing Deaf individuals in Malaysia. The second winner was the [Māori and Bipolar Disorder research project](#) from New Zealand's University of Otago on the factors impacting the wellbeing of Māori with bipolar disorder.

RESEARCHER IN RESIDENCE PROGRAMME

Two active researchers from communities underrepresented in research and publishing, who have been unable to continue their work due to circumstances such as armed conflict, joined Springer Nature in 2023 for 10 days per month over a three-month period. During the programme, our teams gained new insights into the experience of such researchers. Our ambition was to [bridge the gap](#) between authors and publishers, ultimately resulting in a better understanding of the publishing ecosystem for all.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

DEI IN OUR PUBLISHING CONTENT

We interact with millions of people every day. Connecting with them as authors, peer reviewers, editors, readers, teachers and users of our platforms provides us with the opportunity to influence behaviour on a large scale and effect real change.

WE ARE SIGNATORIES OF THE UK'S PUBLISHING ACCESSIBILITY ACTION GROUP (PAAG) CHARTER. THE CHARTER INCLUDES 10 SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS FOR PUBLISHERS AT EVERY STAGE OF THE PUBLICATION PROCESS, WHEN PRODUCING DIGITAL PUBLICATIONS AND EBOOKS, TO CREATE MORE ACCESSIBLE, USER-FOCUSED CONTENT.

In 2023, we set up a [hub of tailored DEI resources](#) to inform, inspire and support our editorial community in developing inclusive publishing practices.

CASE STUDIES

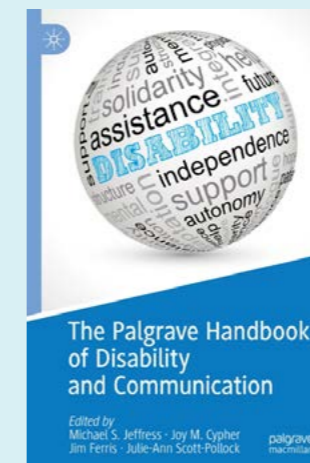
THE QUEER IN CHEM SERIES

Acknowledging the challenges that queer scientists face and actively working to address them, *Communications Chemistry* presented its [Queer in Chem series](#) – a collection of Q&As with accomplished LGBTQ+ chemists discussing their scientific interests and professional experiences. With this collection, the journal hopes to foster a deeper understanding of the rich tapestry of identities and experiences within the chemistry community, as well as to encourage understanding, acceptance and support, both within the field of chemistry and across society at large.



THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION

[This collection features contributions from more than 40 international scholars experiencing and researching disability](#), and focuses on the lived experience of disability in all its variety. The scholars examine the way people communicate with people with disabilities, talk about disability and express themselves through their disabled identity. The book deconstructs ableist communications from the past and present, as well as showing how today, empowered people with disabilities have more agency to control communicative structures.



FEATURES CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MORE THAN 40 INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS EXPERIENCING AND RESEARCHING DISABILITY.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our responsibility to the global communities we work with goes beyond our publishing and commercial activity. We partner with and donate to others who contribute positively to the research, health and education communities that we work in, and our charitable giving helps our communities to discover, learn and achieve.

SUPPORTING THE UKRAINIAN RESEARCH COMMUNITY

In ongoing support for the Ukrainian science and research community, we supported a [panel discussion event](#) by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in November 2023. Chaired by Professor Robert Schlögl, president of the Foundation, researchers and experts from Ukraine and more than 20 other countries discussed how science can be an engine for the country's reconstruction. The summary of the participants' recommendations has been presented to a high-ranking delegation from the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, as well as representatives of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and German research organisations.

IN 2023, WE GAVE APPROXIMATELY €900,000 IN DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIP TO CHARITIES AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS THAT SHARE OUR VALUES. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO DONATIONS OF BOOKS, OTHER EQUIPMENT AND VOLUNTEERED TIME.

SUPPORTING CHARITABLE CAUSES

Donations to charitable organisations and good causes amplify our impact, help address societal challenges and support our communities. Our approach to charitable giving includes strategic donations reviewed by our global charity committee, and the funds allocated for causes chosen by employee groups.

Through our contributions, we aim to:

- Enable access to equitable quality education and science.
- Align with our commitment to the [SDGs](#).
- [Champion DEI](#) in our communities.
- Work with causes of interest and value to our colleagues, editors, authors, customers and other partners.



CASE STUDIES

CELEBRATING 180 YEARS OF MACMILLAN EDUCATION – WITH 180 DAYS OF GIVING BACK

A love of learning, reading and innovation for social good has always been Macmillan Education's mission. To mark its 180th anniversary, the company is continuing to build on this commitment, started by its founders, Daniel and Alexander Macmillan, almost two centuries ago.

Macmillan Education launched [180 days of giving back](#) to celebrate its positive impact on education globally, and to show its dedication to serving local communities. This programme gave Macmillan Education employees one day of leave to volunteer for a charity that supports education in their region. Each location, from Poland to Eswatini and Mexico to India, selected a local charity to support, giving colleagues the opportunity to make a difference.

In South Africa, for example, 25 colleagues displayed their artistic skills by helping to remodel the Shine by Hope daycare centre and preschool in Johannesburg. Transforming the centre into a colourful haven, it has since been inundated with parents who want to enrol their children for 2024.

SUPPORTING DIVERSITY IN CANCER RESEARCH

In 2023, Springer Nature made a donation to the American Cancer Society to support 10 participants in its [Diversity in Cancer Research \(DICR\) internship programme](#). The donation follows on from our support for organisations such as In2ScienceUK, with the aim of diversifying the talent pipeline for the future and improving social mobility. The DICR interns spent 10 weeks over the summer engaging in hands-on research. They were mentored by an accomplished investigator in a cancer research lab or in a clinical or community setting.



With this donation, we can get closer to our goal of increasing the number of underrepresented minority cancer researchers. Diversity in science is critical because it invigorates problem-solving, drives innovation and better equips the scientific community to address inequities that exist in cancer prevention, treatment and care. We could not do this without the help of partners like Springer Nature.

ELLIE DANIELS, MD, MPH, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
CENTER FOR DIVERSITY IN CANCER RESEARCH

**PLANET**

ACTING ON CLIMATE

In 2023, our targets to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). We are committed to reaching net zero GHG-emissions across the value chain by 2040 from a 2019 baseline year. This reflects our ambition to follow the science that we are proud to publish.

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OUR PLANET'S FUTURE: FOLLOWING THE DATA



We are proud to say that at Springer Nature, we follow the science. Since 2020, we have been carbon neutral for our buildings, fleet and flights, through our use of renewables, offsets and increased efficiencies.

The subsequent year saw us sign [The Climate Pledge](#) and commit to setting science-based targets, both of which gave us a clear goal of net zero by 2040, 10 years ahead of the Paris Agreement. In 2022, we developed our science-based targets, and in 2023 we were delighted to have them externally validated. We published these targets in a [net zero supplement](#), alongside our first full scope 3 inventory.

Our targets lay out a roadmap for ambitious near-term emissions reductions. These align with the scientific consensus that rapid emissions reductions are necessary to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

▶▶ **We now understand our total value chain carbon footprint, and the scale of ambition needed to operate within the 1.5°C global warming limit.**

This is in line with the science we publish. Armed with this knowledge, we are empowered to take decisive actions to reduce our carbon footprint and lead by example.

Using data to inform changes, we will continue working to reduce our emissions. For example, this year, we've undertaken an in-depth review of our global fleet of more than 700 vehicles so that we can reduce fleet emissions in the coming years. In 2023, more than 120 of these vehicles used an electric battery¹, up from 36 in 2019, our baseline year.

In our books and journals, our aim is to decouple the process of sharing knowledge from carbon emissions. Printed products can be printed nearer the customer. We increased data collection through our ongoing supplier sustainability programme, to ensure key suppliers are aware of the value we place on reducing carbon emissions, as well as protecting human rights.

We also continue to see the restoration of biodiverse forests as a way to contribute to managing global carbon levels and deliver positive co-benefits to local communities. In light of this, we aim to balance out

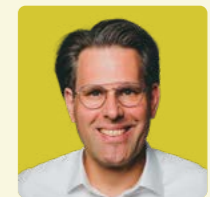
our carbon emissions. However, we acknowledge that offsetting alone is not a sustainable solution, and recognise that achieving net zero requires ambitious emissions reductions. So, while we continue to purchase carbon certificates for our scope 1, 2 and partial scope 3 emissions, we are prioritising ways to reduce emissions at the pace needed.

We believe that these examples underscore our dedication to embracing the science, and illustrate the actions we are taking to drive down our carbon emissions.

Our carbon reduction ambitions are only part of our environmental sustainability journey. Our 9,000 colleagues across Springer Nature play a crucial role in delivering our sustainable business strategy, and we want to empower them to join us on this journey. That's why, this year, we had our first compulsory environmental training for all our staff, which received an approval rating of 4.6 out of 5. We also support and encourage initiatives such as the employee-led Green Office Network of volunteers, which initiates projects and inspires action on sustainability-related behaviour in our offices. The significant growth of the network, nearly doubling to 400 members in 2023, is a clear indication that sustainability is important to many of our colleagues. We will remain committed to engaging and supporting our colleagues as we move ahead in delivering our goals.



JOYCE LORIGAN,
GROUP HEAD OF
CORPORATE AFFAIRS



MARC SPENLÉ, CHIEF
OPERATING OFFICER

¹ Includes: fully electric, plug-in hybrid, and self-charging hybrid vehicles.

OUR CARBON APPROACH

In 2023, we published our carbon footprint across all three scopes for the first time. Measuring our emissions allows us to take a data-driven approach to driving down our carbon footprint. We continue to support biodiverse reforestation through our forestry offset programme, as well as recognising the need to prioritise emissions reductions.

SETTING OUR TARGETS

We shared the news that our emissions reductions targets were validated by the SBTi. Taken together with our total carbon footprint, these map out our route to net zero by 2040.

Setting science-based targets required us to develop a comprehensive emissions inventory, which can now inform our strategy. Additionally, we are signatories to the [Business Ambition for 1.5°C framework](#).

WE REMAIN CARBON NEUTRAL

Springer Nature Group has been carbon neutral for its offices, warehouses, fleet and flights since 2020, powered by increased renewable electricity, energy efficiencies and offsets.

We recognise that to reach net zero, we will need to deliver 90% emissions reductions (as detailed in the table to the right) by 2040, and that offsetting is not included in those reductions.

When quantifying our carbon removals, we include a portion of homeworking and commuting emissions, in light of increased hybrid working patterns.

We continue to see the restoration of biodiverse forests as a way in which we can contribute positively to managing global carbon levels, and deliver positive social co-benefits to local communities. We review our use of forestry offsets, as well as responsibly sourced forestry products, in our supply chain on an ongoing basis.

OUR SCIENCE-BASED TARGETS

	NEAR-TERM TARGET (2032)	NET ZERO TARGET (2040)
Scope 1 and 2 Includes: • On-site fuel and electricity • Fleet	Reduce absolute scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by 54.6%	Reduce absolute scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by 90%
Scope 3 GHG Protocol categories 1–15	Reduce absolute scope 3 GHG emissions ² by 32.5%	Reduce absolute scope 3 GHG emissions by 90%

Baseline year: 2019

² Categories covered are purchased goods and services, capital goods, fuel- and energy-related activities, upstream transportation and distribution, waste generated in operations, business travel and upstream leased assets.

OUR CARBON APPROACH

CASE STUDIES

REFORESTATION IN NICARAGUA

We are now in our fifth year of supporting [Taking Root's CommuniTree project in Nicaragua](#), working with [C Level](#). In 2023, we purchased certificates totalling around 17,500 tonnes of CO₂e, equal to our net carbon footprint from our direct emissions. We are proud that our ongoing engagement provides stability to local communities.

We prioritise the core principle of 'additionality' by ensuring that the certificates we purchase reflect carbon balancing that would not have occurred without our investment. The initiative is certified by Plan Vivo, the longest-standing voluntary carbon standard, and enables farmers to reforest land with native trees in ways that build their capacity to earn money from well-maintained forests.



MANAGING CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS

We consider the risks related to climate change within our overall risk management processes, including physical risks to our operations and those of critical suppliers, and transition risks such as the impact of regulatory and market factors. We have business continuity processes in place.

Our [net zero roadmap](#) is a core component of our climate response and we will report annually on progress. Our publishing activities contribute to the better understanding of climate risk, mitigation and adaptation.

CARBON INVENTORY AND REDUCTIONS

In line with our previous reports, we publish the emissions associated with our sites and fleet (scopes 1 and 2) and emissions associated with serviced sites and airlines (partial scope 3) in three ways: gross emissions; net carbon emissions before offsetting; and net carbon emissions after the purchase of carbon offsets.

In 2023, we expanded our data set to include our full scope 3 emissions covering the years 2019–2022. For each year, the figures comply with the minimum reporting requirements per category as described in the GHG Protocol’s Corporate Value Chain (scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard.

In this report, we publish 2023 data for buildings, fleet and flights. Based on data for previous years, we expect these emissions to be around 10% of our full carbon footprint.

Our full carbon footprint includes scope 3 emissions related to homeworking, commuting, events, products and logistics, business travel and other supplier emissions.

You can find our full 2022 carbon footprint in the [net zero supplement](#) we published in 2023. Our 2022 net carbon footprint across all three scopes was 140,674 tonnes CO₂e³. We will publish our full carbon footprint for 2023 in a second supplement in 2024.

TOTAL GHG EMISSIONS FROM SCOPE 1 AND 2, SERVICED SITES AND FLIGHTS (PARTIAL SCOPE 3) (TONNES OF CO₂ EQUIVALENT, tCO₂e)

NET EMISSIONS (BEFORE OFFSETTING)



DOWN 39% SINCE 2019

GROSS EMISSIONS



DOWN 35% SINCE 2019

[†] Data reviewed by auditors, see audit statement on [page 42](#).

^{*} Data reviewed by auditors in a prior year.

^{**} Data has been restated.

³ This figure includes 6,204 tonnes CO₂e of emissions, the reporting of which is currently optional under GHG Protocol guidance and is not covered by our carbon targets in line with SBTi’s approach.

OUR NET ZERO ROADMAP

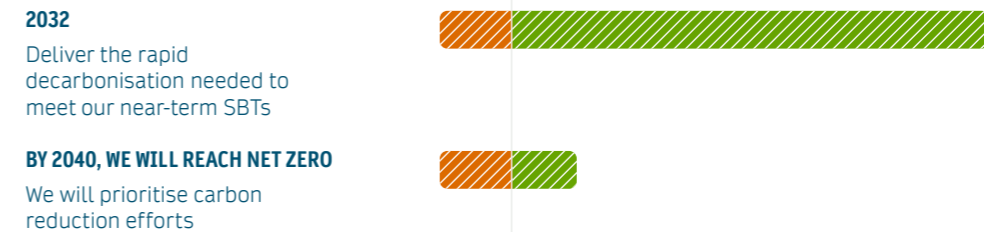
The chart is a high-level representation of our net zero roadmap and milestones. It shows net carbon emissions, including offsets (detailed in this report and on page 50), i.e. scope 1, scope 2 and partial scope 3 – those relating to serviced offices and flights. Striped sections of the bars are indicative only – showing data that will be reported in the future. For 2023, full scope 3 emissions will be published in the 2024 net zero and scope 3 supplement. [The 2023 supplement can be found on our website.](#)



HISTORICAL CARBON



FUTURE PROJECTION



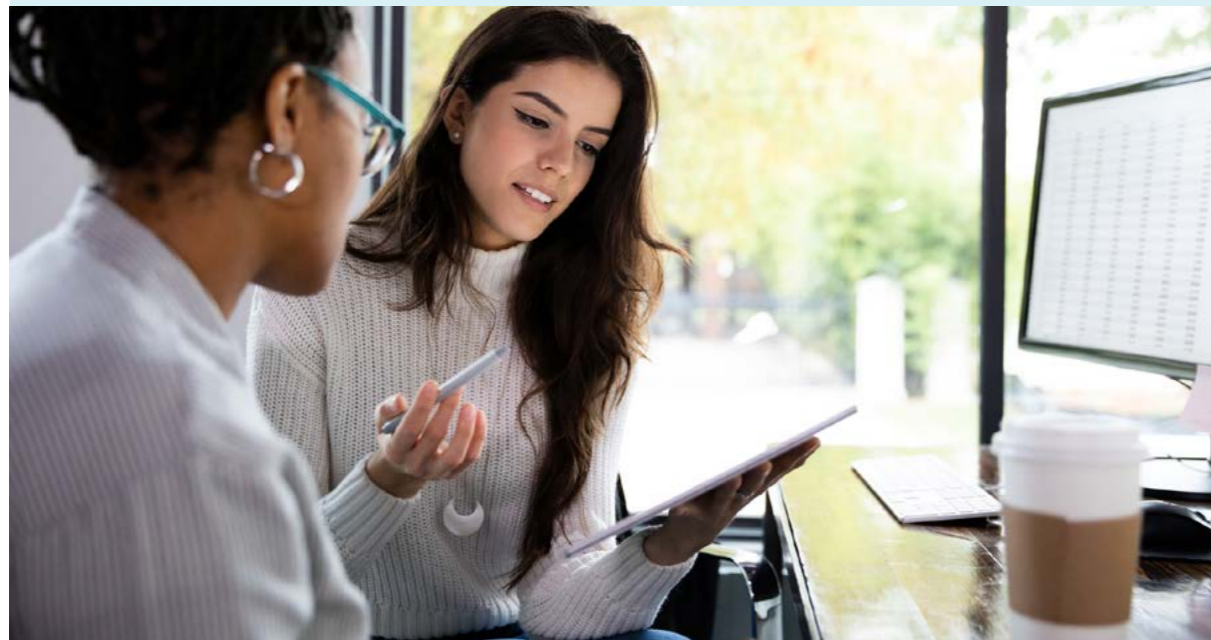
CARBON INVENTORY AND REDUCTIONS

CASE STUDIES

SUPPLY CHAIN EMISSIONS

Tackling supply chain emissions will be a vital part of our net zero journey. We are working with 11 priority suppliers in the pre-press and printing area to understand their emissions and improve our own reporting. We also hope to encourage additional carbon reporting and reductions from these suppliers. We are reviewing our supply chain to minimise product and logistics emissions where we can.

Our [Business Partner Code of Conduct](#) includes expectations for suppliers to improve their impact on the environment and promote responsibility in their own supply chains.



DATA-DRIVEN REDUCTIONS

RENEWABLE ENERGY

In 2023, our renewable and clean electricity use in our buildings reached 99% for the first time.⁴ We prioritise purchasing renewable electricity directly from our suppliers and where that is not practical, we buy renewable electricity certificates (RECs). We purchased carbon offsets for a small number of sites where it was impractical to buy RECs (see [page 46](#)).

BUILDING ENERGY USE

Compared with 2022, our buildings' total energy use decreased by 10.7% overall, as we continued to consolidate our portfolio and improve energy efficiency.

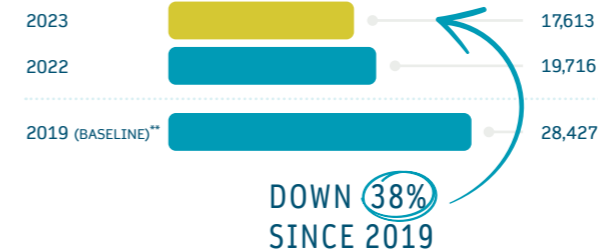
We aim to have increasingly energy-efficient buildings. In 2023, our London office undertook an energy audit as part of a scheme administered

by the Mayor of London's office. This resulted in several actions that we completed in 2023, including changes to office heating management and the installation of LED lighting in our onsite catering kitchen. We have selected a new office site in Heidelberg, Germany, which we expect to move into in 2024, that has been built to the ambitious [Passivhaus](#) standard.

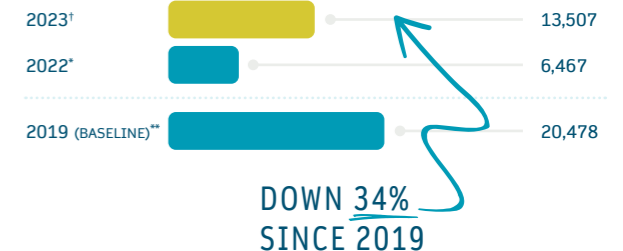
BUSINESS TRAVEL

Compared with pre-pandemic levels, our 2023 business flight emissions remain low, at around 65% of 2019 volumes. As expected, travel increased in 2023 compared to the previous year. In line with our environment policy, we are monitoring this trend and taking actions to avoid ongoing increases.

TOTAL ENERGY USE (MWh)



BUSINESS FLIGHT EMISSIONS (tCO₂e)



[†] Data reviewed by auditors, see audit statement on [page 42](#).

* Data reviewed by auditors in a prior year.

** Data has been restated.

⁴ More information on energy sources in this category can be found on [page 46](#), footnote 11.

REPORTING ON CARBON ACTIONS

In 2023, we continued to make progress on the six short-term carbon actions that we announced in our 2021 Sustainable Business Report. These actions were designed to start addressing emissions quickly.

AREA	ACTIONS	PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS	STATUS
NET ZERO	Set science-based targets against a 2019 baseline, covering at least 95% of our scopes 1 and 2 emissions and two-thirds of our scope 3 emissions in 2022.	Targets validated by the SBTi in 2023.	
PEOPLE	Roll out introductory sustainable business training to all employees via a three-year programme, starting in 2022.	<p>Launched and rolled out mandatory sustainable business training modules (2022–2024).</p> <p>In 2023, the training included a dedicated Environmental module, which achieved a high approval rating of 4.6 out of 5. Overall, these modules have an 91% completion rate.</p>	
OFFICES	Set up Green Building Checklists and action plans for major sites in 2022, and review half-yearly 2022–2025.	<p>Major sites reviewed the Green Building Checklist and created action plans, comprising 158 identified potential actions across all 18 sites.</p> <p>We review and monitor progress every six months.</p>	
	Implement space-saving strategies across our global office portfolio and measure associated carbon reductions.	Reduced office space by 7.4% in 2023 as a direct result of office reduction strategies. The implementation of space-saving strategies is ongoing. We will measure the impact of this reduction.	
PRODUCTS	Inform end-of-life recycling by labelling new titles in our printed books and journals portfolio by 2025.	Action plans for each area of the business are under development.	
IT	Transition from data centres to carbon-neutral and energy-efficient cloud-based suppliers wherever possible by 2025.	<p>We formed a specialised team to prepare our applications for cloud deployment.</p> <p>Our two major cloud providers have net zero goals.</p>	
SUPPLIERS	Actively engage 50% of print and 50% of pre-press suppliers (by spend) to align with our sustainability goals by 2022.	<p>In 2023, we requested carbon footprint data from print and pre-press suppliers, covering more than 50% of our spend in that area.</p> <p>Where usable carbon intensity data is available from priority suppliers, this has been used in scope 3 calculations.</p>	

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

We consider the impact of our operations on the natural environment and manage our resource use to minimise negative impacts, as well as supporting projects that have co-benefits for biodiversity.

OUR WORKPLACES

RESOURCE USE

Our offices are currently using less water and office paper, and producing less waste, than before the pandemic, due to an increase in hybrid working. In our largest offices, waste segregation – for recycling, reuse, production of biofuels and composting – reached more than 50%. Our IT recycling guidelines set out how we handle electronic equipment that is no longer usable.

IN 2023, OUR 1,500 COLLEAGUES BASED IN PUNE, INDIA, MOVED INTO A NEW OFFICE. THE BUILDING IS LEED PLATINUM CERTIFIED, AND WAS DESIGNED WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND EMPLOYEE WELLBEING IN MIND.

OUR SUPPLIERS

PRINTED PRODUCTS

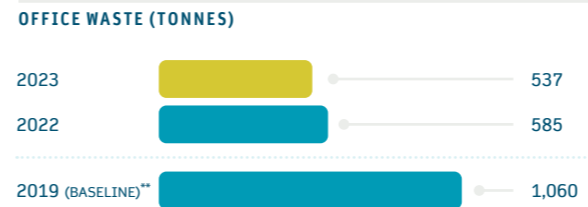
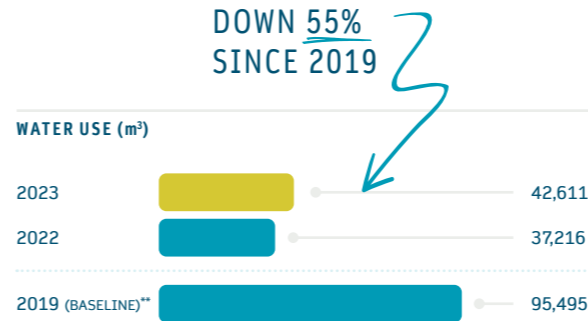
Many of our products are provided in digital-only format, and where they are printed, materials are produced by third-party suppliers. Our printed products required 28,230 tonnes of paper in 2023, a decrease of around 5.8% since 2022.

We continue to reduce logistics emissions by increasing our use of print-on-demand services. In 2023, we also explored optimising our supply chain to make stock movement more efficient (see [page 33](#)).

SUSTAINABLE PAPER SOURCING

Our [paper policy](#) requires us to only use paper from known, legal and responsible sources in our products. Papers must be graded three or five stars in the Publishers' Database for Responsible Environmental Paper Sourcing (PREPS) or certified by one of the following: Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, Sustainable Forestry Initiative or Forest Stewardship Council standards.

We collate data from our largest printers and other sources to determine compliance with the policy. In 2023, compliance was 97%, an increase from 92% in 2022. Areas of non-compliance, and any exceptions to policy, are analysed and reviewed with business areas and printers, in some cases working in tandem to ensure paper is properly certified for future use. In 2024, we will review processes for collating data on paper volumes purchased across the whole group to improve data quality and accuracy.



** This data has been restated.



CASE STUDY

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION IN GERMANY

Our Wiesbaden office was recognised through the Ökoprofit environmental certification as part of their Environmental Consulting and Climate Protection Programme.

We have scrutinised our environmental and climate-relevant processes and developed a strategy to reduce GHG emissions and conserve resources. The programme of measures covered the areas of energy, water, waste, mobility and procurement.

Our certification in this programme is a big step in our ongoing sustainability and environmental protection journey in Wiesbaden.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABILITY

In 2023, 93% of Springer Nature employees completed our first compulsory training on environmental impact topics, as part of the values and conduct training. This was developed in-house and used leading climate science published in our journals and books. It achieved a rating of 4.6 out of 5 from those who completed it.

The Green Office Network

Springer Nature’s global Green Office Network is an employee-run network for colleagues to share their passion for sustainability. The network runs internal sustainability campaigns, and promotes behavioural change and colleague engagement in environmental topics with around 400 members in 28 locations across the world. In 2023, the network experienced significant growth, with more than 250 new members joining since 2022.

GREEN OFFICE NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS IN 2023

2 SWAP SHOPS	2 CYCLING EVENTS	3 RECYCLING CAMPAIGNS	3 ELECTRONIC RECYCLING DRIVES
5 SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOPS	7 CLEAN-UP EVENTS	100s OF SHARED RIDES FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUTING	155 TREES PLANTED
300+ KG OF WASTE COLLECTED IN CLEAN-UPS	1,000s OF PLASTIC ITEMS REMOVED FROM OFFICES	1,500 PLANTS INSTALLED IN OFFICES	10,000 PAPER CUPS SAVED



CASE STUDY

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES IN OUR NEW PUNE OFFICE

Following the move to our new office in Pune, India, the local Green Office Network has been encouraging behavioural change through commuting and waste reduction initiatives.

The network targeted the carbon emissions generated by commuting through carpooling, bike sharing and shuttle service initiatives, creating tools, shared via an internal MySpace portal, to help employees reduce time spent in peak-hour traffic, minimise fuel consumption, decrease emissions, and cut both costs and effort. By the end of 2023, 724 people (52% of the office

population) had used the tool. IT colleagues helped develop an in-house application as an easy way for colleagues to offer and accept shared rides to and from the office, or book a shuttle from common locations.

In addition, an initiative called Sustainify aims to reduce the use of non-recyclable products and replace them with eco-friendly alternatives. As part of this campaign, a ‘No Paper Cup Day’ was initiated each month. Colleagues are encouraged to bring their reusable coffee mugs and water bottles regularly, and on the agreed days, there are no paper cups available for use in the office. In total, the use of more than 16,000 cups has been avoided since July 2023.

PUBLISHING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Publishing trusted, peer-reviewed climate research, and enabling it to reach the decision-makers who need it, is the greatest action we can take to help reduce global emissions and tackle climate change.

WE CONTINUE TO PUBLISH RESEARCH FROM ACROSS THE SDGs, INCLUDING SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION. FOR EXAMPLE, AN ARTICLE IN *NATURE CLIMATE CHANGE* ON THE FUTURE OF THE WEST ANTARCTIC ICE-SHELF GARNERED INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION WITH OVER 1,500 MEDIA HITS. IT DESCRIBES HOW THE COLLAPSE OF THE WEST ANTARCTIC ICE SHEET MAY BE INEVITABLE REGARDLESS OF ATTEMPTS TO MITIGATE GHGs.



SPRINGER NATURE HAS SHARED MORE THAN 70,000 CLIMATE RESEARCH JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS SINCE 2015



CASE STUDY

NATURE RECOGNISED BY PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Nature was named [Environmental Personality of the Year at the 24th ECOVIDRIO awards](#) for its extensive track record in disseminating the latest scientific discoveries and research, including on climate change and its effects and on the biodiversity crisis. ECOVIDRIO is the non-profit organisation responsible for managing glass recycling across Spain, and previous winners include former Director of the UNFCCC Christina Figuerres and anthropologist and primatologist Jane Goodall. This is the first time a research journal has received the award.



This award is a fantastic endorsement of the critical role *Nature* plays in communicating about critical topics including climate change to both scientific audiences and the general public, across the world. We are in great company with previous winners and are grateful to ECOVIDRIO for recognising the importance of science and trusted research in identifying solutions to the pressing global challenges, and ultimately speeding up progress we desperately need for the future.

MAGDALENA SKIPPER, EDITOR IN CHIEF, *NATURE*

**GOVERNANCE**

WORKING ETHICALLY

Our work is guided by codes of conduct for employees, business partners and editors, and is supported by a range of group-wide policies and procedures. These give us the frameworks we need to uphold our values and implement our sustainable business priorities, within the organisation and through every part of our supply chain.

IN THIS SECTION

- 39 GOVERNANCE, RISK AND COMPLIANCE
- 39 APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING ON MATERIAL ESG TOPICS
- 39 CRITICAL CONCERNS
- 39 BEHAVING ETHICALLY
- 39 AI PRINCIPLES
- 40 MANAGING OUR SUPPLY CHAIN
- 40 WHISTLEBLOWING

GOVERNANCE, RISK AND COMPLIANCE

Supported by guidelines and frameworks, integrity is a key value for Springer Nature. Through our governance, risk and compliance approach, we proactively address relevant legal and regulatory risks across all of our operations. Our governance approach is not just about our direct operations. For us, being a responsible business means we also need to engage with parties who can have an impact on our business or who are impacted by our business. Through engagement of our internal and external stakeholders on a periodic basis, we aim to identify emerging issues, risks and opportunities relevant to them and therefore to our business. We employ an extensive system of policies, procedures, controls and oversight practices to ensure all aspects of our business and extended relationships are managed responsibly.

APPROACH TO REPORT AND MATERIAL ESG REPORTING

At Springer Nature, effective governance is essential to the way we manage our ESG impacts. The executive team oversees the internal controls and risk management practices around ESG topics material to our business.

Our sustainable business strategy and management of material ESG topics are overseen by a steering group, which includes members of the Management Board, and executive team. Dedicated committees and working groups focus on specific strategies and the operational activities through which they are implemented.

Our governance, risk and compliance team designs and operates our group-wide risk and compliance system. This system identifies and proactively

addresses relevant ESG, legal and regulatory risks, and other issues covered in our [Code of Conduct](#).

- **Company policies:** Company-wide policies are designed to help us manage and mitigate topics, and are reviewed at least every five years to ensure they stay up to date. A policy management committee meets several times a year to review existing, new and updated policies.
- **Staff awareness:** We train all staff on the expectations set out in the Code of Conduct and group policies.
- **Monitoring compliance:** We detect issues through compliance reviews, internal audits and monitoring.
- **Escalating issues:** We have a global [Speak Up system](#) to escalate and investigate issues.

The internal audit department conducts audits on a wide range of topics throughout the group, and in 2023, the team launched an insight programme to build a greater understanding about company-wide audit process, risk management and compliance awareness across the business. In 2023, we conducted six site visits for internal audits.

CRITICAL CONCERNS

We seek to identify any new risks and material changes to our risk profile on a quarterly basis. We consider the major risks and uncertainties that could affect Springer Nature, as well as the possible relationships and interdependencies. We also track 12 principal risk areas (€1–5 million or equivalent) and eight emerging risk areas (risks that may impact in future years). In 2023, we reported on 25 significant principal risk areas (>€5 million or equivalent) in 14 risk categories.

BEHAVING ETHICALLY

Our Code of Conduct for employees sets out our expectation that all employees are treated fairly and respectfully. All staff must affirm their commitment to this code annually.

We expect the communities we work with and our suppliers to adhere to the same standards we set for ourselves by acting in a sustainable, ethical and socially responsible way. In addition to the Code of Conduct for our staff, we have a targeted code of conduct for stakeholders across our supply chain (business partners). We also have targeted codes of conduct for the publishing activities of the authors and editors we work with.

TRAINING

We train all staff on the expectations set out in the Code of Conduct and group policies on an annual basis through our values and conduct training programme. All employees are required to complete this training programme, which includes topics from the Code of Conduct.

The training programme generally follows a three-year cycle, starting with the Code of Conduct (year 1) and then breaking down the topics into bite-sized modules (years 2 and 3). From 2022 to 2024, the overarching theme for this training is 'sustainable business'. The programme covers ESG topics connected with the Code of Conduct and Business Partner Code of Conduct that are material to our business, as well as our internal values, our [sustainability strategy](#) and the SDGs.

IN 2023, WE LAUNCHED THREE NEW TRAINING MODULES – 'ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT', 'HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN' AND 'PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED'. [READ MORE ABOUT OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT TRAINING IN THE PLANET SECTION](#). IN 2023, THE TRAINING HAD A COMPLETION RATE OF 93%.

We also provide additional specialised training and webinars for colleagues in higher-risk and/or senior management roles and locations.

AI PRINCIPLES

Springer Nature is committed to adopting an ethically focused approach while designing, developing, deploying and using AI-based solutions.

Springer Nature's AI governance forums and processes have been set up to provide for regulatory and legal compliance, as well as adherence to our own AI principles. The use of AI technologies aligns with our group strategies and values, meets the principles of ethical AI and aims to fulfil current and future legal requirements. We use AI solutions responsibly, making sure that we consider and mitigate any negative societal or environmental impacts. We place human-centred values at the heart of our approach to the [responsible use of AI](#).

Under the oversight of the Management Board, in 2023, we set up an AI governance structure, including forums and processes, to ensure regulatory and legal compliance. An AI board and four decision forums (AI Ethics Forum, Product and Technology

GOVERNANCE, RISK AND COMPLIANCE

Forum, Sales and Commercial Forum, and the Legal and Group Policy Forum) are in place to make sure we communicate with and consider the needs of all stakeholder groups and to localise decision-making with cross-functional collaboration.

We have developed a set of principles to guide our colleagues in the use of AI (see table, right). The AI Ethics Forum has also produced two AI ethics health checks to help those working with AI adhere to and apply the AI principles. The principles and health checks will be regularly reviewed as the landscape evolves.

ANTI-BRIBERY, FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

We operate a zero tolerance policy for any corruption involving our employees or supply chain. In 2023, the anti-bribery, fraud and corruption (ABFC) risk assessments for the education division were updated by the finance directors. We completed an ABFC risk assessment for part of the research division in 2023 and will continue to focus on the ABFC controls within the research division in 2024.

In 2023, we had no confirmed significant incidents of corruption.

MANAGING OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

SUPPLIER ONBOARDING

We expect our business partners to align with the same standards that we set out for ourselves. Our [Business Partner Code of Conduct](#) covers topics including fair pay and conditions, prevention of

forced and child labour, health and safety, and environmental practices. Compliance with our Business Partner Code of Conduct is part of our standard contract for suppliers.

AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2023, 95% OF BUSINESS PARTNERS THAT ARE ACTIVELY MANAGED IN OUR LABOUR STANDARDS PROGRAMME HAD COMMITTED TO FOLLOW THE CODE. TO ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE WITH THE BUSINESS PARTNER CODE OF CONDUCT, WE ACTIVELY MANAGE AND MONITOR OUR SUPPLIERS THROUGH OUR SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Once onboarded, all in-scope suppliers are required to complete a due diligence questionnaire covering modern slavery and human trafficking, and to update it at least once every three years or more often, depending on the risk profile of the supplier. Our due diligence questionnaires are regularly reviewed to align with upcoming legal and regulatory requirements relating to ESG matters.

We audit major suppliers to monitor adherence to our Business Partner Code of Conduct. In 2023, there were 23 audits in scope and 21 were completed.

Where we have concerns, we work with suppliers to address them, discussing audit findings and any action plans stemming from them. We follow up on agreed actions and provide support to ensure action plans are executed. In 2023, our supplier audit

program found 11 high-priority issues. Most of them were in the ‘working conditions’ and ‘health and safety’ categories and involved excessive working hours, fire drills not done, storage of hazardous waste in an open area, blocked emergency exits, and blocked aisles and unmarked aisles. At the time this report was published, four of these actions were still open. They are from two audits that were reported in November 2023. Two actions were completed in March 2024 and the other two are still being discussed to agree a deadline for closure.

WHISTLEBLOWING

We have processes for staff, business partners and all third parties to ask questions or raise concerns about how Springer Nature is operating. One of these channels is a confidential and independent whistleblowing system. In 2023, 107 reports were raised via the Speak Up system, consistent with 2022.

The percentage of anonymous reports has declined substantially since 2022, allowing us to better address the issue raised and communicate with the reporter more easily. This is positive as it indicates that staff trust the business enough to disclose their identities when asking questions or sharing concerns.

We continue to engage regularly, including via company-wide training and targeted awareness sessions, on the importance of speaking up. This includes training for managers on how to respond to a report made directly to them.

WHISTLEBLOWING REPORTS

	2021	2022	2023
REPORTS RECEIVED	133	125	128
VIA SPEAK UP	114	106	107

**SPRINGER NATURE AI PRINCIPLES
HUMAN-CENTRED VALUES**



DIGNITY, RESPECT AND MINIMISING HARM

We prioritise human wellbeing and dignity, and take steps to prevent harm to society and the environment.



FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

We mitigate the potential for structural bias and inequities.



TRANSPARENCY

We disclose when an AI system is being used and explain our processes in accessible language.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We maintain human oversight of the development and outcomes generated by our AI tools and solutions.



PRIVACY AND DATA GOVERNANCE

We safeguard personal privacy and follow all relevant data protection laws.



APPENDIX

IN THIS SECTION

42 AUDITOR'S REPORT

44 KEY DATA

48 SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE AND MATERIALITY

49 MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO MATERIAL TOPICS

50 GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE (GRI) INDEX

AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO SPRINGER NATURE AG & CO. KGAA, BERLIN

We have performed a limited assurance engagement on selected non-financial indicators in the area of diversity and carbon reporting (hereafter "selected sustainability disclosures") marked with the † symbol within the Sustainable Business Report of the Springer Nature Group (Springer Nature AG & Co. KGaA, Berlin, and its subsidiary companies; hereafter the "Company") for the reporting period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 (hereafter the "sustainability report").

Our engagement exclusively refers to selected sustainability disclosures marked with †. Not subject to our assurance engagement are sustainability disclosures for prior years.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

The executive directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the sustainability report, which comprises the selected sustainability disclosures, with reference to the GRI Sustainability Reporting Standards (hereafter "reporting criteria").

These responsibilities of the Company's executive directors include the selection and application of appropriate methods for the preparation of the selected sustainability disclosures and making assumptions and estimates about individual non-financial disclosures of the Group that are reasonable

in the circumstances. Furthermore, the executive directors are responsible for such internal control as the executive directors consider necessary to enable the preparation of selected sustainability disclosures that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud (manipulation of the selected sustainability disclosures) or error.

INDEPENDENCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE AUDITOR'S FIRM

We have complied with the German professional requirements on independence as well as other professional conduct requirements.

Our audit firm applies the national legal requirements and professional pronouncements – in particular the BS WP/vBP ["Berufssatzung für Wirtschaftsprüfer/ vereidigte Buchprüfer": Professional Charter for German Public Accountants/German Sworn Auditors] in the exercise of their Profession and the IDW Standard on Quality Management issued by the Institute of Public Auditors in Germany (IDW): Requirements for Quality Management in the Audit Firm (IDW QS 1) and accordingly maintains a comprehensive quality management system that includes documented policies and procedures with regard to compliance with professional ethical requirements, professional standards as well as relevant statutory and other legal requirements.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AUDITOR

Our responsibility is to express a conclusion with limited assurance on the selected sustainability disclosures based on our assurance engagement.

We conducted our assurance engagement in accordance with International Standard on Assurance Engagements (ISAE) 3000 (Revised): "Assurance Engagements other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information" issued by the IAASB. This standard requires that we plan and perform the assurance engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether any matters have come to our attention that cause us to believe that the selected sustainability disclosures are not prepared, in all material respects, with reference to the reporting criteria. Not subject to our assurance engagement are any sustainability disclosures for prior years.

In a limited assurance engagement, the procedures performed are less extensive than in a reasonable assurance engagement, and accordingly, a substantially lower level of assurance is obtained. The selection of the assurance procedures is subject to the professional judgment of the auditor.

In the course of our assurance engagement we have, among other things, performed the following assurance procedures and other activities:

- Gain an understanding of the structure of the Group's sustainability organization, the sustainability strategy of the Company,
- Inquiries of the executive directors and relevant employees involved in the preparation of the selected sustainability disclosures about the preparation process and about the internal control related to this process,
- Identification and assessment of risks of material misstatement in the selected sustainability disclosures,
- Analytical procedures on selected sustainability disclosures,
- Inquiries, inspection of sample documents and obtaining evidence relating to the collection and reporting of selected disclosures in the selected sustainability disclosures,
- Evaluation of the presentation of the selected sustainability disclosures.

ASSURANCE CONCLUSION

Based on our assurance procedures performed and the evidence obtained, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the selected sustainability disclosures of the Company for the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 are not prepared, in all material respects, with reference to the reporting criteria.

We do not express an assurance conclusion on any sustainability disclosures for prior years.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

RESTRICTION OF USE

We draw attention to the fact that the assurance engagement was conducted for the Company's purposes and that the report is intended solely to inform the Company about the result of the assurance engagement. As a result, it may not be suitable for another purpose than the aforementioned. Accordingly, the report is not intended to be used by third parties for making (financial) decisions based on it. Our responsibility is to the Company alone.

We do not accept any responsibility to third parties. Our assurance conclusion is not modified in this respect.

GENERAL ENGAGEMENT TERMS AND LIABILITY

The enclosed "General Engagement Terms for Wirtschaftsprüfer and Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaften [German Public Auditors and Public Audit Firms]" dated 1 January 2017 are applicable to this engagement and also govern our relations with third parties in the context of this engagement (www.de.ey.com/general-engagement-terms). In addition, please refer to the liability provisions contained there in no. 9 and to the exclusion of liability towards third parties. We accept no responsibility, liability or other obligations towards third parties unless we have concluded a written agreement to the contrary with the respective third party or liability cannot effectively be precluded.

We make express reference to the fact that we will not update the report to reflect events or circumstances arising after it was issued, unless required to do so by law. It is the sole responsibility of anyone taking note of the summarized result of our work contained in this report to decide whether and in what way this information is useful or suitable for their purposes and to supplement, verify or update it by means of their own review procedures.

Berlin, 8 April 2024

EY GmbH & Co. KG
Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft

Lehmann

Wirtschaftsprüferin
[German Public Auditor]

Fischer

Wirtschaftsprüferin
[German Public Auditor]

KEY DATA

	2021	2022	2023
Economic			
Revenue (€ billion)	1.70	1.82	1.85
Our research content			
Proportion of journal content published immediate (gold) open access (OA) (%) ¹	36	38	44
Number of new OA articles published ¹	149,700	154,868	183,800
Number of fully OA books	1,671	2,212	3,130
People²			
Number of full-time employees (headcount)	9,133	9,553	9,402
Number of full-time employees (FTE)	8,728	9,202	8,821
Number of employees by continent (headcount)			
Europe	4,751	4,906	4,654
North America	1,024	1,031	1,062
South America	696	709	713
Asia	2,310	2,540	2,609
Africa	265	286	278
Oceania	88	81	86
Number of new hires ³	Newly reported in 2022	1,962	1,483
Number of new hires per region ³			
Europe	-	791	680
North America	-	204	172
South America	-	123	101
Asia	-	736	472
Africa	-	94	46
Oceania	-	14	12

1 Includes research journal and review article content only, published in fully open access journals or within hybrid journals. Excludes editorials and opinion pieces. From 2023 onwards, includes content published by Cureus.

2 As at 31 December of the respective year.

3 Excludes joiners who left after a day or less; includes interns, trainees and apprentices.

KEY DATA

	2021	2022	2023
People² (continued)			
Overall gender split (% men/women) ⁴	Newly reported in 2022	40/58	39/59
Gender split per region (% men/women) ⁴	Newly reported in 2022		
Europe	–	37/62	37/63
North America	–	35/61	40/58
South America	–	45/53	41/56
Asia	–	48/52	47/53
Africa	–	37/61	40/59
Oceania	–	36/64	35/65
Gender split – Management Board (% men/women) ⁴	67/33*	67/33*	67/33 [†]
Gender split – tiers one to three (% men/women) ⁴	59/41*	59/41*	55/44 [†]
Social impact			
Cash donations and sponsorship (€ thousands) ⁵	527	1,350	893
Compliance			
Percentage of suppliers covered by sustainable procurement measures (%) ⁶	Newly reported in 2022	99	95
Proportion of staff undertaken Code of Conduct training (%) ⁷	97	95	91

4 Remaining percentage: other, prefer not to say, not known.

5 This estimated figure comes from group-wide research and information taken from financial systems, and includes funds given in donations and sponsorships to charities and non-profit organisations to support projects and programmes that align with our aims. Donations in kind are not included in this figure.

6 Indicates the percentage of suppliers covered under the Business Partner Code of Conduct.

7 Percentage of staff that registered and completed online training.

* Data reviewed by auditors in a prior year.

† Data reviewed by auditors, see audit statement on [page 42](#).

KEY DATA

	2021	2022	2023
Environment⁸			
Energy usage			
Total energy use (MWh) ⁹	20,559	19,716	17,613
Renewable energy (%) ¹⁰	52	59	61
Total electricity use (MWh)	11,371	12,218	10,934
Renewable and clean electricity (%) ¹¹	95	95	99
Overview of carbon neutral target¹²			
Greenhouse gas emissions, gross (tonnes CO ₂ e) ¹³	8,602*	15,175*	22,084 [†]
Greenhouse gas emissions, net (tonnes CO ₂ e) ¹³	4,304*	10,107*	17,224 [†]
Carbon balance after purchase of carbon offsets (tonnes CO ₂ e)	0*	0*	0 [†]
Emissions within scope of carbon neutral target¹²			
Scope 1 (tonnes CO ₂ e) ¹⁴	2,910*	3,048*	3,385 [†]
Scope 2 (tonnes CO ₂ e)			
Location-based emissions ¹⁵	4,182*	4,715*	4,279 [†]
Market-based emissions ¹⁶	538*	463*	239 [†]
Partial scope 3 (tonnes CO₂e)¹⁷			
Flights	672*	6,467*	13,507 [†]
Leased building services (location-based emissions) ¹⁵	838*	945*	913 [†]
Leased building services (market-based emissions) ¹⁶	184*	129*	93 [†]

* Data reviewed by auditors in a prior year.

[†] Data reviewed by auditors (excluding footnotes), see audit statement on [page 42](#).

- 8 We collect primary data for our largest sites (those with more than 100 employees, and several other strategically important sites). Approximately 79% of energy consumption, 78% of the associated gross carbon emissions (92% including flight emissions) and more than 80% of resource use is therefore based on actual data. Data for the remaining locations is extrapolated based on average values. The following 2023 acquisitions are reflected in the environmental data: College Press Publishers, Troupant Publishers Proprietary Limited, Slimmer AI Science and protocols.io; additionally, the Springer Fachmedien München business was divested in June 2023. The overall impact on gross and net emissions is 1.2% and 1.6% respectively. Prior years' figures have not been restated.
- 9 This figure includes energy used by sites where we have operational control, our serviced sites and major outsourced data centres.
- 10 This figure shows our renewable and clean electricity purchases, as a proportion of total site energy use.
- 11 This figure relates to both renewable and/or clean electricity purchased directly through the electricity provider, for our sites and one major outsourced data centre, and additional renewable energy certificates (RECs) purchased via a broker for electricity used at other sites. We have updated this metric to include nuclear electricity (<1% of the total) stated as clean electricity, which was purchased for some of our sites in Spain from July 2023 onwards.
- 12 In 2020, Springer Nature set a target to be carbon neutral for our offices, fleet and flights. All figures exclude emissions relating to properties leased by Springer Nature to third parties, and the transmission and distribution of electricity. Additionally, the 'outside of scopes' ('biogenic' part of biofuels) emissions are estimated at 107 tonnes.
- 13 Gross emissions do not factor in purchasing of renewable and clean energy, including RECs, or offsets. Net emissions factor in supplier-sourced renewable and clean electricity and purchases of additional RECs but excludes offsets.
- 14 Scope 1 figure includes 111 tonnes CO₂e relating to an accidental release of refrigerant ('F-gas') at our previous Pune office during demolition work by a licensed contractor in 2023.
- 15 For location-based emissions reporting, we apply the following hierarchy of emissions factors:
- 1 Regional or subnational grid average where a recent factor is available, including from eGRID and the Australian Government.
 - 2 National production figures sourced from the International Energy Agency (2023).

Factor source	Country
Umwelt Bundesamt, Strom- und Wärmeversorgung in Zahlen (2023)	Germany
UK Government, greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors (2023)	UK
The most recently published regional or subnational grid factors available from the national government	Argentina, Australia, France, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, USA and Vietnam
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Standardized baseline – grid emission factor for Southern African Power Pool, Version 01.0 (2018)	Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe
European Environment Agency, greenhouse gas emission intensity of electricity generation (2023 edition)	All other European operations
IEA, Emissions Factors (2023 edition)	All other operations

16 Market-based emissions figures include the carbon benefits of purchasing supplier-sourced green and clean electricity and additional purchases of RECs.

17 We expect to publish the remainder of our scope 3 footprint for 2023 later in 2024. For additional information on our full scope 3 footprint 2019–2022, see our [net zero supplement](#).

KEY DATA

	2021	2022	2023
Environment⁸ (continued)			
Emissions intensity (per unit of revenue)			
Gross emissions per million euros (tonnes CO ₂ e) ¹³	5	8	12
Net emissions per million euros (excludes offsets) (tonnes CO ₂ e) ¹³	3	6	9
Resource use			
Total water usage (cubic metres)	41,090	37,216	42,611
Total site waste production (tonnes) ¹⁸	503	585	537
Proportion office waste separated from general waste streams (%) ¹⁹	51	49	55
Office paper (tonnes)	23	22	20
Production paper (tonnes)	24,412	29,961	28,230
Production waste (tonnes) ²⁰	2,074	615	1,300

¹⁸ Figure relates to typical Springer Nature office and warehouse waste streams and excludes recycling of unsold product and damaged production paper and recycling of construction wastes.

¹⁹ The indicator relates to waste that has been separated for recycling, reuse, production of biofuels and composting. It does not include waste that has been sent to incineration (such as in energy-from-waste facilities) or landfill. This indicator relates to our largest sites (those with more than 100 employees, and several other strategically important sites).

²⁰ We report production waste generated from third-party warehouses and printers, which includes unsold product. Data for the largest warehouse suppliers shows this paper is sent for recycling.

SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE AND MATERIALITY

The principles of responsible governance, compliance with laws and ethical business conduct are embedded throughout Springer Nature. Policies, guidance and culture are overseen by members of the Management Board and wider executive team to ensure we are operating responsibly and addressing the issues that are of most importance to our business and our stakeholders.

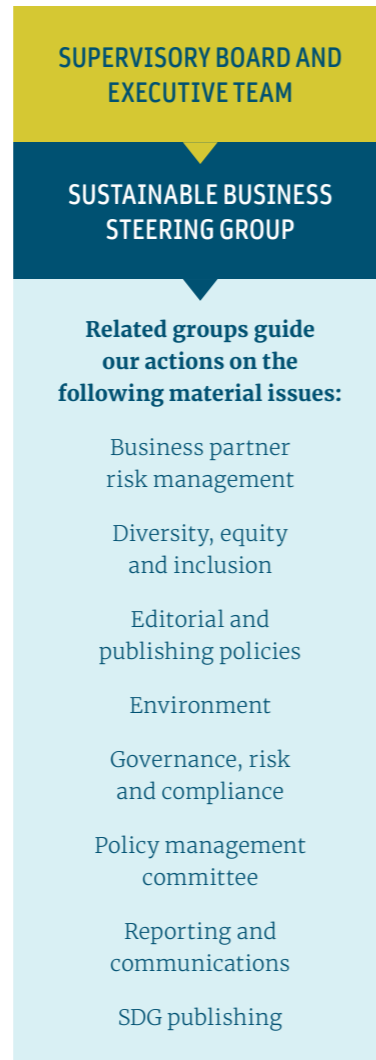
SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE

Our sustainable business strategy and management of material environmental, social and governance (ESG) topics are overseen by a steering group, which includes members of the Management Board and executive team. Dedicated committees and working groups focus on specific strategies and the operational activities through which they are implemented.

Governance is a key component of our approach to managing ESG topics. Our governance, risk and compliance team designs and operates our group-wide risk and compliance system. This system identifies and proactively addresses relevant ESG, legal and regulatory risks, and other issues covered in our [Code of Conduct](#).

- **Company policies:** Company-wide policies are designed to help us manage and mitigate topics, and are reviewed at least every five years to ensure they stay up to date.
- **Staff awareness:** We train all staff on the expectations set out in the Code of Conduct and group policies. A policy management committee meets several times a year to review existing, new and updated policies.

OUR GOVERNANCE APPROACH



- **Monitoring compliance:** We detect issues through compliance reviews, internal audits and monitoring.
- **Escalating issues:** We have a global [Speak Up system](#) to escalate and investigate issues.

The implementation of group policies and procedures is the responsibility of functional, divisional and regional management. Our business leaders are supported in this by a network of senior managers, including legal, HR, IT and finance teams.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Sustainable business and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are strategic priorities, with progress against milestones and key performance indicators provided to the supervisory board and executive team quarterly.

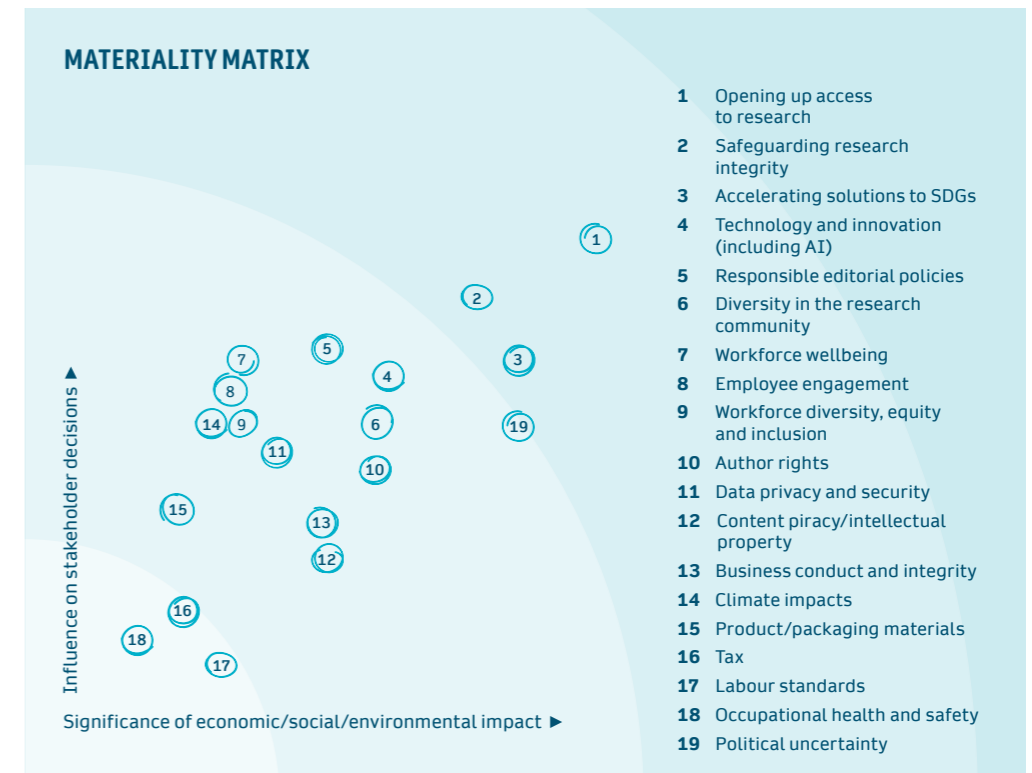
Senior leaders oversee core activities that address ESG risks, and work in partnership with oversight committee members. See our [GRI Index](#) for more on these members.

MATERIALITY

Our materiality assessment identifies the ESG issues that are deemed to be most significant to Springer Nature and incorporates stakeholders' concerns and input. We manage our materiality process on a cycle aligned with the development of our five-year strategy, ambitions and targets. The process includes an annual review of emerging topics for consideration, including those that are identified in the group-wide risk management process, and also takes into account business changes. This drives our disclosure effort.

Material topics are shared with the executive team and are reflected in our quarterly risk management reporting processes (see more on [page 49](#)).

The assessment approach follows the principles of double materiality, with placement of the issue on the matrix reflecting its impact, or potential impact, on the environment and on communities that we work with, as well as its impact on our own operations.



MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO MATERIAL TOPICS

APPROACHING COMPLIANCE RISKS AND CRITICAL CONCERNS

On this page, our GRI index, and in relevant pages or documents on the Springer Nature Group website, we set out our approach to managing ESG topics. Governance is a key component of our approach to managing ESG impacts. Led by our Chief Risk and Compliance Officer, our governance, risk and compliance team is responsible for group risk reporting.

The executive team and audit committee receive quarterly risk reports and biannual compliance updates, including the reporting of significant compliance incidents, if any.

CRITICAL CONCERNS

We seek to identify any new risks and material changes to our risk profile on a quarterly basis. We consider the major risks and uncertainties that could affect Springer Nature, as well as the possible relationships and interdependencies.

All our operational locations are covered by internal risk assessments. The governance, risk and compliance and internal audit teams undertake internal reviews of our operations, and work with external auditors to audit our supply chain.

ANTI-BRIBERY, FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

We operate a zero-tolerance policy for any corruption involving our employees or supply chain and recognise our role in ensuring that the funds committed to projects are not diverted or misused.

We conduct stand-alone anti-bribery, fraud and corruption (ABFC) risk assessments on a regular basis and have an ABFC policy and ABFC management guidance. Compliance with the requirements set out in the policy is the responsibility of the heads of each global division or group function. This responsibility includes designing controls (with the assistance of the governance, risk and compliance team and finance management) to prevent, where possible, fraud or staff offering and receiving bribes.

DIGITAL SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION

We aim to be a data-driven and customer-centric organisation, offering valuable services and insights. We have established technical and organisational measures to protect our systems and commercially sensitive information. We also ensure all personally identifiable information is stored and processed in a legally compliant manner, in recognition of the severe risks from unsecure data and systems.

We run infrastructure and server-level security initiatives, and continue to invest in employee training on a regular basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

We have a global environment policy that sets out expectations of how we manage the company's most material environmental impacts, including carbon emissions. The policy applies to all our locations and colleagues, and brings together a range of practical guidance on areas including office paper, water, fluorinated gases, waste and electronic waste. It is supplemented by a paper policy, which is shared

with the suppliers that we work with to produce our printed products.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our global health and safety policy guides how we manage both mental and physical health risks at all our sites. Our buildings are primarily offices, so ergonomics and wellbeing are important concerns.

We keep these risks as low as we can, with mandatory annual training for colleagues, a health and safety management system, and regular reporting to senior management to consider trends or actions to avoid a recurrence.

LABOUR

We follow the UN Global Compact, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the standards issued by the International Labour Organization, and we expect our business partners to do the same.

We publish an annual [Modern Slavery Act Statement](#) on our website.

MANAGING OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

We expect all our suppliers to adhere to the same standards we set for ourselves by acting in a sustainable, ethical and socially responsible way. We apply a proportionate risk-based approach to supplier management, coordinated by the business partner risk steering group. We use a third-party risk assessment tool to collect supplier due diligence data and prioritise

suppliers. Suppliers are assessed for risks related to bribery and corruption, labour standards and human rights, data protection, information security and the environment. Completing periodic due diligence helps us to work with business partners who follow the same standards that we set ourselves, as per our Business Partner Code of Conduct.

PAYING A FAIR SHARE OF TAX

We commit to contributing a fair share of tax and subscribe to initiatives that increase tax transparency. The average tax rate currently of the Springer Nature Group is approximately 26% and we do not expect material changes in the mid-term.

Our [tax strategy](#) for the year ending 31 December 2023 is published on our website.

PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES

Material risks and opportunities related to publishing activity are overseen by the executive team, relevant senior leadership team members and other working groups. The topics include opening up access to research, safeguarding research integrity, accelerating solutions to SDGs, responsible editorial policies and diversity in the research community. We share resources relevant to these topics on our website, aimed at the communities we work with, including codes of conduct that set out ways of working and expectations.

- [Open research](#)
- [Research integrity](#)
- [SDG Programme](#)
- [Editorial policies](#)
- [Diversity, equity & inclusion](#)

GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE (GRI) INDEX

Springer Nature has reported the information cited in this GRI content index for the period 1 January to 31 December 2023 with reference to the 2021 GRI Standards. This index can be used to find key ESG information, organised by the relevant and most up-to-date GRI Universal and Topic Standards with GRI 3-3 Management Approach integrated for each topic. We believe this is the most appropriate approach for communicating effectively with our stakeholders.

GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	DETAIL
GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021	2-1 Organizational details	Springer Nature Group
	2-2 Entities included in the organization's sustainability reporting	Reporting covers entities that are part of Springer Nature Group: Springer Nature AG & Co. KGaA and its subsidiary companies. It is referred to through this report as 'Springer Nature', 'the company' or 'the organisation'. During 2023, Springer Nature acquired Troupant Publishers Proprietary Limited (acquisition), protocols.io and Slimmer AI Science, and we divested our transport business, Springer Fachmedien. Please see the About Us section of our website for more information.
	2-3 Reporting period, frequency and contact point	The 2023 Sustainable Business Report covers the period from January to December 2023, in line with Springer Nature's financial year. We report annually, typically in the second quarter. Enquiries can be forwarded to communications@springernature.com .
	2-4 Restatements of information	To ensure fair comparison of data year on year, and in accordance with our baseline and recalculation policy, we restate figures from previous years if there is a significant change to data-gathering processes, methodology and improvements in data accuracy. We have restated 2019 figures (our baseline year) for carbon emissions and energy use, used in charts on pages 32 and 33.
	2-5 External assurance	Our auditor, EY, performed a limited assurance engagement on selected non-financial indicators in the area of diversity and carbon reporting, marked in the data charts on pages 42-43 of this report and the data table on pages 44-47 with † in accordance with the International Standard on Assurance Engagements (ISAE) 3000 (Revised). The full statement can be read on pages 42-43 of this report.
	2-6 Activities, value chain and other business relationships	Springer Nature is a leading publisher of research, professional, health and education content. We add value to our communities by providing digital and print content in the form of journals, books and databases primarily to academic and governmental institutions, corporate customers and individuals. More information can be found in the About Us section of our website, and in our Annual Progress Report . Springer Nature has an international supply chain. Direct goods and services include: global production (pre-press, print, paper) and global distribution (transport and shipping, postage, warehousing and logistics). Indirect goods and services include: IT (hardware, software, services, fixed/mobile telecoms), marketing, travel and events, external agencies and communications, auditing, consulting/outsourcing/offshoring. See page 32 of this report for how we are engaging our value chain with our net zero commitments.
	2-7 Employees	Unlocking Potential, pages 18-27

GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE (GRI) INDEX

GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	DETAIL
GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021	2-8 Workers who are not employees	The vast majority of our company's activities are performed by permanent employees. Temporary staff include seasonal workers in warehouses, to assist with peak seasons.
	2-9 Governance structure and composition	More information can be found in the About Us and Corporate Governance sections of our website.
	2-10 Nomination and selection of the highest governance body	Corporate Governance
	2-11 Chair of the highest governance body	Our supervisory board
	2-12 Role of the highest governance body in overseeing the management of impacts	Corporate Governance
	2-13 Delegation of responsibility for managing impacts	Corporate Governance Our executive team Sustainability governance and materiality, page 48
	2-14 Role of the highest governance body in sustainability reporting	Sustainability governance and materiality, page 48
	2-15 Conflicts of interest	Corporate Governance
	2-16 Communication of critical concerns	Approaching compliance risks and critical concerns, page 39
	2-17 Collective knowledge of the highest governance body	Corporate Governance Sustainability governance and materiality, page 48
	2-18 Evaluation of the performance of the highest governance body	Corporate Governance
	2-19 Remuneration policies	Corporate Governance
	2-20 Process to determine remuneration	Corporate Governance
2-22 Statement on sustainable development strategy	Joint statement from our Chair and CEO, page 5	
2-23 Policy commitments	Our Code of Conduct for employees sets out our expectation that all employees are treated fairly and respectfully. The group-wide compliance system is designed to identify and proactively address relevant legal and regulatory risks, and other issues covered in our Code of Conduct. See page 39 of this report.	

GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE (GRI) INDEX

GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	DETAIL
GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021	2-24 Embedding policy commitments	Code of Conduct Governance, risk and compliance, page 39 All stakeholders can raise concerns via Speak Up
	2-25 Processes to remediate negative impacts	Code of Conduct Governance, risk and compliance, page 39 All stakeholders can raise concerns via Speak Up
	2-26 Mechanisms for seeking advice and raising concerns	Code of Conduct Governance, risk and compliance, page 39 All stakeholders can raise concerns via Speak Up
	2-27 Compliance with laws and regulations	We had no instances of fines for non-compliance that met our materiality threshold.
	2-28 Membership associations	This non-exhaustive list includes associations that are important for Springer Nature to represent company interests and where our staff take a leading role. Book Chain Project, Media Law Resource Center Research and Health segments: American Library Association, Associação Brasileira de Editores Científicos (ABEC), Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP), Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, CHORUS, Crossref, De Mediafederatie, International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, LIBER, NASIG, National Information Standards Organization (NISO), Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), ORCID, the Publishers Association, Research Data Alliance, Research4Life, SNSI, Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP), South African National Library and Information Consortium, Special Library Association, STM International. Education segment: Associação Brasileira de Livros e Conteúdos Educacionais (Abrelivros), Association of Publishers – India, Cámara Argentina del Libro, Cámara Nacional de la Industria Editorial (CNIEM), Federation of Indian Publishers, Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA), Polish Chamber of Books, Egyptian Publishers Association.

GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE (GRI) INDEX

GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	DETAIL
GRI 2: General Disclosures 2021	2-29 Approach to stakeholder engagement	<p>We define our stakeholders as those parties who can have an impact on our business or who are impacted by our business.</p> <p>Our key stakeholders are those with the greatest impacts, i.e. the institutions, researchers and educators we work with; our employees; and our shareholders. We use a variety of means to engage with stakeholders. This engagement is not carried out specifically as part of the report preparation process but as part of our general management approach, and summaries are reviewed as part of the materiality approach. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · We engage with our global workforce through our annual employee engagement survey (see page 10 of this report). · We engage with institutions, researchers and educators mainly at conferences, client meetings, via editorial boards, library advisory boards and other events. · We engage with others in our industry on environmental issues through the quarterly meetings of the Book Chain project and as part of the UK Publishers Association Sustainability Taskforce.
	2-30 Collective bargaining agreements	<p>Springer Nature recognises the importance of open communication and engagement between workers and managers regarding working conditions. We respect our employees' legal rights to freely associate, organise and bargain collectively without fear of harassment, intimidation, penalty or reprisal. We require our business partners to do the same with their own employees, as stated on page 9 of our Business Partner Code of Conduct.</p> <p>We have works councils, employee representation forums or other local formally elected employee representation groups in Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom, covering around 50% of our global workforce. Around 28% of our workforce is covered by collective bargaining agreements. In markets where collective bargaining is inhibited by law or by custom, we provide other means for employees to submit collective feedback and receive a considered response, such as town halls and via our company intranet. An international staff representative forum maintains regular dialogue about important organisational developments or employee matters, and also includes representatives from countries not formally covered by works councils.</p>
GRI 3: Material Topics 2021	3-1 Process to determine material topics	Sustainability governance and materiality, page 48
	3-2 List of material topics	
	3-3 Management of material topics	
GRI 203: Indirect Economic Impacts 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Sustainability governance and materiality, page 48 Annual Progress Report
	203-2 Significant indirect economic impacts	In the section Advancing Discovery, pages 11-17 , we outline our role in facilitating access to research, professional, health and education content for a wide range of industry sectors. We go further by supporting the participation of researchers from low- and lower-middle-income countries and other underrepresented groups in the global research community – for example, through our membership of Research4Life and provision of article processing charge (APC) waivers. We have a specific focus on research for the SDGs, supporting sustainable development.

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GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	DETAIL
GRI 204: Procurement Practices 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Business Partner Code of Conduct Modern Slavery Act Statement Engaging our suppliers, page 40
GRI 205: Anti-corruption 2016	3-3 Management of material topics 205-1 Operations assessed for risks related to corruption 205-2 Communication and training about anti-corruption policies and procedures 205-3 Confirmed incidents of corruption and actions taken	Anti-bribery, fraud and corruption, page 49 Sustainability governance and materiality, page 48 Governance, risk and compliance, pages 39-40 Code of Conduct
GRI 206: Anti-competitive Behavior 2016	3-3 Management of material topics 206-1 Legal actions for anti-competitive behavior, anti-trust, and monopoly practices	We are cooperating with authorities in three jurisdictions to respond to competition-related investigations. Anti-bribery, fraud and corruption, page 49 Sustainability governance and materiality, page 48 Governance, risk and compliance, pages 39-40 Code of Conduct
GRI 207: Tax 2019	3-3 Management of material topics 207-1 Approach to tax 207-2 Tax governance, control, and risk management 207-3 Stakeholder engagement and management of concerns related to tax	Paying a fair share of tax, page 49 Please see our tax policy .
GRI 301: Materials 2016	3-3 Management of material topics 301-1 Materials used by weight or volume	Reducing our impact on nature, page 35 The tonnage of paper used to produce our printed products is reported on page 35 of this report, where you can also find out more about our policies for responsible sourcing of paper. As we increasingly distribute content digitally, this issue is becoming less material over time. We do not have centralised data on the use of packaging materials for all our products. See page 35 of this report for our work on reducing the impact of product packaging. We report production waste generated from third-party warehouses and printers, which includes unsold product (see page 35 of this report).

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GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	DETAIL
GRI 302: Energy 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Our carbon approach, pages 30-31
	302-1 Energy consumption within the organization	Environment data table, pages 32-33
	302-2 Energy consumption outside of the organization	
	302-3 Energy intensity	
	302-4 Reduction of energy consumption	
	302-5 Reductions in energy requirements of products and services	
GRI 305: Emissions 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Our carbon approach, pages 30-31
	305-1 Direct (Scope 1) GHG emissions	Environment data table, pages 32-33
	305-2 Energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions	2022 scope 3 emissions in this report include emissions currently optional under GHG Protocol guidance and not covered by our carbon targets in line with SBTi's approach.
	305-3 Other indirect (Scope 3) GHG emissions	Carbon emissions for flights presented in this report reflect the combustion of aviation fuels and Radiative Forcing. Emissions associated with the sourcing and refining of aviation fuels are included in our net zero supplement.
	305-4 GHG emissions intensity	Our net zero supplement is published on our website.
	305-5 Reduction of GHG emissions	
GRI 308: Supplier Environmental Assessment 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Business Partner Code of Conduct Our carbon approach, pages 30-31
	308-1 New suppliers that were screened using environmental criteria	Our carbon approach, pages 30-31 Governance, risk and compliance, pages 39-40
	308-2 Negative environmental impacts in the supply chain and actions taken	
GRI 401: Employment 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Be part of progress, pages 21-22
	401-1 New employee hires and employee turnover	Data table in this report, page 44
	401-2 Benefits provided to full-time employees that are not provided to temporary or part-time employees	Setting out our approach as an employer, page 20

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GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	DETAIL
GRI 402: Labor/ Management Relations 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Code of Conduct Be part of progress, pages 21-22
GRI 403: Occupational Health and Safety 2018	3-3 Management of material topics	Employee wellbeing and engagement, pages 20-27 The accident frequency rate in the locations where it is reported was 0.49 per million hours worked. The accident reporting covers 42 countries and 137 sites, which amounts to 100% of our full-time employees.
GRI 404: Training and Education 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Employee wellbeing and engagement, pages 20-27 Data table in this report, page 44
GRI 405: Diversity and Equal Opportunity 2016	3-3 Management of material topics 405-1 Diversity of governance bodies and employees	Diversity, equity and inclusion, pages 23-26
GRI 406: Non-discrimination 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Code of Conduct
GRI 408: Child Labor 2016	3-3 Management of material topics 408-1 Operations and suppliers at significant risk for incidents of child labor	Our Business Partner Code of Conduct covers topics including fair pay and conditions, prevention of forced and child labour, health and safety and environmental practices. We also publish an annual modern slavery statement .
GRI 409: Forced or Compulsory Labor 2016	3-3 Management of material topics 409-1 Operations and suppliers at significant risk for incidents of forced or compulsory labor	Our Business Partner Code of Conduct covers topics including fair pay and conditions, prevention of forced and child labour, health and safety and environmental practices. We also publish an annual modern slavery statement .
GRI 410: Security Practices 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Our Business Partner Code of Conduct covers topics including fair pay and conditions, prevention of forced and child labour, health and safety and environmental practices. We also publish an annual modern slavery statement .

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GRI STANDARD	DISCLOSURE	DETAIL
GRI 414: Supplier Social Assessment 2016	3-3 Management of material topics	Modern Slavery Act Statement
	414-1 New suppliers that were screened using social criteria	Business Partner Code of Conduct
GRI 418: Customer Privacy 2016	414-2 Negative social impacts in the supply chain and actions taken	
	3-3 Management of material topics	Digital security and data protection, page 40
	418-1 Substantiated complaints concerning breaches of customer privacy and losses of customer data	During 2023, an incident related to a customer data breach was reported to the relevant authorities in Germany and the UK. We supported the customers that were impacted by the breach and updated relevant processes. There were no material impacts on Springer Nature's operations. The competent authorities in the UK have confirmed that regulatory action based on UK GDPR is not required in this case.



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