

FAQ

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AnimalTestInfo – Database on animal testing projects in Germany

In 2013, German law tasked the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) with publishing non-technical project summaries (NTS) of approved animal testing projects. Since 2014, the BfR has made the NTS available to the public online via the AnimalTestInfo database (www.animaltestinfo.de).

AnimalTestInfo contains all NTS for the projects for which applications have been submitted by researchers of scientific research institutes of universities, industry and the German federal government and which have been approved by the competent authorities of the German federal states ('Laender'). The applicants are responsible for the content of the NTS published by the BfR.

The German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R) is part of the BfR. It co-ordinates nationwide activities with the goals of restricting animal experiments to only those which are considered essential, and safeguarding the best possible protection for laboratory animals. To this end, the work of the centre is intended to stimulate research activities worldwide and promote scientific dialogue.

Why does the BfR publish the NTS in AnimalTestInfo?

German law has assigned the BfR the task of publishing generally understandable non-technical project summaries (NTS) of approved animal testing projects online. This is regulated by Section 8 Para. 6 of the German Animal Welfare Act¹ and Section 41 of the German Ordinance on the Protection of Animals used for Experiments and other Scientific Purposes². Within the BfR, the Bf3R is responsible for these tasks.

What is the purpose of AnimalTestInfo?

¹ German Animal Welfare Act in the version published on 18 May 2006 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1206, 1313), last amended by Article 2 (20) of the Act of 20 December 2022 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 2752).

² German Ordinance on the Protection of Animals used for Experiments and other Scientific Purposes of 1 August 2013 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 3125, 3126), last amended by Article 1 of the Ordinance of 11 August 2021 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 3570).

AnimalTestInfo is the tool with which applicants (scientists) directly inform the public about their approved animal testing projects in Germany.

AnimalTestInfo thus fulfils a European legal requirement. Recital (41) of EU Directive 2010/63/EU³ states: *'To ensure that the public is informed, it is important that objective information concerning projects using live animals is made publicly available.'*. This goal is outlined in Art. 43, 'Non-technical project summary', of the Directive. Directive 2010/63/EU was transposed into German law in 2013 through the amended German Animal Welfare Act (TierSchG) in conjunction with the German Ordinance on the Protection of Animals used for Experiments and other Scientific Purposes (TierSchVersV). The latter stipulates that a summary must be submitted along with every application for authorisation of an animal testing project in accordance with Section 8 of the German Animal Welfare Act.

What information is included in the NTS intended for the public?

In the NTS, the applicants provide information on the purpose of the animal experiments, the benefits they aim to achieve, and the expected harm or distress to the animals used. The number and species of animals intended for the use (mice, rats, etc.) and the fulfilment of requirements to avoid the use of animals in advance, to reduce their number in the experiment and to improve their welfare are also stated.

What can I search for in the AnimalTestInfo database?

You can search by animal species (e.g. mice) and number (ranges) of the intended experimental animals, by the legally defined purpose of the experimental projects (e.g. basic research), by the year of official approval and, of course, by keywords, which you can choose freely. Further information can be found in the search [instructions of the database](#).

Does AnimalTestInfo contain all animal testing projects in Germany?

AnimalTestInfo contains the NTS of all animal testing projects requiring authorisation that have been applied for by scientific research institutes of universities, industry and the German federal government and approved by the competent authorities of the German federal states ("Laender"). The database does not contain NTS of any experimental projects authorised under the simplified approval procedure (Section 8a Para. 1 of the German Animal Welfare Act). Animal experiments under the simplified approval procedure include, for example, the testing of vaccines as part of batch testing (Section 8a Para. 1, Sent. 2, (b) of the German Animal Welfare Act). If animals are killed solely in order to use their organs or tissues for scientific purposes, this is not considered animal testing (Section 7 Para. 2 Sent. 3 of the German Animal Welfare Act). Accordingly, no NTS need to be published.

Why are NTS published anonymously?

German law requires the anonymous publication of NTS. This is already laid down in Recital (41) of the EU Commission's Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, which states: *"[Publication] should not violate proprietary rights or expose confidential information. Therefore, users should provide anonymous non-technical summaries of those projects, which Member States should publish. The published details*

³ Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes (OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 37).

should not breach the anonymity of the users.”. This is addressed in Article 43 Para. 1 of the Directive.

Is it possible to see from the NTS who or which institution has applied for the respective animal experiment?

No, the German law specifies that NTS must not contain any institutional or personal data. This must be excluded by the applicant.

Can I find out from the BfR in which federal state (“Land”) the respective animal testing project was applied for?

No. The BfR cannot provide any information on this. German law stipulates publication of the NTS in such a way that it does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about the applicant. The provisions on the protection of intellectual property and the protection of trade and business secrets also remain unaffected (see Section 41 Para. 1, Sent. 3 and 4 of the German Ordinance on the Protection of Animals used for Experiments and other Scientific Purposes).

Who is responsible for the content of the NTS?

The applicants are solely responsible for the content of the NTS.

How long does it take for an NTP to be published after an authorisation has been granted?

German law allows for up to 15 months for publication: 3 months for the competent authority to forward the NTS to the BfR after the project authorisation has been granted and another 12 months for publication. The BfR usually publishes the summaries of the authorised animal testing projects within 3 months.

What differences are there to the laboratory animal numbers published annually by the Bf3R?

The laboratory animal numbers provide a retrospective record of the actual number of animals used for scientific purposes per calendar year, regardless of individual experimental projects. This includes animals killed for organ removal as well as animals used in animal experiments approved through a simplified procedure. Therefore, the data can be used to determine the number of animals used for specific purposes each year. In contrast, the NTS published in AnimalTestInfo are data on animal testing projects at the time of authorisation. The summaries can also be used to retrieve information on individual future animal testing projects. This includes, among other things, the purpose, the expected benefits, and measures undertaken to minimise animal suffering.

Further information on the BfR website on AnimalTestInfo

AnimalTestInfo website
<https://www.animaltestinfo.de/>

Website of the German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R)
<https://www.bf3r.de/en/>

About the BfR

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity (BMLEH) in Germany. The BfR advises the Federal Government and the States ('Laender') on questions of food, chemicals and product safety. The BfR conducts independent research on topics that are closely linked to its assessment tasks.

About the Bf3R

The German Centre for the Protection of Laboratory Animals (Bf3R) was founded in 2015 and is an integral part of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR). It co-ordinates nationwide activities with the goals of restricting animal experiments to only those which are considered essential, and safeguarding the best possible protection for laboratory animals. Moreover, it intends to stimulate research activities and encourage scientific dialogue.

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