



Simply leveraging Sustainability.

Sustainability
Report 2023

"Through collaboration with our customers in over 60 countries and with a team of 2,500 auditors, we make an important contribution to the United Nations' global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

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Foreword

Dear Readers,

Our first sustainability report is more than just a disclosure. It represents our commitment to transparency, integrity and responsibility as the core components of our value system. This report was not created due to a formal obligation, but from our drive to transparently demonstrate our sustainability strategy. As a globally operating company in the field of assessment and certification of management systems, we want to provide clear insight into our actions and explain how we support companies on their path to greater ecological and social responsibility.



Ingo M. Rübenach
Managing Director and
CEO, DQS Holding GmbH



Michael Drechsel
Managing Director,
DQS Holding GmbH

While our direct environmental impact may be limited compared to manufacturing companies—our operations do not involve smokestacks, assembly lines, or industrial production—we are nonetheless committed to achieving our sustainability goals. At DQS, we work with dedicated auditors and experts who uphold the highest standards in quality, environment, safety, and occupational health every day, with precision and integrity.

However, we recognize that sustainability requires action within our organization as well, whether through CO₂ reduction measures, sustainable procurement practices, or promoting diversity.

Equally significant is our indirect impact on sustainability. As a certification service provider, we support organizations worldwide in implementing and adhering to standards. We see ourselves not just as verifiers, but as transformation partners who guide our customers toward responsible business practices. Certifications such as ISO 14001 for environmental management or ISO 50001 for energy management, as well as specialized sustainability and supply chain audits, are essential components of our portfolio. These services promote the global adoption of sustainable practices.

Through our collaboration with customers in over 60 countries and with a team of 2,500 auditors, we make a meaningful contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

For DQS, sustainability is not just a goal but an ongoing process. Our mission is to pursue this journey continuously and in partnership with our stakeholders. We thank you for joining us on this path and hope you find valuable insights in our sustainability report.

Sincerely,

Ingo M. Rübenach

Michael Drechsel



Report Profile

A comprehensive survey within the DQS Group serves as an important data basis for reporting on our ecological and social impact. This report for 2023 considers all subsidiaries in which DQS Holding GmbH holds a financial majority. This includes the subsidiaries DQS GmbH, DQS CFS GmbH, DQS Medical Devices GmbH, DQS Inc. (USA), DQS Brasil, DQS MSS Argentina s.r.l., DQS (PTY) Ltd. (South Africa), DQS Turkey, DQS France SAS, DQS UK, DQS Polska Sp. z o.o., DQS Management Systems Solutions (HK) Ltd. (Hong Kong), DQS Korea LLC, DQS India, DQS AP Ltd. (China), and DQS Japan Inc. From DQS Mexico, only CO₂-relevant data could be provided for this reporting period, as it is undergoing restructuring due to consolidation with DQS Inc. Therefore, it is only considered in this report for emission values.

Internal on-site audits are regularly conducted at all our local offices. Since 2021, DQS's sustainability efforts have also been externally and independently assessed by EcoVadis. To provide our business partners and other interested stakeholders with transparent insight into our sustainability management, this report lays the foundation for annual reporting. The report was prepared with reference to the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) Universal Standards 2021. External verification is not planned. Through monitoring changes in legislation and current reporting obligations, we ensure that we will continue to adapt our sustainability management and reporting to all relevant guidelines affecting us.

Who We Are

DQS is a globally leading company in the field of assessment and certification of management systems. With our services, we support organizations worldwide in building trust with customers and stakeholders, enabling sustainable growth, and accessing new markets. Founded in 1985 by the German Institute for Standardization (DIN) and the German Society for Quality (DGQ), DQS, headquartered in Frankfurt am Main, was Germany's first independent certification body and has since developed into an international group. In 2008, the US company Underwriters Laboratories, as another shareholder, integrated its international management system certification business into the group, helping the company take a major step toward global presence.

Today, DQS offers its services in over 60 countries - driven by a clear focus on creating economic, social, and ecological value, and a commitment to innovative, progressive methods. With a team of more than 2,500 highly qualified auditors working exclusively for DQS, we conduct over 125,000 audit days annually and provide expertise in around 200 internationally recognized standards. Our specialization in management systems ensures that customers benefit from sustainable, structured solutions that help them continuously improve their process efficiency and system security.

Shaping Change – With Vision and Responsibility

Our mission is to set the highest standards for certification and assessment of management systems, thus creating a foundation for security, trust, and sustainable success. In an increasingly digitalized and interconnected environment, DQS facilitates interaction between companies, authorities, and consumers through transparent, reliable processes. These principles form the basis of our goal to take a pioneering role in the global certification landscape and actively shape cultural change in the industry. Through our support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) that are essential to us, we create an environment that is future-oriented, innovative, and sustainable.

Global Presence, Local Expertise

The DQS Group is established as a global unit and offers customer-oriented certification solutions aligned with local characteristics and requirements. With its international presence, DQS ensures that the highest standards are consistently implemented worldwide.

In Germany, the DQS structure includes DQS GmbH focusing on products related to quality, occupational safety and health, and environment. Additionally, the group bundles specialized competencies in four "Centers of Excellence" (CoEs). DQS Medical Devices GmbH concentrates expertise around certification and notification of management systems for the medical industry. DQS CFS GmbH functions as the CoE for audits and assessments in sustainability and food sectors. The CoE Information and Data Security (IDS) is part of DQS GmbH. DQS Holding GmbH assumes central management and administrative functions of the group and coordinates the strategic direction of subsidiaries worldwide.

Globally, the DQS Group extends across 60 countries. The DQS operates subsidiaries in Argentina, Brazil, China, France, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the USA. Additionally, there are license partners in Egypt, Ethiopia, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, El Salvador, Finland, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Qatar, Croatia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Hungary, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, and Vietnam. Thus, DQS is positioned as a reliable global unit that operates close to market needs through regional presence.

Broad Service Portfolio and Recognized Industry Expertise

DQS offers certifications according to approximately 200 internationally recognized standards and covers a wide range of industries and specialist areas – from the automotive industry through food and consumer goods to information security. Besides established standards like ISO 9001 (Quality Management), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), and ISO 45001 (Occupational Safety), our portfolio also includes specialized standards for the automotive sector (e.g., IATF 16949, TISAX® or ENX VCS), for food and sustainability (e.g., FSSC 22000 or BRCGS), and for medical technology (e.g., MDR (EU) 2017/745 or MDSAP).

Our Audit Philosophy: Impartiality and Impulses for Positive Change

DQS stands for the highest integrity and impartiality in auditing and certification. Our auditors provide an independent assessment and create a solid foundation for improvements through the verification of management systems. The neutral and comprehensive assessments help organizations not only ensure conformity with international standards but also identify potential for efficiency improvement and risk minimization. Thus, customers can derive important perspectives and insights from audit processes about where the effectiveness and efficiency of their systems can be strengthened. These impulses promote sustainable improvement and increase the trust of customers and partners in the company.

Setting the Course for Tomorrow's Certification Landscape

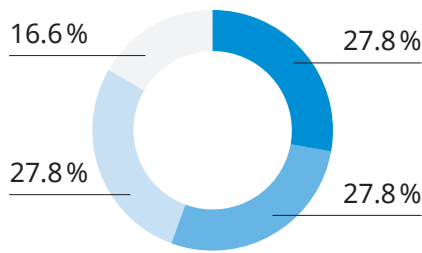
Innovation and digital transformation are at the center of DQS's strategic orientation. Under the leadership of CEO Ingo M. Rübenach, DQS focuses on data-based approaches to further optimize audits and certifications in terms of precision, efficiency, and transparency. The continuous adaptation of traditional audit processes to new digital possibilities, process automations, and advanced analytics is at the forefront. This path enables DQS to strengthen its role as a market pioneer while promoting an industry culture characterized by flexibility, agility, and willingness to innovate.

Sustainability and Digital Leadership as Guideposts

DQS strives to further expand its global responsibility as a transformation partner and promoter. Through our clear commitment to the SDGs and climate protection, as well as through the promotion of digital solutions and cultural change in the certification industry, we set sustainable standards. DQS's goal is to accompany customers worldwide as a partner in implementing sustainable and innovative strategies. As a pioneer of a modern, sustainable, and digital certification landscape, DQS aims to establish itself as a reliable partner in the global market for quality and trust and support development toward a socially and ecologically responsible economy.

DQS in Numbers and Facts

Shareholders:



- DGQ
- DIN
- Underwriters Laboratories
- VDMA, Spectaris, Hauptverband der Deutschen Bauindustrie e.V., ZVEI e.V., DQS Holding GmbH

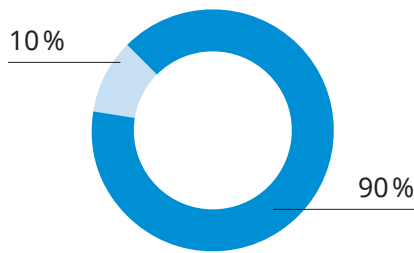
997

Employees
(Employee count as of December 31, 2023)

506 ♀ **491** ♂

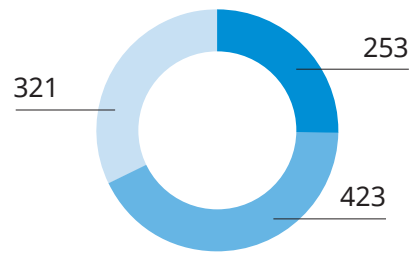
Employment Contracts:

100% with guaranteed working hours



- Permanent
- Fixed-term

Age Structure:



- under 30
- 30 to 50
- over 50



Corporate Governance

The DQS Group consists of DQS Holding GmbH and its subsidiaries. As group headquarters, DQS Holding GmbH in Frankfurt am Main manages the worldwide business development of the DQS Group. The managing directors of DQS Holding GmbH conduct business according to the instructions of the shareholders' meeting and within the framework of law and articles of association – they represent the GmbH both in and out of court towards third parties (§ 35 Para. 1 GmbHG).

Management Structure

The supreme body of DQS Holding GmbH is the shareholders' meeting, in which all shareholders are represented. Regular shareholders' meetings are typically held twice a year, during which resolutions reserved for shareholders according to the articles of association and law are passed.

Additionally, the shareholders have formed a permanent shareholders' committee consisting of up to four members, which is responsible for advising and continuously monitoring the management. The duties of the shareholders' committee are regulated in rules of procedure.

To monitor the measures required under accreditation requirements to ensure independence and impartiality in certification activities, a steering committee was established, which typically meets twice a year and includes representatives of various interest groups.

Leadership Structure of the DQS Group

The subsidiaries of DQS Holding GmbH are managed by their respective local management and supervised by their respective shareholders' meetings and supervisory bodies. The subsidiaries report to DQS Holding GmbH.

For the operational management of the DQS Group, a "Group Leadership Team" was created, consisting of the management of DQS Holding GmbH, the management of the subsidiaries, and those responsible for the CoEs and global central functions (Human Resources, IT Infrastructure & Digitalization, Finance & Controlling, and Marketing).

The group-wide responsibilities and authorities are defined in binding regulations ("Rules of Collaboration").

Organizational Profile

Company Name	DQS Holding GmbH
Headquarters	Frankfurt am Main
Commercial Register	The company is registered under number HRB 54018 at the commercial register of the district court in Frankfurt am Main.
Articles of Association	Version of the articles of association dated February 1, 1985, as amended on April 8, 2021.
Purpose of the Company	<p>a. The purpose of the company is to promote the economy. The company positions itself as a service partner for organizations, businesses, and institutions. Its activities focus on creating value through effective management systems and processes for its clients.</p> <p>b. The company maintains and manages subsidiaries, other partnerships, and cooperations to provide assessment and certification services nationally and internationally.</p> <p>c. The company strives for global recognition of its certificates and the certificates of affiliated companies.</p>
Shareholders	<p>DIN German Institute for Standardization e.V., Berlin</p> <p>German Society for Quality e.V. (DGQ), Frankfurt am Main</p> <p>UL International-Singapore Private Ltd.</p> <p>ZVEI - German Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association e.V., Frankfurt am Main</p> <p>VDMA - Mechanical Engineering Industry Association e.V., Frankfurt am Main</p> <p>Spectaris – German Industry Association for Optics, Photonics, Analysis, and Medical Technology e.V., Berlin</p> <p>German Construction Industry Federation e.V., Berlin</p>
Shareholders' Committee	<p>As of December 31, 2023, the shareholders' committee consisted of:</p> <p>Mr. Mirko Bautz, Chairman Managing Director, UL International Germany GmbH</p> <p>Mr. Daniel Schmidt Board Member, DIN German Institute for Standardization e.V.</p> <p>Prof. Dr.-Ing. Robert Schmitt President, German Society for Quality e.V.</p> <p>Dr. Sandra Drechsler Head of Technical Policy and Standardization, VDMA; Managing Director, DIN Standards Committee Mechanical Engineering (NAM)</p>

Sustainability at DQS

Our Understanding of Sustainability

Sustainability is firmly anchored in DQS's DNA. Our core business consists of supporting companies in fulfilling their ecological and social responsibilities in the best possible way. DQS thus functions as an enabler for corporate sustainability.

Simply leveraging Sustainability.

Our pronounced expertise in sustainability, with which we support our customers, is equally applied to our own company. We set the highest standards both for our customers and ourselves. Our honest and transparent approach enables us to learn continuously and improve ourselves constantly.

A better World for All

The United Nations describe important development areas for a sustainable global society with the 17 SDGs of Agenda 2030. DQS's sustainability strategy is also based on these goals to contribute to sustainable development. Our entire business activity is designed to implement national and international guidelines, standards, and certifications aimed at fulfilling companies' ecological, social, and economic responsibilities.

The sustainable transformation of the economy is a collaborative societal project – as a member of the B.A.U.M. e.V. network for sustainable business, we have joined forces with numerous other actors to jointly develop sustainability strategies, exchange experiences and knowledge, and thus contribute together to fulfilling the SDGs. We also support the forward-looking development of international standards and certifications through our participation in various DIN standards committees.



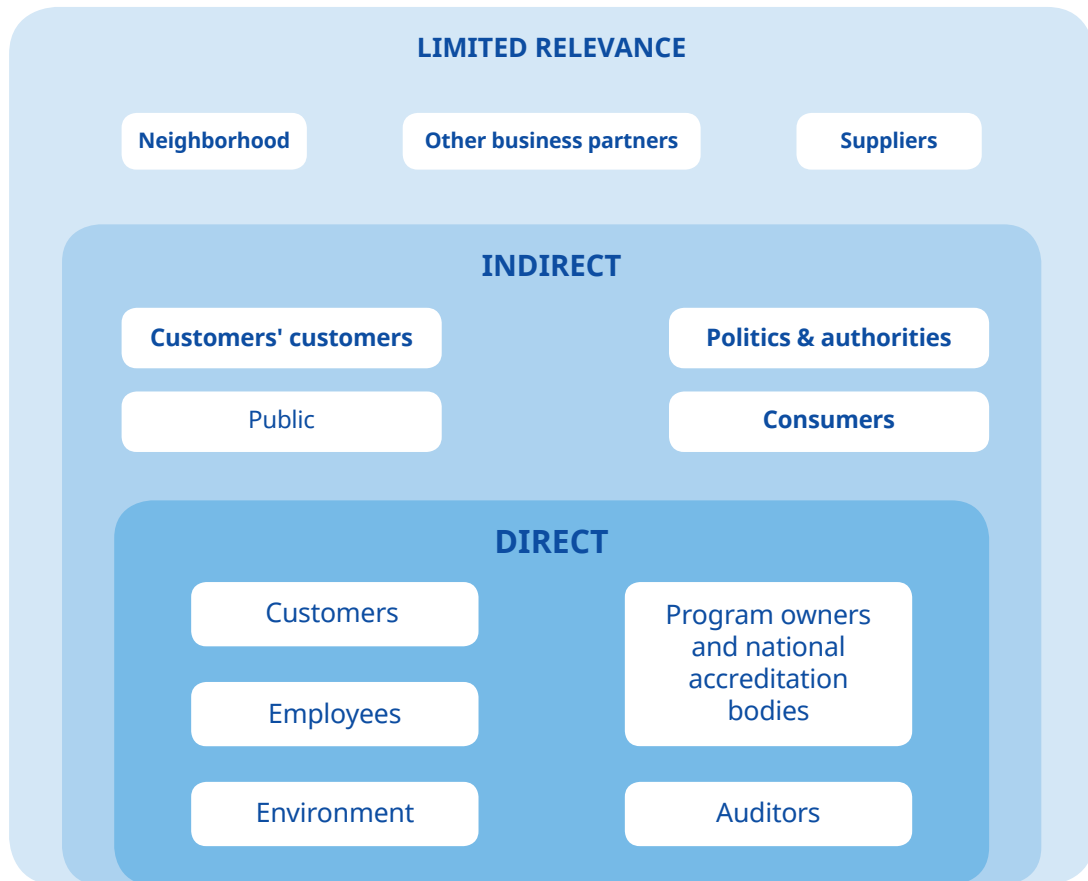
Material Topics

For the development of our sustainability strategy, a company-wide materiality analysis was conducted. The analysis was based on the potential impacts of business activities on the environment and society as defined by GRI. Considering and communicating with various stakeholders, these topics were evaluated regarding their materiality for DQS. Both the probability of occurrence and the severity of impacts on stakeholders were evaluated on a three-level scale. All topics identified as having medium or high materiality in this assessment are subject to this report. A double materiality analysis has not yet been conducted but is targeted for the fiscal year 2025.

10 out of 30 analyzed sustainability topics were identified as material for the DQS Group:

<div style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Governance</div> <div style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic performance • Market presence • Indirect economic impacts • Procurement practices • Anti-corruption • Anti-competitive behavior • Taxes </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Society</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Occupational health and safety • Training and education • Diversity and equal opportunity • Non-discrimination • Freedom of association and collective bargaining • Child labor • Forced or compulsory labor • Security practices • Rights of indigenous peoples • Local communities • Social assessment of suppliers • Political influence • Customer health and safety • Marketing and labeling • Protection of customer data </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>These were consolidated under the following five action areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity and impartiality • Labor and human rights • Occupational health and safety • Competence management • Energy and emissions </div> <p><i>For these topic areas, responsible persons were appointed to ensure their integration into management processes.</i></p>
<div style="border: 1px solid green; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">Environment</div> <div style="border: 1px solid green; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials • Energy • Water and effluents • Biodiversity • Emissions • Waste • Environmental assessment of suppliers </div>		

Our Stakeholders



Contact with our stakeholders is of great importance for DQS. Therefore, we pursue numerous communication strategies through which stakeholder concerns and needs have also been incorporated into the materiality analysis.

The most important stakeholders of DQS are our customers, with whom DQS's customer service representatives maintain daily dialogue. Here, in addition to concerns arising in daily business, individual annual planning is developed, audit dates are discussed, and invitations to DQS customer days are extended. Additionally, DQS regularly provides white papers for customers to inform them about current topics.

Approximately 80% of audits are conducted by external auditors who work as freelancers for DQS. The auditors are intensively and individually supported by DQS through a dedicated department. There are also annual meetings as well as joint annual reviews and evaluations. Through regularly published formats such as newsletters, auditors also have access to various information channels.

For employees, in addition to annual reviews, there are also annual internal surveys and a special whistleblower channel. DQS GmbH also has a works council that represents employee interests. Employee compensation is not based on collective agreements but on our own function-based compensation matrix.

Sustainability Strategy

Our contribution to fulfilling the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015, is an elementary component of our sustainability strategy. In particular, our impact extends to the following goals:

- ✓ Goal 5: Gender equality
- ✓ Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation
- ✓ Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy
- ✓ Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth
- ✓ Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production
- ✓ Goal 13: Climate action

The sustainability strategy is centrally managed by DQS Holding across the entire group. Since 2019, there has been a sustainability team that works closely with individual offices worldwide.



Direct Impact through the Internal Corporate Sustainability Management System

The DQS sustainability management system is based on three action fields:

Compliance and Commitment

To fulfill our commitment to the SDGs and our general corporate responsibility across the entire value chain, DQS has developed a Code of Conduct. This is based on ILO labor standards, OECD guidelines, UN Human Rights, and climate protection goals, and must be signed by all suppliers. DQS is externally and independently assessed by sustainability rating organizations such as EcoVadis, Supplier Assurance, and IntegrityNext.

Accountability and Disclosure

To ensure transparency in our sustainability processes and to be accountable to stakeholders regarding our activities, DQS will regularly prepare sustainability reports and provide emission indicators in the future.

Improving our Footprint

To continuously improve our social and ecological footprint, binding regulations are established for sustainability topics under the core areas of climate, environment, labor and human rights, and ethical business conduct through various guidelines.



Indirect Impact through Business Partners

Our core business is certifying and verifying organizations according to standards. As part of our services, we support organizations in improving their sustainable footprint and fulfilling their due diligence obligations and socio-ecological

responsibilities in the best possible way. DQS sees itself as a partner at eye level, enabling companies to continuously enhance their sustainability performance. Our vision is to create a better tomorrow for all as a transformation partner.

Our Sustainability Goals



Annual Sustainability Reports

KPI

Annual publication of a sustainability report

Status 2023

2023 report published



Reduction of CO₂ Emissions by 30% (compared to emissions from 2023)

KPI

CO₂ emissions (Scope 1 to 3)

Status 2023

Average of 222.60 kg CO₂e per audit according to 2023 emissions assessment



EcoVadis Rating: Minimum Silver

KPI

EcoVadis Rating

Status 2023

Silver (60/100)



No Violations against the Code of Conduct

KPI

Number of violations

Status 2023

No significant incidents in 2023



No Discrimination Cases

KPI

Number of reported incidents

Status 2023

No significant incidents in 2023



Code of Conduct Training for 100% of Personnel

KPI

100% employee participation

Status 2023

Training on the updated version of the Code of Conduct



No Lost Time Incidents (LTI)

KPI

LTI

Status 2023

No significant incidents in 2023

For 2030, we have set ourselves seven overarching goals to make DQS more sustainable.

Our Core Business: Sustainable Impact

The DQS Group's core business consists of certifications and audits. In this, we rely on collaborative partnership at eye level. We cover a broad range of competency fields, specifically in the areas of quality management, environment, energy, safety and health, medical devices, food, information security, and sustainability. As a transformation partner, we support our customers in improving their ecological, economic, and social impacts. Through our certifications, we also strengthen global exchange between companies, authorities, and organizations. We understand our work as an important contribution to achieving the SDGs and thus to sustainable societal development.



Gender Equality

Gender equality represents an important foundation for social justice. This is a key audit criterion in the many different social standards that DQS

audits globally.



Clean Water and Sanitation

Clean water and sanitation facilities are central to health and are fundamentally required in many management systems, such as ISO 45001 or ISO 14001, as well as various

social standards and assessed by us. Additionally, with ISO 46001, which is part of our certification offering, a guideline is available for efficient water management.



Affordable and Clean Energy

Energy is a valuable resource and central factor for climate protection. Companies with an energy management system certified by DQS according to

ISO 50001, for example, show consistent reduction in their energy consumption and increased energy efficiency. This addresses sub-goal 7.3, which aims for a "doubling of the energy efficiency improvement rate." In total, a certified energy management system according to ISO 50001 leads to a reduction in GHG emissions and thus

also contributes to SDG 13 (Climate Action). The recently published ISO amendments, intended to ensure consideration of climate change in ISO management system standards, can help accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies. ISO 50001 certification helps customers and consumers in selecting sustainable partners and providers.



Decent Work and Economic Growth

To create decent jobs, companies must ensure compliance with labor and human rights. ISO 45001, often the subject of our certification work, also

plays an important role for SDG 8: Sub-goal 8.8 addresses topics that are central to the OHS standard, namely "protection of worker rights" and "promoting safe and secure working environments." Furthermore, ISO 45001 is an important compliance component, particularly regarding compliance with OHS laws and regulations. We also support our customers through certified social management systems according to standards like IQNet SR 10 or FSSC 24000, not only to demonstrate compliance with employee rights to stakeholders but through our critical assessment to further develop existing rights and good working conditions. Additionally, various social and sustainability standards like SEDEX, TFS, RSCI, or RBA can provide reliable evidence for compliance with human rights along the supply chain.



Responsible Consumption and Production

Our certifications help strengthen consumer confidence in products and services and help them make informed

and sustainable consumer decisions. Our reliable evidence enables organizations to place sustainable products and services in markets and fulfill customer requirements. To support our customers on their path to sustainable production, we offer a variety of industry-specific certifications such as ISCC Plus, ASI, GLOBALG.A.P., and ResponsibleSteel.



Climate Action

Our offering in the environmental and climate sector is very extensive. In addition to management systems like ISO 50001 or ISO 14001, organiza-

tions can also continuously improve their environmental performance through various international guidelines, such as the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and ISO 14064-1 specification for creating an energy balance or an EMAS validation.

Sustainability Heroes – The Conference for Sustainability and Transformation Impulses

To fulfill our goal of contributing to a sustainable future economy beyond our core business, DQS offers a specialized exchange platform with the Sustainability Heroes conference. In line with our holistic strategy, the conference provides practical impulses for sustainable action and discusses current developments and regulatory frameworks.

A Conference with Tradition and New Perspectives

The Sustainability Heroes event, which was originally launched in 2014 as the DQS Sustainability Day, began as an on-site event in Frankfurt am Main and already attracted numerous decision-makers, sustainability experts, and specialists in environmental and energy issues. Since 2020, the event has been held entirely online to enable broader target group participation and simultaneously improve the event's CO₂ footprint. As a joint project of DQS and DGQ, the event has now become an established part of the sustainability landscape in the DACH region. Furthermore, an expansion to other markets where DQS is active is planned.

Highlights and Inspiring Contributions: A Look at Past Years

Throughout its long history, Sustainability Heroes has offered cutting-edge presentations, panel discussions, and interactive sessions with renowned experts and pioneers. A recurring highlight is the discussion about implementing sustainability regulations with measurable impact. For example, Siemens AG presented approaches for measuring corporate contributions to the SDGs in 2017. The Voith Group presented their "Green Controlling" strategy in 2018, through which the company achieved significant savings in water and energy in production. Another highlight was Symrise AG's presentation: In 2021, they offered insights into their comprehensive biodiversity strategy, which focuses on close cooperation with local communities and sustainable supply chains.

The Sustainability Heroes Awards: Incentives for Change

As part of the conference, DQS has been presenting the Sustainability Heroes Awards annually since 2015, recognizing companies for their outstanding sustainability projects. These awards, originally known as the German Awards for Excellence, motivate organizations to showcase their sustainability initiatives to a broad audience. Numerous renowned companies have actively submitted their initiatives and received the award during the event: including Deutsche Telekom, which was recognized for its comprehensive measures for CO₂ reduction along the value chain, and Epson Deutschland, which promises a closed paper cycle and significant water savings with its innovative PaperLab technology.

A Strong Network and Exchange for Sustainable Transformation

Sustainability Heroes has established itself as a vibrant platform attracting hundreds of participants annually – including sustainability managers, environmental and energy experts, and compliance officers. The event creates an atmosphere of exchange where networking plays a crucial role alongside presentations and best practices. Together with our partner DGQ and other industry leaders, we aim to contribute to the spread of sustainable practices and inspire companies to change through the conference.

The next Sustainability Heroes Conference will take place from November 25-27, 2025. All further information is available at www.sustainability-heroes.com

Together with our partner DGQ and other industry leaders, we aim to contribute to the spread of sustainable practices and inspire companies to change through the conference.

Governance

Compliance with internationally binding regulations and national legislation is an immutable principle for DQS when it comes to our sustainability efforts. The standards we apply to our own business activities and stakeholders are documented in various policies. Our Ethics Policy comprehensively describes our policies and expectations in dealing with employees, business

partners, and third parties, specifically addressing corruption and information security. The topics of occupational health and safety, labor and human rights, and environment are each covered in separate policies. A Code of Conduct holds our suppliers accountable to comply with DQS's corporate due diligence requirements.

Integrity and Impartiality

As a certification body, credibility, impartiality, and integrity are central pillars of our work. Therefore, DQS regularly undergoes both internal and external audits. The DQS subsidiaries are audited annually, while smaller offices are audited every three years.

Anti-corruption

Our credibility and integrity affect not only our own economic performance but also have far-reaching consequences for the reliability and consumer trust in certifications and audits. Therefore, special attention is paid to corruption risks during regular internal risk assessment.

These are evaluated through an Anti-Bribery Risk Assessment and various risk analyses. Additionally, criminal records are checked before hiring new employees, and impartiality and independence are verified for management positions. To ensure that everyone in the company adheres to the same standards, these are made available on the company's internal intranet, handed out to new employees upon entry, and regular training is conducted. According to the Ethics Policy, all employees and auditors are required to report violations and potential violations to their respective manager or management. Employees are protected from disciplinary measures through a whistleblower clause. The Ethics Policy also stipulates that disregarding the provisions can lead to disciplinary, labor law, and even criminal consequences.



The DQS Ethics Policy dedicates a separate chapter to corruption, –stating that DQS does not tolerate any form of corruption, bribery, or bribe-taking. In addition to the Ethics Policy agreements, all employees and auditors are obligated to comply with the respective anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws of the countries in which they operate. The regulations extend to gifts, sales and advertising practices, government activities, and the use of company property. Complaint management is also outlined within this policy. Various channels are available for submitting reports:

- ✓ Online system
- ✓ Mailbox
- ✓ Postal mail
- ✓ Telephone hotline
- ✓ Answering machine system
- ✓ Personal meeting

The whistleblower's confidentiality is guaranteed in all cases. Each report is reviewed by DQS, responded to, and appropriate steps are initiated if necessary. The anti-corruption policies established in the Ethics Policy are communicated to all employees both upon joining the company and through regular training. With the Code of Conduct revised in 2023 and the Ethics Policy, all suppliers are informed about the anti-corruption policies and committed to compliance through their signature.

No significant corruption risks or incidents were identified during the reporting period. In line with DQS's 2030 sustainability goals to train 100% of employees on compliance topics, it is important to maintain the training sessions that are already taking place.

Anti-competitive Behavior

Anti-competitive behavior manipulates markets and thus harms the positive economic development that DQS intends to contribute to through its business activities. We are committed to free and open competition and against cartel formation or monopolization. The legal provisions of the respective countries in which we operate are complied with. DQS was not involved in any legal proceedings regarding anti-competitive behavior during the entire reporting period. Our commitment to fair competition is explicitly stated in our Ethics Policy.

Our Principles:

- ✓ We treat customers, competitors, and suppliers objectively, honestly, and fairly.
- ✓ We do not enter into contracts or side agreements with competitors, whether directly or through others, to fix prices, divide customers, markets, or territories, or restrict sales.
- ✓ We do not make agreements with competitors regarding prices, costs, production, market, or business strategies.
- ✓ We refrain from any business practices that could be labeled as fraudulent or unfair.
- ✓ We refrain from any behavior that could be interpreted as an attempt to exclude a current or potential competitor.

Society

Labor and Human Rights

DQS supports companies worldwide in meeting the highest labor and human rights standards. It is equally important to maintain these in our own business activities and to lead by example. As an internationally operating company dealing with different national labor law standards, it is particularly important to fulfill our responsibility as an employer towards our employees.

Employment

Through its business activities, DQS has the opportunity to create jobs with fair pay and good working conditions. The Labor and Human Rights Policy stipulates that statutory minimum wages or industry standards must be maintained and that no illegal or unauthorized wage deductions may be made. In Germany, we use a compensation matrix for employee remuneration that is based on the respective employee's function. These pay scales and compensation bands are regulated in a works agreement. Compensation is generally well above the respective statutory minimum wages. Employees and managers are recruited locally whenever possible.

Parental leave regulations vary by location according to different legal requirements. In total, parental leave entitlement exists for more than 716 employees, 386 female and 326 male¹. Fundamentally, there is no exclusion from parental leave entitlement based on gender at any location. The difference in parental leave entitlements by gender is based only on the difference in the total number of employees. However, parental leave was predominantly taken by female employees, with 20 female compared to 9 male employees. Return to work after parental leave was arranged with 15 female and 11 male employees, which was implemented without exception, corresponding to a return rate of 100% in each case. These employees were still working at DQS twelve months after ending their parental leave, resulting in a retention rate of 100% as well.



¹ From the subsidiaries DQS (PTY) Ltd. (South Africa), DQS Turkey, DQS Management Systems Solutions (HK) Ltd. (Hong Kong), and DQS India, not all data could currently be considered.

Total number and rate of new employees during the reporting period

	Global	female	male
Total	95	58	37
Rate	9.5 %	61.1 %	38.9 %

Total number and rate of employee turnover during the reporting period

	Global	female	male
Total	117	43	74
Rate	11.7 %	36.8 %	63.2 %

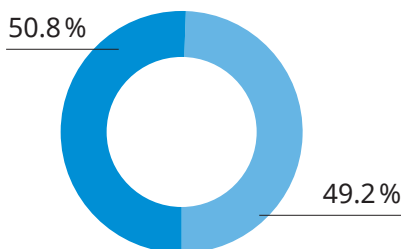
Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Non-discrimination

DQS understands the promotion of diversity as both a socially important task and a competitive advantage. Our commitment to diversity, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination is an important component of our Labor and Human Rights Policy. We are committed to considering

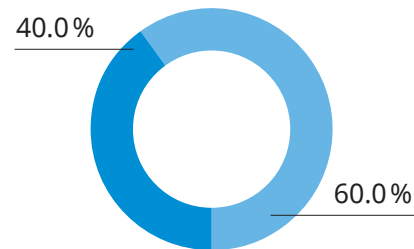
and evaluating employees and applicants independently of diversity characteristics. Promoting diversity and an inclusive work environment, for example through our commitment to work-life balance and the participation of people with disabilities, are important pillars of our company.

Percentage of employees in DQS by employee category and gender:

Employees



First Line Management



■ female ■ male

The gender ratio in the DQS Group is very balanced, with 51% female and 49% male employees. In First Line Management, male managers slightly outnumber female managers, with a ratio of 60% to 40%. Currently, no comprehensive data is available regarding the corresponding distribution in control bodies, age structure, or membership in other minorities.

The average salary data across all DQS companies shows a gender pay gap of 14.4%². To counter this, DQS uses a compensation matrix for employee remuneration that is based on the respective employee's function.

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is an important pillar for fair and humane working conditions. Therefore, employees' freedom of association and assembly is explicitly secured in the DQS Labor and Human Rights Policy and the Code of Conduct. Accordingly, all employees have the right to freely and peacefully assemble, form unions, join them, organize them, and collectively negotiate with the company. Here, too, reports can be made through the already described complaint mechanisms if there are concerns or violations. No violations were identified in the reporting year.

² From six of the subsidiaries considered in this report, no gender-related salary data could be determined.

A slight distortion of the Gender Pay Gap is possible due to the conversion of salaries paid in different currencies.

Occupational Health and Safety

Our employees are crucial for DQS's successful work. As an employer, we bear great responsibility for the well-being of all employees. Work-related illnesses or accidents must be strictly avoided. Therefore, occupational health and safety is comprehensively regulated in a separate policy.

This policy includes information on the following topics:

- ✓ Compliance with legal regulations
- ✓ Instructions on workplace conditions and environment
- ✓ Health promotion
- ✓ Accident and incident management
- ✓ Emergency preparedness
- ✓ Fire protection
- ✓ Personal protective equipment

Employees are required to report violations of the policy, with anonymous communication naturally guaranteed.

Occupational health and safety are central assets of our organization. Ensuring and promoting these lies within the responsibility of managers and management. National legal requirements of the respective locations are to be considered as minimum standards. Risk assessments are essential here to identify potential hazards at work. These are implemented locally according to national regulations and methods. To permanently eliminate hazards effectively, different methods are used to investigate work-related incidents, such as the Fine-Kinney and RCAT™ methods. Employees are important partners for occupational health and safety and are involved in feedback discussions and occupational safety committees. The German-based companies DQS GmbH, DQS CFS GmbH, and DQS Medical Devices GmbH additionally consult employees through the Safety Committee, consisting of works council, management, occupational safety specialist, and company physician.

The occupational health measures vary by location and are oriented towards the needs and concerns of a service provider with primary office work. The scope of occupational health measures is based on local conditions. Measures include, depending on needs, offerings from flu and Covid-19 vaccinations to private insurance, as well as company bicycle offerings and sports promotion programs as preventive measures. Training and instruction on occupational safety and health protection are typically already part of new employee onboarding. Additionally, training on special topics is conducted depending on location, for example:

- ✓ Heat stroke and risks from UV radiation
- ✓ First aid courses
- ✓ Mosquito prevention courses
- ✓ Fire protection exercises and fire alarms

In the course of occupational health and safety management, days lost due to work accidents or work-related illnesses are measured. There were no such lost days, serious illnesses, injuries, or even fatalities at DQS in the reporting year.

The auditors working on behalf of DQS are subject to all national regulations as well as industry-relevant and company-specific regulations and instructions. Instruction by the audited organizations and the provision of prescribed Personal Protective Equipment are mandatory.

Competence Management

Knowledge and competence are elementary for our organization to ensure our commitment to creating the best possible value for our customers, but also to promote the professional development of our employees. Internal regulations for employee training and development as well as career management are outlined in the Labor and Human Rights Policy. Our auditors are highly qualified partners at eye level and simultaneously representatives of DQS. A wealth of annual training sessions and experience exchanges for maintaining and expanding competence are important building blocks for their work.

Training and Development

Training and development opportunities for DQS employees vary primarily according to job description and function. These can encompass a wide range of durations and contents. On average, employees spent between 10 and 14 days on training during the reporting period, which corresponds to approximately 80 to 112 hours. DQS does not distinguish by gender. Fundamentally, opportunities for training and development depend solely on function and employee needs. The educational programs conducted in the reporting year include, for example:

- ✓ Mandatory training on regulations
- ✓ Training on the job
- ✓ Intensive support during probation period orientation
- ✓ Special qualifications for auditors
- ✓ Sales and communication training
- ✓ English courses
- ✓ Digital training
- ✓ Financial support for external training

As transition assistance to maintain employability and support career transition due to retirement or termination, the following formats were offered among others:

- ✓ Early retirement planning
- ✓ Reintegration management
- ✓ Support for adaptation to remote work
- ✓ A World Café as a starting point for adaptation to changed organizational structures
- ✓ Active support of working students in preparation for permanent employment
- ✓ Opportunities for five-year continued employment after reaching retirement age

Managers are required to conduct regular annual reviews with employees to evaluate their performance and professional development. This requirement is verified in internal audits across the group. In the reporting year, such annual reviews were conducted with over 80% of all employees.

10-14

Days were spent by employees on average with **further training**



Environment

Energy and Emissions

Environmental protection is a collective task for both states and companies. DQS takes its responsibility to contribute positively to global climate goals and avoid negative environmental impacts very seriously. Therefore, energy and emissions are essential components of our sustainability strategy.

To ensure environmentally sustainable business practices within our organization, a special Environmental Policy was developed. Here, DQS commits fundamentally to protecting natural resources, particularly energy, air, and water, as well as minimizing climate-damaging emissions. Special attention is paid to auditors' travel activities and power supply and energy efficiency, as DQS records its greatest environmental impacts in these areas. Instructions for employees on waste prevention are also part of the policy. The Environmental Policy also establishes the goal of climate neutrality and the responsibility of managers for observing, complying with, and shaping environmental and climate protection measures.

Through the Code of Conduct, suppliers are also required to adhere to climate- and environmentally-friendly business practices.

Energy

The energy expenditure for DQS's business activities results primarily from electricity consumption in offices and fuel consumption for traveling to on-site audits. As a service company, there are no other significant environmental impacts beyond these. Total electricity consumption in the DQS Group amounted to 196,854.327 kWh³ in the reporting year. Heat energy consumption was 136,586.06 kWh.



Business travel and flexible arrival and departure are essential for DQS auditors, as audits represent a substantial component of our core services, and these must be conducted predominantly on-site according to regulations. At this point, only minor savings in energy consumption are possible. However, based on an emissions analysis in 2019, several energy-saving measures were derived. For example, in the German subsidiaries, we switched to a local energy provider through an additional agreement, through which we now source 100% electricity from renewable energies. The installation of photovoltaic systems at the DQS subsidiaries in Frankfurt am Main will be completed by the end of 2024, allowing us to achieve near electricity self-sufficiency in the future. Further savings in electricity consumption resulted from our intelligent LED lighting system. Through the expansion of our vehicle fleet to include electric cars as company vehicles and the

reduction of work commutes through the Mobile Working Policy, emissions from fuel consumption could also be reduced. The digitalization of our processes also resulted in a significant reduction of raw materials and materials (such as paper, packaging, and plastics) in addition to higher efficiency. DQS is working intensively on a paperless and shipping-free office.

Emissions

Building on the findings of our national CO₂ assessment from 2019, significant insights were gained for the corporate assessment of 2023. Based on the GHG Protocol, all three scopes were analyzed, incorporating subcategories that represent noteworthy emission sources relevant to our core business. The foundation for our reduction goals focused on those emission sources deemed both impactful—contributing over 5% to total emissions—and controllable. The activity data used for emission calculations were derived from primary and secondary data as well as assumptions and models.

In alignment with the nature of our business operations, over 60% of emissions are attributed to auditor travel activities. As most audits are conducted by external auditors, the associated emissions are recorded as Scope 3 emissions. These emissions are calculated based on invoices submitted by external auditors, which detail transportation modes and distances for commuting, as well as the use of rental cars, taxis, and accommodations. Across all three scopes, an average value of 222.60 kgCO₂e per audit day and 86.26 kgCO₂e per person-day was determined based on audits conducted in 2023. The calculations were performed according to the 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR6). The Global Warming Potentials (GWPs) used in these calculations were also taken from this report. For emission factors, guidelines from the UK Department

for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA) were applied. The calculations included all gases listed by the IPCC, covering the six gases regulated under the Kyoto Protocol.

As part of our sustainability strategy, we are committed to achieving Net Zero for direct emissions in the long term. By 2030, we aim to reduce CO₂ emissions by 30% compared to 2023. This translates to an annual reduction of approximately 5%. Furthermore, the 2023 average baseline per audit and audit day has been established as a benchmark for future reduction targets.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions of the DQS Group for the Reporting Year 2023

	Gross Volume in t CO ₂ e	% of Total Emissions	Gross Volume in t CO ₂ e	% of Total Emissions
	Scope 2 market based		Scope 2 location based	
Scope 1 (Direct Emissions)	452,90	5.3 %	452.90	5.2 %
1.1 Stationary Facilities	124.95	1.5 %	124.95	1.4 %
1.2 Mobile Facilities	307.01	3.6 %	307.01	3.5 %
1.3 Refrigeration Units	20.94	0.2 %	20.94	0.2 %
Scope 2 (Indirect Emissions)	229.89	2.7 %	406.39	4.6 %
2.1 Electricity	229.89	2.7 %	406.39	4.6 %
Scope 3 (Other Indirect Emissions)	7,919.08	92.0 %	7,919.08	90.2 %
3.6 Business Travel	6,978.01	81.1 %	6,978.01	79.5 %
3.7 Employee Commuting	941.06	10.9 %	941.06	10.7 %
Total	8,601.88	100 %	8,778.37	100 %
Per Audit	222.60 kgCO₂e		227.17 kgCO₂e	
Per Person-Day	86.26 kgCO₂e		88.03 kgCO₂e	

Note: Discrepancies in Scope 1 percentages are due to rounding.)

Declaration of Use

Declaration of Use

DQS Holding GmbH has reported the information specified in this GRI Index for the period from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, with reference to the GRI Standards.

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Simply leveraging Sustainability.

Sustainability
Report 2023

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