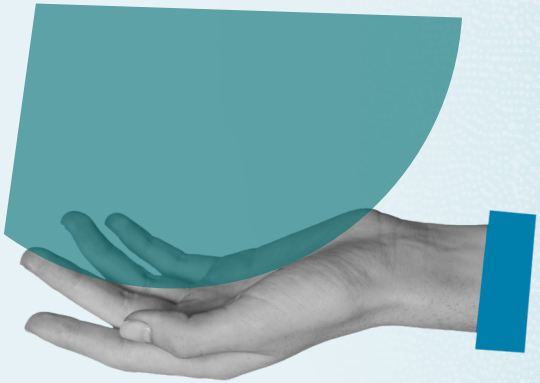
Multiple Benefits: Maximising the Value of Each Approach









High and volatile energy prices, geopolitical interdependencies and risks, and enormous investment pressures all pose challenges for business, politics and local authorities in equal measure. At the same time, money is tight for private households, with citizens forced to cut their cloth accordingly. This calls for political solutions that address several challenges simultaneously while making more effective use of resources. But how can political stakeholders ensure supply security, competitive power and economic strength for the long term while also cutting cost risks and promoting societal cohesion?

The answer lies in approaches that solve several problems simultaneously, along with measures that produce multiple benefits and generate far-reaching leverage effects. In the first issue of our new series 'ZukunftswissenKOMPAKT', we highlight concrete examples for systematic approaches to leveraging these multiple benefits.

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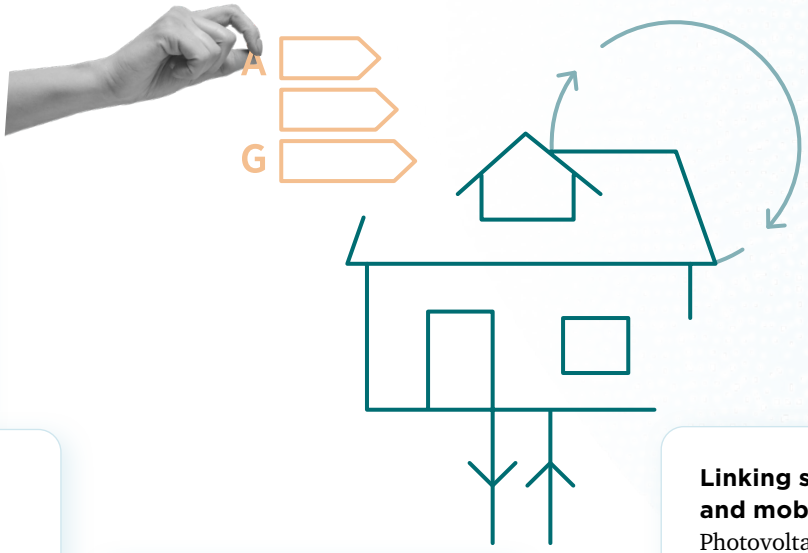
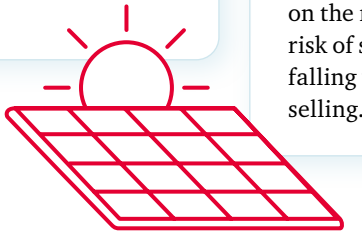
Increased Independence and Predictable Expenses

Forward-looking decisions can mitigate cost risks, preserve property value and promote health while also contributing to climate protection:



Stabilising energy expenses
Efficiency measures, modern heating technologies and economical cooling systems can reduce energy demand and costs while mitigating the risks posed by volatile energy markets.

Improving housing quality and health
Insulation and shading help to keep room temperatures stable while protecting against heat during summer. Effective ventilation promotes a healthy indoor climate.



Securing property value
Prompt modernisation strengthens a property's position on the market and reduces the risk of subsequent price hikes, falling values and problems when selling.

Linking self-generation and mobility
Photovoltaics, storage systems and electric cars make it possible to increase usage of self-generated electricity and improve cost planning. With the right technology, EV batteries can also serve as power storage systems. This increases independence – especially in cases where alternatives are limited, such as in rural areas.



Using products for longer, buying fewer new items
Looking after products, repairing them and buying second-hand where possible keeps items in use for longer and can cut expenses. Workshops and repair cafés support this.

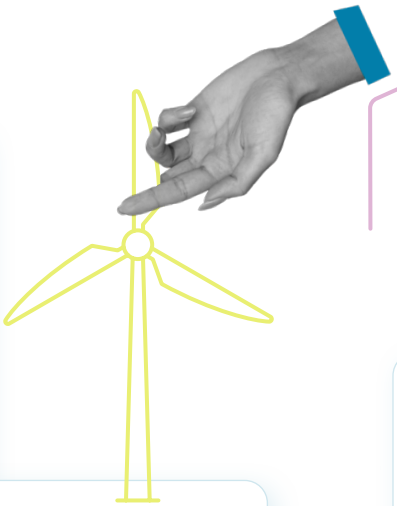
Improving health through proper nutrition
A balanced, seasonal diet featuring a high proportion of plant-based foods can reduce the risk of diet-related disease – and support climate protection efforts into the bargain. On hot days, light meals and plenty of fluids can help people to stay healthy and comfortable.

Avoiding food waste
Good planning, appropriate portions and correct storage avoids direct financial losses in day-to-day life.



New Market Opportunities for German Industry

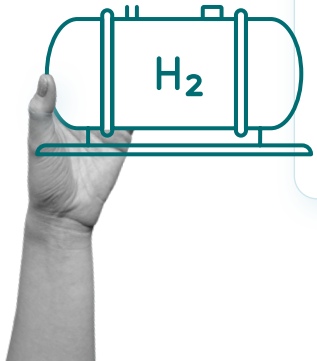
From new export markets to increased independence, German industry can turn the green transition into global competitive advantages:





Driver of global competitiveness
From the circular economy to electrification and energy efficiency, ambitious climate action sparks innovation. German companies that lead the way in developing these technologies to market maturity can secure top positions worldwide.

Green steel as a key export
Companies that engage with climate-friendly material production methods at an early stage can tap into global demand for green products, such as green steel and cement – and, with this demand set to rise in future, securing customer access is vital.



Catching up in the race to adopt e-mobility and rail-based transport
A rapid e-mobility ramp-up can generate the scaling effects that Germany's automotive industry needs in relation to vehicle and battery technology and system services. Together with efforts to digitalise rail-based transport and adopt smart mobility platforms, this can provide strong stimulus for German companies in the transport sector.

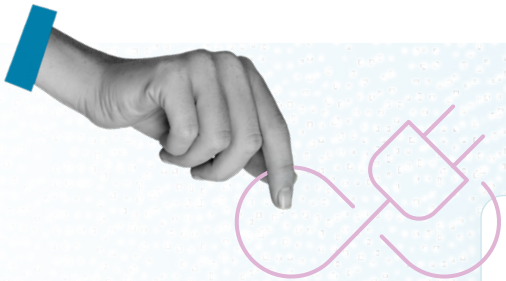
Fewer imports, greater independence
By replacing fossil fuels with electricity and placing a systematic focus on the circular economy, German industry can support internal planning while also strengthening the economy as a whole – against global price shocks and (political) dependencies on energy and raw material suppliers.



New markets for the food industry
The boom in vegetarian and vegan alternatives demonstrates how transformation can lead to new growth. Early investments can secure profitable niches and global competitive edges for the German food industry.

Lower emissions, reduced risks
A rising carbon price will force German industry to embark on climate protection measures – and thus secure long-term export opportunities. Companies that act today to reduce their carbon intensity protect themselves effectively against climate-related trade barriers (such as carbon tariffs) imposed by other countries.

Future Opportunities for Skilled Trades and SMEs



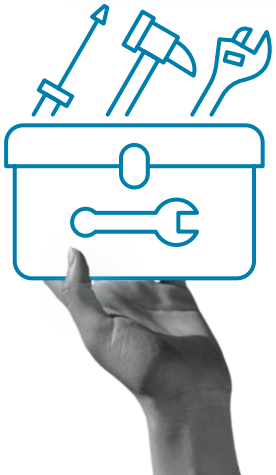
From companies in the skilled trades to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), businesses that promptly implement future-focused products and services, adopt efficiency measures and embrace the circular economy protect themselves against external price shocks. The key stimuli in this area include:



Attracting skilled workers
Companies that credibly engage with the environmental economy demonstrably boost their appeal as an employer – making it easier to recruit talented candidates.



Skilled trades and SMEs can cut utility costs
Renewable energy technologies, electricity self-generation, process optimisation and energy-saving retrofitting reduce utility costs with lasting effect. These measures foster independence from price shocks while also generating new income. In addition, they create a push for modernisation, markedly advancing technical development – and giving rise to new and innovative products and services.

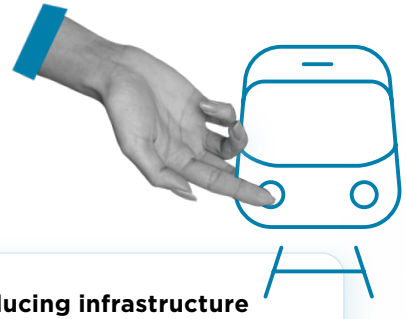


Implementing circular business models
Conserving resources reduces waste, increases supply security and opens up profitable business segments such as repair and maintenance services.

The environmental economy as a growth engine
Companies that make the move to sustainable materials and techniques early can seize lucrative niches and gain a head-start on the market – leaving conventional providers behind them. The environmental economy accounts for roughly three million jobs in Germany alone. From green tech specialists to circular economy experts, the transition is continuously reshaping job descriptions, with long-term implications for the labour market.

Efficiency as an Imperative for Budget Discipline

Energy-efficient modernisation protects public assets against decline, contributes to heat protection, provides lasting relief for local authorities' budgets and keeps money in the region. The central fields of action for the public sector include:



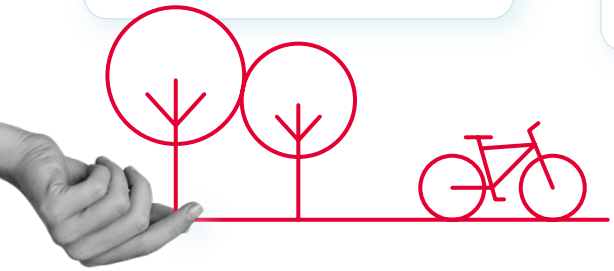


Preserving assets and easing budget pressure
Retrofitting public buildings with energy-efficiency measures prevents assets from losing value, protects against extreme heat, cuts the operating costs of schools and leisure centres on a permanent basis, and insulates public funds from the impacts of volatile energy prices.

Reducing infrastructure costs
Effective local public transport networks together with cycling and walking infrastructure ease pressure on roads, reduce the need for expensive repairs and ensure adherence to strict EU air quality thresholds entering into force in 2030.

Expanding affordable leisure activities
Targeted energy-saving measures in swimming pools and sports facilities prevent closures as well as drastic increases in entry prices as a result of elevated operating costs – which helps to keep quality of life affordable for local residents.

Promoting health, cutting costs
A balanced offering in public canteens and hospitals, with meals based on regional produce, contributes to climate protection while also supporting disease prevention, accelerating patients' recoveries and reducing food costs.



Boosting regional value creation
Rather than funding fossil fuel imports, investments in retrofitting measures and district heating systems flow directly into local companies, such as businesses in the skilled trade and SMEs in the construction sector.

Creating location advantages for businesses
Industry and SMEs are more likely to settle in locations that offer modern, sustainable energy infrastructure and supply security.



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You can find the detailed Zukunftsimpuls on the topic of 'Multiple Benefits' here (German):
https://wupperinst.org/en/a/wi/a/s/ad/9447/

Further publications by the Wuppertal Institute can be found here:
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