



Basic Research is Essential!

The research conducted at universities and research institutes is the indispensable foundation that underlies the applied research work carried out by companies. If industrial research is to add value and contribute to growth in Germany and worldwide, it is imperative that we remain committed to a high-quality and structurally sound system of basic research at universities.

It is the knowledge garnered by basic researchers that shows us – in theory at least – what technical possibilities the near future could hold. If we are to use this theoretical knowledge to create value, we must combine it with practical benefits. Often, this practicality requires years of further research. In many cases, it is not sufficient to merely identify the benefits – there are many carefully directed steps that must be taken before economically viable products can be created.

There is no contradiction between basic research and industrial research. On the contrary, each acts as a catalyst and stimulates the other. True innovations can be made only on the basis of sound scientific principles. And it requires successful new products to add the value that, in turn, facilitates a new generation of scientific knowledge. In shaping the research strategy at BASF, we have long combined both forms of science. As a company that is itself engaged in research, we specifically enter into partnerships with universities and non-university research institutions. These successful collaborative ventures advance the work being done by both sides, thus enriching the research landscape.

Many of the staff in our BASF laboratories who are now successfully working in industry began their scientific careers in basic research. As a company, we benefit from that fact on a daily basis. These employees have the ability to focus on the science that lies at the core of their research, while at the same time looking beyond their immediate confines and seeing the product that must one day emerge from their research and prove its worth on the global market.

Especially for a country like Germany, which is poor in natural resources, it is essential to invest in the finest minds and to safeguard our long-term capacity for excellent basic research. Only if our scientists are able to hold their own at the cutting edge of international research will we remain economically successful in the long run. Forward-looking industrial research projects rest on the foundation that basic research builds for them. The present edition of this magazine seeks to provide some relevant insights.

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