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Research of practical utility lies at the heart of all activities pursued by the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. At present, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft maintains more than 80 research units, including 56 Fraunhofer Institutes, at 40 different locations in Germany. The majority of the 13,000 staff are qualified scientists and engineers, who work with an annual research budget of 1.3 billion euros. Of this sum, more than 1 billion euros is generated through contract research.

Within the Fraunhofer Society the Fraunhofer Nanotechnology Alliance (encompassing 20 Institutes) focus on multifunctional coatings for use in such areas as the optical and automotive industries, the design of special nanoparticles for use as fillers and functional materials in biomedical applications, and a novel type of actuator based on carbon nanotubes.

Business areas (crosscutting technologies)

- Nanomaterials / nanochemistry
- Nano optics / electronics
- Nanobiotechnology
- Modeling / simulation
- Manufacturing technologies, handling