

## IAMO's Transfer Strategy

### 1. Preliminary remarks

The transfer strategy of the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) is based on the Leibniz Association's Leibniz Knowledge Transfer strategy<sup>1</sup>, the institute's statutory mission and IAMO's specific challenges, especially concerning the institute's central regions of observation.

According to the **Leibniz Knowledge Transfer mission statement**, transfer activities generally refer to the exchange between science and the non-academic world. Transfer links societal knowledge needs and knowledge stocks with the research agendas of Leibniz institutes. It, therefore, fulfils a bi-directional interface function: Research activities and competencies are transferred from science into society and practice, and at the same time, the dialogue between politics, business and the general public on the one hand and science on the other is promoted. This also includes the further training of researchers for careers both within and outside of academia.

By its **statutory mission**, IAMO conducts socio-economically oriented research on the agri-food economy and rural areas of the formerly centrally planned economies of Europe and Asia in a global context. In addition to research, the institute also has a closely linked transfer and further education mandate. In particular, the careers of scientists from the target regions are supported.

**Particular challenges** arise from IAMO's international orientation. This requires cooperation, dialogue and exchange with actors from science and the non-academic sector from many different nations, with their specific cultural, economic and political backgrounds and framework conditions. This requires particular competencies and strategies as well as a distinct understanding of the different contexts, including research and scientific education, on-site. This signals the need for "tailor-made" transfer activities and opens up a unique role for IAMO in scientific and economic development in these countries. In this context, the institute also (implicitly) pursues a diplomatic mission by promoting dialogue and exchange of experience between Germany and the target countries as well as between the target countries themselves.

**Transfer activities at IAMO** have gained importance over time. Increased systematic efforts are being made to intensify the exchange between science and practice in its many facets. The aim is not only to provide broad information about our research results but also to work directly on solving societal challenges in the partner regions. This is done through the targeted transfer of knowledge to the partner regions, advising decision-makers from business, civil society, politics and administration, both at the national and international level, as well as through the joint development of solutions with business and politics within the framework of specific projects. At the same time, knowledge transfer also means integrating the pressing issues in our partner countries and their knowledge bases into our research projects. A key element of IAMO's transfer strategy is academic capacity building, including long-term research, advisory and innovation infrastructure in the partner regions. This also involves

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Bilder\\_und\\_Downloads/Neues/Mediathek/Publikationen/Brosch%C3%BCren/Leitbild\\_Transfer\\_Einzelseiten.pdf](https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Bilder_und_Downloads/Neues/Mediathek/Publikationen/Brosch%C3%BCren/Leitbild_Transfer_Einzelseiten.pdf)

drawing on experience from Germany as well as at the international level. Conversely, the knowledge and skills gained in the target regions are also brought to bear in tackling challenges in other countries.

To make the transfer activities successful, they are oriented toward four strategically designed transfer formats. All formats are characterised by the fact that the activities are **science- or evidence-based**: They are strictly oriented towards the scientific competencies and research activities of IAMO and the cooperation partners. The transfer is thus always closely linked to IAMO's research, which forms the basis of all transfer activities. At the same time, transfer activities enrich the analysis by considering important impulses and experiences from the non-academic sector in the research design. Thus, transfer activities cannot be sharply separated from research but rather form an essential part of research activities in the respective formats. Since IAMO conducts socio-economically oriented research, essentially studying the behaviour of actors, institutions and markets, information from a "real world" perspective is indispensable for successful research design.

Accordingly, there is no separate "transfer unit" at the institute whose staff would predominantly engage in the transfer or advisory activities. Instead, transfer activities, albeit in varying scope and formats, are the task of the academic staff in the context of their personal career development. At the same time, various positions within the institute are involved in the coordination and organisation of transfer-oriented projects and events. In addition to the three scientific departments (transfer formats 1-4), this includes third-party funding management (transfer format 1), the International Research Groups Central Asia, China, and Southeast Europe, the IAMO Graduate School, the guest and scholarship programme (transfer format 2), and press and public relations (transfer format 3).

**IAMO's four transfer formats**, as well as their **governance** and **evaluation**, are presented below.

## 2 Transfer formats

Conceptually, **four transfer** formats can be listed, which have specific characteristics and address different target groups:

- (1) Transfer through interaction and dialogue - transdisciplinary cooperation structures.
- (2) Transfer through minds - sustainable capacity building and career promotion
- (3) Transfer through events and information - events, publications and media activities
- (4) Transfer through consultancy - classical policy advice and membership in boards

(ad 1) The format "**Transfer through interaction and dialogue - transdisciplinary cooperation structures**" develops solution- and innovation-oriented dialogues and interactions with representatives from business, politics and administration. It also promotes the dissemination of research results. In addition to implementing or piloting various transdisciplinary or practice-oriented projects in direct cooperation and interaction with businesses and politics, the format focuses on designing long-term dialogue platforms with science, business and politics in the countries under consideration. This also results in new perspectives and impulses for research itself, which is thus more likely to offer more targeted approaches to solutions and options for action for societal challenges in "real-world" environments.

These activities are accompanied by IAMO's research and third-party funding manager. The majority of research projects involve knowledge transfer or dialogue with non-scientific actors. In addition, projects explicitly include the establishment or continuation of dialogue platforms.<sup>2</sup>

(ad 2) The format "**Transfer through minds - sustainable capacity building and career promotion**" primarily aims at academic qualification at the institute and in the regions under consideration. Through individual guidance and support of professional careers within and outside academia of IAMO employees and guests, individuals qualify for leading positions in academia, business and politics in their respective home countries or international organisations. In addition, specific, structured training programmes are carried out for researchers from and in the regions under consideration. Transfer-oriented infrastructures are created in the countries themselves (e.g. offices, chairs, laboratories, participation in training programmes). This format contributes to the improvement of agricultural economics research capacities and the competence development of employees in the administration of the countries under consideration.

The format is embedded in permanently established cross-sectional areas of the institute, such as the International China Research Group and the Central Asia Research Group, as well as specific further training and exchange programmes (Early Career Scientists Programme/IAMO Graduate School and the guest and scholarship programme) on the one hand, and on the other hand in third-party funded (e.g. DAAD, BMBF, Volkswagen Foundation, EU) capacity-building collaborative projects, which are temporary in nature and whose longer-term implementation is generally aimed at through comparable follow-up projects.<sup>3</sup>

(ad 3) The third transfer format, "**Transfer through events and information - events, publications and media activities**", is dedicated to the communication of research activities and research results to a broad audience (e.g. organisations closely connected to public administration, ministries, academies, interested experts), especially in the partner countries. This format offers a bundle of everyday transfer activities that ultimately contribute to societal reflection. The aim is to achieve the broadest possible reach using target group-specific communication channels.

The activities are accompanied by the institute's press and public relations work. This includes the co-hosting of international conferences, also in the partner countries and/ or with international organisations (e.g. IAMO Forum, Central Asia Conferences, Large Farm Management Conference Kyiv) as well as the (co-)editing of outreach-oriented publication series (e.g. Policy Briefs, IAMO Annual, Länderanalysen). Furthermore, the institute uses social media channels (Twitter, Facebook), blogs and press releases to inform about its activities, research findings and events. Finally, staff members comment on current topics, e.g. via interviews and background discussions, in various national and

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<sup>2</sup> Examples include transfer-oriented cooperation projects concerning Central Asia (BMBF-KlimALEZ I and II, BMBF-ANICANET, GIZ-TAAST), Eastern Europe (Leibniz-LaScala), the Western Balkan (GIZ-Migration), China (BMBF-DITAC) or the South Caucasus (Sparkassenstiftung). With regard to the co-implementation of long-term dialogue and networking projects, examples include the Sino-German Agricultural Centre (DCZ-Beijing), the German-Ukrainian Agricultural Policy Dialogue (APD-Ukraine), cooperation with internationally oriented specialist organisations (e.g. DLG, IFPRI, FAO, World Bank Group), as well as the Leibniz Innovation Farm Brandenburg or the Leibniz Science Campuses Plant-based Bioeconomy and EEGA.

<sup>3</sup> Examples include the Graduate Schools in Central Asia (VW SUSADICA, EU-Erasmus-DSinGIS), the exchange programmes with Romania and Serbia (EU-ENHANCE, DAAD-Serbia), various summer schools (DAAD) or the establishment of joint infrastructures in Uzbekistan and Ukraine (VW-IPReS, BMBF-UaFoodTrade).

international media (print, radio, TV) or give expert lectures for a scientifically minded or non-scientific audience (e.g. within the framework of parliamentary evenings or expert events).

(ad 4) The fourth transfer format, "**Transfer through consultancy - classical policy advice and membership in boards**", offers targeted, and often demand-driven, information to decision-makers from business and politics. On the one hand, this concerns the preparation of expert reports and analyses for national (e.g. BMEL, GIZ) or international organisations (e.g. FAO, World Bank) or participation in formats such as "Leibniz im Bundestag". On the other hand, this includes staff involvement in permanent and temporary committees such as scientific advisory boards or advisory boards of ministries, organisations or other institutions.

### 3 Coordination and Quality Assurance

The present transfer concept, with its four central formats, reflects the institute-specific transfer strategy as part of its overall strategic orientation. Accordingly, the institute's management is responsible for coordination, quality assurance, and evaluation. In particular, the institute's management is entrusted with the fundamental consideration in implementing primarily resource-intensive transfer activities. The operationalisation of the various transfer formats takes place on a more decentralised level within the scientific departments by individual researchers, interdepartmental groups or within the framework of project consortia. The transfer formats are supported institutionally by third-party funding management and press and public relations work. In addition, the transfer activities are also linked to the institution's personnel development strategy.

As IAMO's transfer activities are either part of research activities, build on them or are indirectly fed by scientific analyses, a scientific perspective also guides quality assurance. The principles of good scientific practice (e.g. DFG Kodex) provide an essential foundation in this respect.

**Internal quality assurance measures** include the professional monitoring (incl. quality checks) of activities by the respective project leaders and the adequate supervision of guests and researchers in qualification phases. In addition to the Directorate, staff responsible for third-party funding management and press and public relations is also involved in quality assurance. **Externally, quality assurance** of transfer projects as part of externally funded projects already takes place at the time of application and through interim and final evaluations by the external funding institutions. At the same time, feedback mechanisms between the participating researchers and the target groups, particularly in transfer formats 1, 2 and 4, ensure quality assurance. Finally, the institute's supervisory and advisory bodies participate in the design and further development of the transfer concept and are regularly informed about the transfer activities within the framework of the reporting system.

### 4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Transfer activities are documented in the in-house activity database (FIS) and accompanying measures such as the press review. Following the Leibniz transfer model, Leibniz institutes develop their own institution-specific **evaluation patterns**. The decisive factor here is that many transfer activities are not (or hardly) seriously amenable to metric evaluation. Accordingly, **qualitative information** is often more meaningful. Therefore, the assessment of activities is carried out according to qualitative criteria and

is **supplemented by selected metric/quantitative data** in cases where it seems appropriate and possible.

In most cases, transdisciplinary cooperation and dialogue structures (Transfer format 1) are funded by third parties. Therefore, the final assessment of success, e.g. achieving project objectives, is already primarily carried out externally by the funding institution (via interim/final reports or evaluations). Specific results and achievements are also highlighted and presented to the public. These include, for example, new impulses for future projects, follow-up funding for similar projects or results that exceed expectations. Evaluations in the area of qualification and capacity building (**Transfer format 2**) include, among other things, information on completed qualification work (doctorate, habilitation), perception and success of teaching and course offerings, as well as the exemplary recording of professional careers of (former) staff and guests. In addition, in the case of externally funded qualification programmes and transdisciplinary projects, the funding institution always makes a final assessment (via interim and final reports). Events and media activities (**Transfer format 3**) also take into account, in particular, quantitative criteria of perception and visibility (e.g. participant/call-up information) as well as the assessments of selected "feedback". The importance of committee work and commissioned reports (**Transfer format 4**) is also measured, among other things, by the institutions' reputation.

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