

Transfer Strategy of the IOER

The Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER) develops scientific principles, analytical tools and instruments for the sustainable development and transformation of neighbourhoods, cities and regions. To this end, it conducts cross-scale research into the interactions and feedbacks between the natural environment, people and technologies, as well as the options for stewardship and planning. With its research, the IOER aims to initiate, accelerate and implement deep and comprehensive change. It contributes to bringing the development of landscapes and settlement areas into harmony with the natural foundations of life and to minimising environmental risks so that people can thrive within ecological boundaries. In line with this mission statement, the research programme and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's scientific ideal of "theoria cum praxi", knowledge transfer is one of the central tasks of the IOER.

At the IOER, knowledge transfer is not only understood as the target-group-specific and quality-assured translation of scientific findings and, conversely, the integration of socially generated questions into research projects. In its understanding of transfer, the IOER goes beyond this by additionally designing transdisciplinary and transformative projects, processes or formats together with relevant actors in order to enable knowledge (co-)production and co-creation.

Relevant actors for the transfer of knowledge are political decision-makers active in spatial development, public administrations, planning practitioners, the private sector, the third sector and civil society actors as well as intermediaries at all levels. The overarching transfer goals are the transfer of knowledge, the creation of mutual understanding, the identification and processing of information needs, the answering of current questions, and the search for and design of new physical and digital spaces and formats for transfer. In concrete terms, the knowledge transfer activities aim to initiate systemic innovations in human-environment relations in exchange with public, private and civil society actors and to enable responsible collective management (stewardship) of sustainable and environmentally resilient neighbourhoods, cities and regions.

Topics, fields of action and approaches to knowledge transfer

Based on the research profile and the research programme of the IOER as well as the intensive exchange with the actors of spatial development, central **transfer topics** were formulated. These reflect the specific profile of the Institute. The transfer topics enable a thematic bundling of research and transfer activities from various parallel projects at the IOER as well as a continuous presence, profiling and positioning of the Institute in public discourses beyond the duration of individual projects. The seven transfer topics of the IOER are:

- Planning Cities and Regions of the Future
- Shaping Transformations together
- Strengthening Human-Nature Relationships
- Understanding Land Use Change
- Closing Material Cycles in Cities
- Addressing Environmental Risks
- Developing Biological Diversity

Regardless of the transfer topics, three central **fields of action** are distinguished in knowledge transfer at the IOER, whereby the transitions can be fluid:

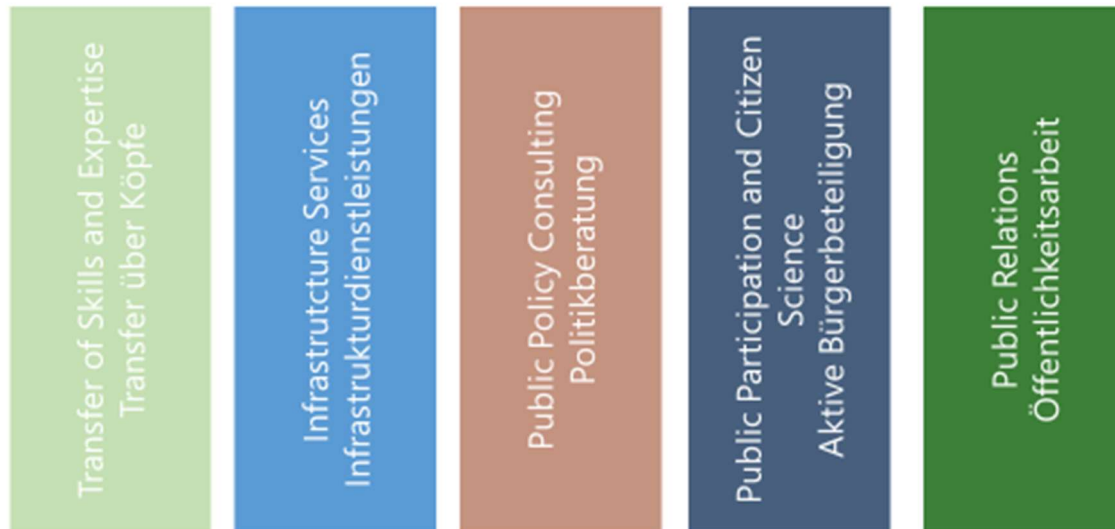
- In the field of communication, the focus is on preparing scientific findings in a way that is appropriate for the target audience and communicating scientific working methods. This generally serves to provide orientation, enable dialogue and participation, and create understanding and acceptance for scientific working methods, results and products. Continuous communication should also open feedback channels to ensure that non-academic knowledge can be integrated into research activities.
- In the field consulting, the aim is to advise those affected, to prepare and support decision-making, but also to identify research and advisory needs in discussion with relevant actors.
- The application field includes all measures and activities that aim to use, adopt and implement research results and findings. This also includes the (further) development of solutions together with the relevant actors.

For the concrete steps in knowledge transfer, specific **approaches** to knowledge transfer can be derived from the research profile and the research programme of the IOER that are particularly suitable or particularly relevant.

Dialogue with society and the related establishment and development of relationships with relevant actors with regard to possible activities in the future is a basic prerequisite for any knowledge transfer (*Public Relations*). In addition, there are various more specific ways that each scientific institution uses according to its knowledge transfer objectives. At the IOER, a special role is played by the active involvement of non-academic partners (*Public Participation and Citizen Science*) in the research process (e.g. in transdisciplinary projects), consulting for decision-makers but also for those affected (*Public Policy Consulting*), as well as knowledge transfer via research data and infrastructure services (*Infrastructure Services*). In addition, knowledge transfer through qualifications, further training and transfer-oriented teaching (*Transfer of Skills and Expertise*) is an important component of knowledge transfer at the Institute.

In principle, IOER thus relates its transfer activities to the typology of "transfer paths" developed by the scientific communities in cooperation with the Joint Science Conference (GWK) (Leibniz Association, 2022).

Fig. 1: Transfer paths (cf. Leibniz Association, 2022)



Measures, implementation and evaluation of knowledge transfer

In accordance with the three fields of action (communication, consultation, and application), a variety of knowledge transfer measures are applied at the Institute of Public Health, whereby the boundaries can be fluid and individual measures can be assigned to more than one field of action.

Communication measures form the basis for continuous dialogue with society. This area includes press and media work (press releases, interviews, newspaper and magazine articles, among others with non-academic actors) and social media activities aimed at a dispersed audience. In addition, there are publicly effective events such as lectures, discussion events, exhibitions, trade fairs, visits or excursions, as well as publications aimed at specific target groups.

The IOER provides consultation in the form of formal expert reports, statements and policy papers, as well as informal advisory services, e.g. through participation in advisory boards and committees. Activities in the field of advisory services not only focus on decision-makers as relevant actors, but also on society as a whole, e.g. in advising those affected.

Ultimately, knowledge transfer also aims to apply findings gained through scientific processes. Measures in this field of action at the IOER range from the provision of information and data (e.g. through the IOER Research Data Centre) to guidelines or tools for use by practitioners. Particular attention is paid to developing these offers together with the relevant actors or to further developing them as a solution approach. This is done primarily in transdisciplinary and transformative projects, e.g. through reallabs and experimental spaces.

For the concrete procedure in knowledge transfer, impact pathways are already described and planned in the context of all research projects in the project development of the IOER. Their elaboration follows a uniform scheme that derives the transfer activities of a project in all phases of implementation step by step from the changes ultimately aimed at.

The conception and coordination of knowledge transfer at the IOER is the responsibility of the Head of Knowledge Transfer in the Directorate. The tasks of this managerial position include strategy development, further training and teaching in the area of knowledge transfer, the collection and securing of experiential knowledge at the Institute as well as support planning, implementation and evaluation of knowledge transfer measures. In addition, the area of responsibility includes opening up new potentials for knowledge transfer, as well as developing, testing and evaluating new measures and formats.