

DER WISSENSCHAFTSRAT BERÄT DIE BUNDESREGIERUNG
UND DIE REGIERUNGEN DER LÄNDER IN FRAGEN
DER INHALTLICHEN UND STRUKTURELLEN ENTWICKLUNG DER
HOCHSCHULEN, DER WISSENSCHAFT UND DER FORSCHUNG.

PRESSEMITTEILUNG 23 | 2017 Berlin 17.07.2017

Next generation of research infrastructures evaluated

German Council of Science and Humanities completes science-driven evaluation for the second time

Twelve conceptual designs for large-scale research infrastructures have been evaluated in detail and comparatively assessed by a mandated committee of the German Council of Science and Humanities, at the request of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF). The evaluated research infrastructures are facilities, resources and services assigned to the research areas Engineering and Natural Sciences, Environmental and Earth System Sciences, and Biological and Medical Sciences. The aim of the evaluation process is to establish a basis for decision making for including research infrastructures into the National Roadmap in the following legislative period in Germany. With the completion of another round of science-driven evaluation, the process is now firmly established. It already was proved in a pilot process completed in 2013.

To enter the Roadmap Process and therefore the science-driven evaluation, proposals had to be of national importance for research policy, have a long utilisation period of at least 10 years and open access on the basis of scientific quality standards. The planned investment costs must amount to at least EUR 50 million in the natural sciences and EUR 20 million in the humanities and social sciences. The infrastructures may be geographically fixed or distributed over multiple locations. In case of international projects, the German share is subject to the evaluation.

All proposals have been evaluated in four dimensions:

— The dimension of **scientific potential** refers to the importance of the project to the development of new or existing fields of research.

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- _ In the dimension of **utilisation**, the size and origin of the user groups and the rules governing access to the proposed research infrastructure are examined. The data concept is also appraised.
- _ The dimension of **feasibility** takes into account the technical, personnel and institutional preconditions at the responsible institution and associated risks.
- _ In the dimension of **relevance to Germany as a location of science and research**, the relevance of the project to Germany's role and interests as well as the impacts on the visibility and attractiveness of German research are assessed.

Each proposal was examined by three reviewers, more than 85 % came from abroad. On the basis of the written reviews and the questions raised therein, a discussion with the authors of the conceptual designs followed. Subsequently, the single reviews were joined, to compare the proposals over every of the four specified dimensions, afterwards.

The comparative approach aimed at calibrating the qualitative reviews across all research areas, and subsequently leads to standardised assessments according to a five-grade evaluation scale, ranging from sufficient to outstanding in each dimension of evaluation.

In parallel, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research commissioned a project management agency to conduct an economic evaluation of all proposals. On the basis of the results from both evaluation processes, the Federal Government will draw up the National Roadmap in the next legislative period. It is expected to be released in the beginning of 2018.

Note: The „Report on the Science-driven Evaluation of Large-scale Research Infrastructure Projects for Inclusion in a National Roadmap” is available on the internet and can be downloaded under: https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/6410-17_engl.pdf.

It can also be ordered via e-mail at the Head Office of the Council (post@wissenschaftsrat.de).