

Securing Long-term Access to Research Data

Opening of the Office of the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) in Karlsruhe



Sabine Brünger-Weilandt (FIZ Karlsruhe), Professor Holger Hanselka (President of KIT), Eva Lübke (NFDI), Professor York Sure-Vetter (KIT, NFDI), and Dr. Frank Mentrup (Mayor of Karlsruhe) cut the red ribbon to open the NFDI Directorate in Karlsruhe. (Photo: Cynthia Ruf, KIT)

In all areas of science, data volumes are increasing rapidly. Already existing, “old” data inventories are considered an important basis for new findings. With the establishment of the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) as a registered association, scientists of all disciplines are now joining forces to improve the accessibility and traceability of data and to make research quicker and better. The partners involved in the establishment of the NFDI were Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and FIZ Karlsruhe – Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure. Today, the NFDI Directorate in Karlsruhe was opened with greetings by Federal Minister of Research Anja Karliczek and State Minister for Science, Research, and the Arts Theresia Bauer.

Today, research data are often stored in internal directories of research institutes only. Hence, it is very difficult for external researchers to access these data for reanalysis from another perspective. An

Monika Landgraf
Chief Press Officer,
Head of Corp. Communications

Kaiserstraße 12
76131 Karlsruhe, Germany
Phone: +49 721 608-41105
Email: presse@kit.edu

Press contacts:

KIT
Sandra Wiebe
Press Officer
Phone: +49 721 608-41172
Email: sandra.wiebe@kit.edu

NFDI
Dr. Hendrik Seitz-Moskaliuk
NFDI Directorate
Phone: +49 7247 808-298
Email: hendrik.seitz-moskaliuk@nfdi.de

FIZ Karlsruhe
Dr. Babett Bolle
Press and Public Relations
Phone: +49 2332 662365
Email: babett.bolle@fiz-karlsruhe.de

increasing proportion of scientific publications is not based on newly collected, but on already existing data stocks. The National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) will collect these data treasures and make them accessible to all scientists. The NFDI comprises up to 30 expert consortia to develop research data management standards across all disciplines. This research-driven approach makes Germany assume a leading role on the international level. The federation and the states will fund the infrastructure with about EUR 900 million over the next ten years.

Gaining Knowledge and Developing Innovations from Data

Federal Research Minister Anja Karliczek comments: “The possibility to use data on a broad basis will gain importance in research in the next years. We strive to gain knowledge from data, to develop innovations, and to secure the competitiveness of Germany. For this purpose, we are establishing the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI). The NFDI will allow for a broad use of research data. In this way, knowledge will benefit entire society. I am very happy that we have now reached the next milestone in the setup of the NFDI. For its work, I wish the NFDI Directorate foresight and much success.”

State Minister for Science, Research, and the Arts Theresia Bauer points out: “I am very happy that we can accompany the two important events today, establishment of the NFDI association and start of funding of the NFDI consortia, by this symbolic handover of the office. In Baden-Württemberg, the NFDI association meets with surroundings and support that are unparalleled on the national and international level, which is not least due to the priority we attached to research data management in the past years.”

The rooms of the NFDI Directorate in Karlsruhe were opened officially today by cutting a red ribbon. The NFDI Directorate includes the offices of the NFDI association and Executive Board composed of Director Professor York Sure-Vetter and Commercial Director Eva Lübke.

“The National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) will make available digital data for research in a sustainable way,” says Sure-Vetter. “I am very grateful for the contributions of many actors from politics and science, in particular the Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures. I would also like to thank the staff of FIZ Karlsruhe and KIT for their active and reliable support in the first foundation phase. The large consensus of the federation and all states to fund the NFDI is a reliable basis and gives us a perspective for further development. I



From left to right: Holger Hanselka (KIT), Eva Lübke (NFDI), Britta Nestler (KIT), Harald Sack (FIZ Karlsruhe), York Sure-Vetter (KIT, NFDI), Frank Mentrup (Mayor of Karlsruhe), Sabine Brünger-Weilandt (FIZ Karlsruhe).
(Photo: Cynthia Ruf, KIT)

am looking forward to cooperating with numerous researchers and administrative staff from various scientific disciplines.”

Eva Lübcke, Commercial Director of NFDI, adds: “Many organizations have paved the way for the establishment of the NFDI on October 12, 2020. We now have the big opportunity to develop an NFDI that meets openness, participation, and joint benefit requirements and serves both research and society.”

Science to Meet the Challenges of Our Time

Sabine Brünger-Weilandt, President and CEO of FIZ Karlsruhe – Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure, underscores: “The partnership between KIT and FIZ Karlsruhe is unique in Baden-Württemberg as well as in Germany. We have tried to offer optimal support and an adequate scientific environment to the directorate in the NFDI founding phase. Today, I am very happy about opening the NFDI and about having another first address for the support of scientific excellence in Karlsruhe.

“Science is our best means to meet the challenges of our time, such as climate change, new pandemics, or rapid social change. This requires cooperative acting and active exchange,” says the President of KIT, Professor Holger Hanselka. “With the National Research Data Infrastructure, we enable access, organization, and interconnection of knowledge for a joint, open, and viable future.”

The Directorate will be the umbrella organization for the expert consortia and will coordinate interdisciplinary problems. In addition, the Directorate will be the interface between science and politics and provide for NFDI’s participation in international developments, such as the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). The decision to place the Directorate in Karlsruhe was made in May 2019 by the Joint Science Conference. KIT and FIZ Karlsruhe – Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure were entrusted with the establishment of the NFDI. Both organizations supported the setup of the Directorate and association in terms of infrastructure and administration.

“Transparency and knowledge transfer are central values to which Karlsruhe as a location of research and science has always been committed,” says Lord Mayor of the City of Karlsruhe Dr. Frank Mentrup. “I take pride in the fact that a nationally and internationally unique institution, such as the NFDI, with its Directorate has found its home in our city. My thanks go to Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

(KIT) and FIZ Karlsruhe – Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure, whose proposal has largely influenced the decision in favor of this location.”

Having established the association on October 12, 2020, KIT and FIZ Karlsruhe will now withdraw from the NFDI Directorate and the association will become independent. The first nine expert consortia started their work on October 01. KIT is involved in three, FIZ Karlsruhe in two of these consortia. During the opening of the office, Professor Britta Nestler from KIT and Professor Harald Sack from FIZ Karlsruhe presented the NFDI4Ing and NFDI4Culture consortia and explained the relevance of these initiatives to their disciplines.

In two rounds the German Research Foundation will select further consortia for funding in the next two years, thus advancing the National Research Data Infrastructure.

About FIZ Karlsruhe

FIZ Karlsruhe – Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure is a limited liability company with state-recognized non-profit status. As one of the largest non-academic information infrastructure institutions in Germany, its public mission is to provide scientists and researchers with scientific information and to develop appropriate products and services. For this, FIZ Karlsruhe opens up vast amounts of data from various sources, develops and operates innovative information services and e-research solutions, and conducts own research projects. FIZ Karlsruhe is member of the Leibniz Association that comprises more than 95 institutions conducting research and providing scientific infrastructure.

Being “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association,” KIT creates and imparts knowledge for the society and the environment. It is the objective to make significant contributions to the global challenges in the fields of energy, mobility and information. For this, about 9,300 employees cooperate in a broad range of disciplines in natural sciences, engineering sciences, economics, and the humanities and social sciences. KIT prepares its 24,400 students for responsible tasks in society, industry, and science by offering research-based study programs. Innovation efforts at KIT build a bridge between important scientific findings and their application for the benefit of society, economic prosperity, and the preservation of our natural basis of life. KIT is one of the German universities of excellence

This press release is available on the internet at http://www.sek.kit.edu/english/press_office.php.

The photos in the best quality available to us may be downloaded under www.kit.edu or requested by mail to presse@kit.edu or phone +49 721 608-41105. The photos may be used in the context given above exclusively.