

Case study - Germany

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Capacity Building for SciComm

BMFTR strategy to improve framework conditions for science communication involves several projects that aim to strengthen structural development, e.g.:

- Funding of the „**Wisskomm–Campus**“ (Science Communication Campus) at the National Institute for Science Communication
- The project **Impact Unit** supports evaluation of science communication activities
- The project **Transfer Unit** connects research and practice of science communication: Joint project between Wissenschaft im Dialog and the Berlin–Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities to strengthen the exchange between research and practice in science communication and contribute to evidence–based practice.

Goals and implementation



- Promotes **exchange between practice and research** in science communication
- Publishes **research overviews and analyses** summarizing the state of research on practice-relevant questions
- Highlight **practical implications**
- Various communication channels and formats provide **accessible entry points**
- Direct exchanges between researchers and practitioners in online **Lunchtalks**
- „**Wisskomm Connected**“ conference fosters sustainable dialogue and networking between research and practice perspectives (Sept. 2024, more to come)

Main stakeholder(s) involved

Direct stakeholders:

- Science communication researchers (from diverse disciplines and research foci)
- Science communication practitioners (from diverse institutions and backgrounds)

Indirect stakeholders:

- Research institutions, universities (supporting capacity building/fostering evidence based science communication in their respective organisations)
- Policy makers (acknowledging the importance of an evidence based practice)

Drivers & barriers

Drivers:

- Increased focus on **quality** in science communication
- Dynamically changing environments and new challenges for science communication
- Professionalisation of the Community of Practice in science communication

Barriers

- Incentives in science communication research and practice alike
- Lack of time
- Lack of resources and common spaces
- Lack of awareness for the relevance of research–practice relations

Outcomes and impact

- Increased interrelation between science communication research and practice – mutually beneficial exchanges/collaborations
- More practice-relevant science communication research
- Better informed science communication practice
- A holistic view on pressing questions of science communication that integrate insights from both research and practice in science communication
- Agenda-setting for good quality science communication

Resources & sustainability

- The Transfer Unit is fully funded by the Federal Ministry with ca. 1.5 Mio.€ shared between WiD and BBAW as project partners.
- The first funding period ends on December 31, 2025.
- A **second, three-year funding phase** is currently being reviewed by the ministry and is expected to be approved (overall 1.28 Mio. €)
- It is important to the BMFTR that the formats that the Transfer Unit has very successfully developed and established in the community can **continue to grow and remain a platform for exchange** between research and practice.
- The second funding period serves also to ensure the **sustainable use of the resources** that have been spent by the BMFTR on the Transfer Unit to date.

Policy relevance/ Transferability

- The Transfer Unit project is a building block in the BMFTR's strategy to strengthen **effective, professional, and resilient science communication** practices.
- Decisions about the role of science communication in Germany are primarily made by the respective institutions and organizations (academic freedom), or in some cases also for the federal states. Therefore, the **BMFTR relies on structure-building projects** such as the Transfer Unit to advance science communication in Germany
- Germany assumes that the work of the Transfer Unit, like that of other structural projects, contributes to **the goals of the current coalition agreement, the new Hightech Agenda Germany, and overarching European goals** (Trust in Science)

Reflections & future directions / Take away messages



- Structure-building measures are an effective tool for strengthening the framework conditions for science communication in Germany.
- They are very well received and highly valued by the community.
- In order to increase the effectiveness of the projects internationally, efforts are also undertaken to make the results available in a European context.
- Institutionalization is difficult, as all structure-building measures in Germany are currently implemented within the framework of project funding, which does not provide for institutionalization.

Thank you!