

Leibniz Guidelines on Providing Scientific Advice to Policymakers and Society

Preamble

It is consistent with the self-concept of the Leibniz Association and its institutes to make research-based knowledge available as a basis for social discourse and political decision-making. Providing research-based advice to policymakers and society places high demands on individual institutions and scientists and on non-university research organisations in general. Against this background, the following principles set out the scope on which we provide research-based advice to policymakers and society, the standards that underpin our advisory work and how we conduct this work.

We set ourselves these principles based on the self-concept contained in our Leibniz mission *Theoria cum Praxi* and commit ourselves to rapidly back them up with concrete procedures and standards at our institutes. The principles are based on an understanding of science that is committed to addressing societal issues, with results often developed in collaboration with society, and that in turn provide helpful points of reference in social and political decision-making processes. We are aware that good advice as a form of knowledge transfer can only be based on excellent science, and that research-based advice is itself a relevant service performed by scientists, which is subject to corresponding criteria. Therefore, we understand these principles as closely related and complementary to the well-established principles of good scientific practice and the standards of scientific integrity.

Consultancy as a scientific duty

1. The advice we provide to policymakers and society is based on scientific findings that reflect the current state of research. In doing so, we take care to point out existing uncertainties and the nature of science as a process.
2. We believe it is essential to clarify the difference between the communication of scientific findings and research-based normative evaluations. From our point of view, both of these consultancy activities represent a mission of science.
3. We advise on the basis of our own expertise and are transparent about its limits. In addition, we make sure that our expertise is relevant to the underlying question and situation and may decline to provide advice under certain circumstances.
4. We see the evaluation of risks and potential consequences (chains of cause and effect) as a central scientific duty.
5. We provide our scientific advice in various forms on request, but we also see it as our responsibility and duty to proactively take advice into the public arena in order to initiate

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debates about societally relevant topics and to provide the basis for informed decision-making.

6. We see scientific institutions as forums for social discourse and use them to promote critical public debate. By pointing out possible courses of action, we enable social participation and the ability of citizens to form political judgments.

Our consultancy standards

7. We see it as our scientific duty to conduct our research and provide advice in an independent manner. We make our research-based knowledge available to policymakers and society.
8. Since political and societal problems are usually complex and scientific advice should rarely come just from one specialist area, where possible we take account of different positions and approaches when conducting our research and providing advice.
9. We are transparent about potential conflicts of interest that could compromise our integrity, the integrity of our recommendations or that of the underlying research. We make it clear whether we are speaking as scientists or as public figures.
10. We see it as our duty to provide scientific policy advice along societal decision-making processes, from the identification and diagnosis of a problem to advice on designing policy measures, analysis of their prospective impact, and their subsequent evaluation. Depending on the problem, the time frame available, and the urgency of the consultation, there may be variation in the methods used and the (scientific) explanatory power of the results.
11. At our institutes, we develop discipline-specific standards for the regular assessment of the quality and impact of the advice we provide to policymakers and society, which also feed into the regular evaluations conducted by the Leibniz Association. The Leibniz Association supports the institutes in this process.

Ways of providing scientific advice to policymakers and society

12. Good advice for policymakers and society takes account of political and societal positions. It is dialogue-based, interactive, and open to societal positions, and recognises the advisory role of science as well as the limits of its advice.
13. We are aware that communicating our research findings via the media is one way in which we provide advice to policymakers and society, whereby each medium has its own specific communication requirements. We aim to always make our statements as clear, understandable and comprehensible as possible, without oversimplifying. In particular, communication via social media places special demands with regard to the language, clarity and balance of our statements.

14. The advisory services offered by our institutes are open to all stakeholders in the free democratic spectrum. The directors of our institutes are called upon to create suitable structures to advise the institute and individual researchers in the event of ethically questionable inquiries, and to protect against allegations and instrumentalization. In this context, the institutes also have access to advice at the level of the Association.
15. Where conflicting scientific results and analyses exist, we create transparency in our advice around scientific consensus and scientific dissent. Where scientifically appropriate and necessary for the advice being provided, we strive to achieve a synthesis.
16. We are aware that even in advisory situations there may be (public) dissent between individual scientists. In such cases, we particularly regard collegial respect and objective arguments to be key to promoting trust in science and scientific advice.
17. As a basic principle, we are committed to using open access routes to publish studies, reports, and advisory papers. The timing of the publication may vary, depending on the consultative context. However, we may also be constrained by the confidentiality of some consultative situations and committed to respecting these.
18. We consider advising policymakers and society based on our research as one of our core tasks and therefore implement specific training programs at our institutions that convey the possibilities and limits of scientific consulting.