

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OF THE ZBW

Key issues paper 2020–2025

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Preamble

As a user-oriented information infrastructure institution, the ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics is committed to the paradigm of Open Science. The ZBW studies the effects of the digitisation of the science system on research and publishing processes in economics and related disciplines. The ZBW aims to transfer its research-based knowledge to the non-academic world.

The ZBW is also a key actor for the knowledge transfer from economic research into the academic and non-academic world.

In addition, the ZBW wants to pick up on questions and information needs of society and integrate them into its research projects and research-based service innovations. Thus, the ZBW actively promotes knowledge transfer.

Definition of knowledge transfer

In principle, knowledge transfer is characterised by content being exchanged through a format, resp. a channel. The dialogue between sender and receiver allows content to be transferred in fact. The more intensively the dialogue is conducted, the higher is the quality of the knowledge transfer. The roles of sender and receiver are not static but can change in the course of the dialogue.

The Leibniz Association¹ defines knowledge transfer as the exchange of knowledge between a Leibniz institution and the non-academic world.

Against this background, the ZBW defines knowledge transfer as an exchange of knowledge between the ZBW and business, society and politics.

What kind of knowledge is the focal point of knowledge transfer?

→ Knowledge transfer includes first and foremost the findings of economic research in Germany. In this context, the ZBW acts primarily as a hinge which ensures the transfer of research findings from economics to politics.

¹ Leibniz-Gemeinschaft (2019). Leitbild Leibniz-Transfer (in German)
<https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/ueber-uns/neues/mediathek/publikationen/leitbild-leibniz-transfer.html>

- Knowledge transfer also includes the ZBW's own, research-based knowledge. At the centre are findings from the areas of Open Science, Open Science infrastructures and possible Open Science applications.
- Finally, the ZBW also uses knowledge transfer to pass on its experience and knowledge in librarianship regarding information provision and evaluation to its different target groups.

Objectives of knowledge transfer

The Leibniz Association pursues science for the weal and benefit of society in accordance with the ideal of “*theoria cum praxi*”. Therefore it is a vital concern for the ZBW as a Leibniz institution to take the knowledge it has gained to the non-academic world and thus to increase society's ability to reflect and innovate. The transfer activities advance the application of the knowledge gained at the ZBW in other areas of society.

Knowledge transfer also serves to ensure the quality of research processes by critical scrutiny of gained knowledge and by reflection in dialogue with the various target groups. In line with good scientific practice, the ZBW advocates transparency in its research and work results. The ZBW thus pursues the strategy of open access as it is described in its key issues paper “Openness as area of action for the ZBW” (Open Access, Open Data, Open Educational Resources, Open Tools etc.).

Finally, the ZBW picks up on information needs and questions through its knowledge transfer with the non-academic world and can thus integrate them into its research projects and the innovation projects for further development of its services. The knowledge transfer is thus designed to be bi-directional.

Target groups of knowledge transfer

In principle, the ZBW is open towards all interested groups for transfer of- fers. However, the ZBW focuses particularly on the groups of politics, media professionals, media business and the interested public.

- The target group **politics** includes political decision makers and other political actors whom the ZBW informs and advises about its research topics and library expertise, but also on developments in economic policy. These transfer activities include the advisory activities in science and economic policy at state and federal level, as well as committee work at national, European and international level. The ZBW provides support for political discussions and ensures that scientific findings can enter into the shaping of science and economic policy, e.g. the development of funding programmes.
- **Media professionals**, especially from the fields of science and business journalism, constitute an important target group in the context of knowledge transfer. Finding and evaluating information is a key expertise of the ZBW that can be passed on in dialogue with media professionals as well as enriched by their knowledge.
- **Media business** is another important addressee of the ZBW. Media business includes, among others, publishers and providers of research and publishing services. Knowledge transfer in this area focuses on publication markets, scholarly publishing behaviour and licence management and administration. Recent research findings can be transferred, important questions can be picked up and integrated into new research projects through dialogue with media business.
- Finally, the **interested public** is an important target group in the context of knowledge transfer. This includes people interested in dialogue on topics such as open data, free educational resources or information search and evaluation. The dialogue with society aims to strengthen the trust in science and to develop an understanding of scientific contents and methods. It also offers opportunities to pick up on the information needs of society.

Actions of knowledge transfer

The ZBW aims to pass on its knowledge and to promote digital and analogue transfer formats that serve exchange and networking. Knowledge transfer includes all activities that impart knowledge, technologies, skills and the understanding of science cultures to all target groups, and also foster dialogue with these groups. All actions of knowledge transfer are specifically customised to the different needs of the respective target group.

The ZBW already communicates through internal and external formats and communication channels and continuously develops new and in particular digital formats to improve the exchange of various contents with its target groups.

Among these are:

- publications / journals “Wirtschaftsdienst” and “Intereconomics”
- videos / tutorials
- podcasts
- infographics
- lectures
- events
- workshops / seminars
- competitions
- conversations in social media
- advisory work
- committee work

Formats with a high degree of interactivity – such as events or conversations in social media – allow the ZBW to pick up on questions and information needs of the target groups.

Successful knowledge transfer depends on the skills and the motivation of employees. Therefore custom-fit trainings and upskillings are offered for employees engaged in knowledge transfer. Participation of these employees in corresponding forums or trainings of the Leibniz Association is also intended.

The following skills are required in employees for the task of transfer:

- comprehensible editing of scientific contents
- written, oral or visual presentation of contents
- creativity to gain attention for certain contents
- analytic skills regarding the needs of target groups
- ability to empathise with the life and work situations of other age groups and professions

The appreciation of transfer services drives the systematic anchoring of a knowledge transfer culture at the respective levels of the ZBW.

The ZBW appoints a knowledge transfer officer who continuously monitors and develops knowledge transfer actions.

Evaluation and further development of knowledge transfer

The ZBW aims to break new ground in knowledge transfer so that knowledge gained can be exchanged with all interested target groups in the best possible way. With regard to evaluation and further development of transfer offers, a distinction must be made between knowledge transfer that occurred and that which succeeded. Knowledge transfer has occurred if content was transmitted from the sender to the receiver through a channel. Knowledge transfer has succeeded if the receiver has adopted the transmitted knowledge and integrated it into his/her actions and possibly even refined it. The ZBW always strives for a successful knowledge transfer.

The fundamental objective is to document and evaluate successful knowledge transfer in the long term as best as possible. So far, the Leibniz Association has not established uniform indicators for the evaluation of transfer actions. Therefore, as a first step, transfer actions and processes will be documented at the ZBW through verbal accounts and descriptions. This procedure represents a qualitative evaluation of transfer offers. In a second step, quantitative indicators will be developed in the long term and used for the evaluation of transfer actions regarding their visibility, efficacy and sustainability.

In the future, the ZBW will also engage to discover and promote new transfer potentials. Here the expansion of digital transfer offers can increase the scope of knowledge transfer. Other target groups can be reached and alerted to the ZBW's transfer offers by providing content in easy language.

Range of offers: knowledge transfer activities of the ZBW

The ZBW's activities in the context of knowledge transfer presently cover a wide range of offers.

The journals *Wirtschaftsdienst* and *Intereconomics* – rich in tradition, independent and unique – provide transfer from economics to politics and society. Economists use these Open Access platforms to discuss current topics in economic policy. The editors of both journals have a significant share in the customising of content for specific addressees. In addition, the ZBW offers access to comprehensive economic information for all interested persons from the academic and non-academic world with its portal EconBiz (<https://www.econbiz.de>).

For students of the final three years at high schools, who represent an important part of the interested public, an annual specific transfer format is provided. The nationwide competition of the YES! project introduces economic topics and teaches research, information and presentation skills. In this project, the ZBW combines its own research on Open Science with the skills of economic researchers and imparts them to students. Knowledge transfer takes place between science and school.

The Marketing & Public Relations division has created communication structures specifically for transferring research findings into the non-academic world. Among these are ZBW videos on YouTube, ZBW annual reports and newsletters as well as online formats such as blog, podcast and Twitter.

The Open Science Transfer department focuses on fostering Open Science culture and the corresponding working method in different target groups. The annual Open Science Conference and the associated Barcamp Open Science play an essential role here. They serve to exchange and transfer the Open Science idea between science, politics and media business. The ZBW leads the organisation and hosting of these events.

Finally, the exchange with the interested public is promoted by events such as the “Night of Science” or “Digital Week”. Here the focus is on the exchange of the ZBW's research-based knowledge and its library expertise regarding information provision and evaluation. In the context of *Leibniz at Bundestag* ZBW employees can enter into direct dialogue with Bundestag deputies – and thus influential representatives of politics.

Further development

This key issues paper will be continually developed. The ZBW and its Advisory Council will regularly reflect on the paper and adjust it according to recommendations.