

15 March 2023**Promoting the transformation towards a culture of sustainability in science and society: HRK supports Transformation Pathways for Sustainable Universities**

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) will support a total of ten university alliances over the next three years in the joint project 'Transformation Pathways for Sustainable Universities' (traNHSform). This work is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), to accelerate the transformation in science and society towards a culture of sustainability.

The HRK will coordinate the project, and together with its implementation partners, the German Society for Sustainability at Universities (DG HochN) and the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research (ISI) in Karlsruhe, it will facilitate discussion formats on university sustainability commitment until the end of March 2026 and highlight good practices in the transformation of universities towards sustainability and climate protection, making them accessible to the university and research system as well as other social actors.

The President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof Dr Peter-André Alt, commented today in Berlin: "With their unique range of services in study and teaching, research and transfer, universities are the vital laboratories of the future for a comprehensively understood social transformation in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As well as expanding, conveying and contributing to the development of transformative knowledge and competences, they also actively apply them and, as organisations, function as living labs to implement the transformation towards a culture of sustainability. The experience and good practices gained in the process, as well as the conflicting goals and external limitations that become apparent, can provide helpful orientation for all sectors of society. I am very pleased that, thanks to the funding from the BMBF, the HRK will be able to intensively support and advance this learning and development process for society as a whole over the next few years with traNHSform."

The project will offer various discussion formats and analyze the experiences of the participating university alliances. Furthermore, it includes the design and pilot implementation of a 'Sustainability at Universities' audit. Following the example of the HRK's proven 'Internationalisation of Universities' audit, the new sustainability audit is intended to develop an offer that focuses on transformative processes for establishing a culture of sustainability at the participating institutions across all areas of activity.

"German universities have already come a long way on their respective paths to comprehensive sustainability. The audit, like the traNHSform project as a whole, will provide them with extraordinary support in their continued efforts and have a stabilising and accelerating influence on the transformation process at our universities," says Alt.

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Background to the traNHSform project

The BMBF-funded Sustainability in Science Initiative is part of the BMBF's Social-Ecological Research and contributes to the implementation of the BMBF strategy 'Research for Sustainability' (FONA). With the funding line Transformation Pathways for Sustainable Universities, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is continuing the Sustainability in Science Initiative. The aim is to anchor sustainability at universities as broadly, holistically and effectively as possible through transdisciplinary and transformative research, development and best practice projects. This includes sustainability in the environmental, social and economic sense. A total of ten research projects or alliances with more than 30 different universities are involved. Within the framework of an accompanying measure the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) together with DG HochN and the Fraunhofer ISI in Karlsruhe will bring together the alliances, create synergies and develop a university-specific sustainability audit.