

28 June 2016**HRK President on the recommendation of the Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures:
an important reference point for developing research data management**

Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), has described yesterday's publication by the Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures (RfII) as a very helpful and well-informed statement on the current state of research data management in Germany. He added that the paper entitled "Performance through Diversity – Recommendations on Structures, Processes and Financing for Research Data Management in Germany" (momentarily available in German only) also provides an important reference point by setting out recommendations for the future development of the system as a whole.

Professor Hippler went on to say: "Many stakeholders in the German research system – from individual researchers and universities and research institutes right through to larger networks – are already involved in research data management. Others are still holding back, as they are unable to gauge how to position themselves in an integrated national system, the contours of which are only just beginning to emerge. The RfII recommendation is extremely helpful in this situation."

In particular, the HRK President welcomed the suggestion by the Council that a "National Research Data Infrastructure" (NFDI) be set up as a network with overarching centres: "In Germany, we need a group like the NFDI, which will make it possible to progressively link existing initiatives. Viable and sustainable structures can only evolve if institutions are given particular responsibilities in the overall system."

"The universities play an important role here," Hippler continued. "This is where the greatest volume of research data is produced, given that most researchers in Germany work at universities. The libraries and computer centres in universities contribute outstanding expertise when it comes to research data – from its description, processing and storage right through to its long-term archiving. It is these strengths in particular that need to be incorporated into the NFDI. The HRK has previously described universities' preferred manner of involvement in research data management in two recommendations (in 2014 and 2015). Another critical success factor for the NFDI will be collaboration between universities and non-university research institutions."

The HRK President praised the RfII's commitment to continuing decentralised development and appealed to those responsible for funding in federal and state governments: "It is right to focus on developing existing initiatives that had their origins in research. However, these initiatives also need judicious encouragement, in consultation with stakeholders, to coordinate their work. The RfII, which also includes representatives of government, is the right body to monitor

developments and inspire change. Federal and state governments have a special responsibility when it comes to the necessary financing. In order to design information infrastructure for the long term, it makes sense to obtain ongoing funding under Article 91b of the Basic Law rather than funding through special programmes. This would be an ideal sphere in which to explore new collaboration opportunities with federal and state governments pursuant to Article 91b.”

Go to the recommendation of the Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures

(momentarily available in German only)