

**13 March 2019****Making use of national research data infrastructure as an opportunity for universities**

"The national research data infrastructure (NFDI) offers great potential for science at German universities. However, both the universities themselves and the states must take the lead to specifically support academic involvement," President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) Professor Dr Peter-André Alt said today in Berlin. His remarks were made in reference to a lecture delivered by the Chair of the Council for Information Infrastructure (Rfll), Professor Dr Petra Gehring yesterday before the HRK Senate.

"Management of research data is not only a matter of appropriate infrastructure entities, but also an integral part of research," Alt said. "The universities should encourage the various expert communities to become involved in the NFDI." He added that experts from the various disciplines should formulate their requirements for research data management to allow appropriate solutions to be developed.

The universities are perfectly placed to advance this process, he said. "Universities are the location of lively dialogue between disciplines. This makes them ideal cooperation zones for expert communities," the HRK President emphasised. "Science and the universities have the task of expediting networking with respect to exchanging expertise and infrastructure models. However, the states definitely need to support such forms of cooperation and strengthen universities in such a way that they can take part in the NFDI."

"The national research data infrastructure will only become a model for success if expert communities, infrastructure entities, university leaders and states work together to make this happen," Alt said. "This also involves a considerable increase in funding for the digitalisation of universities. The NFDI primarily supports researchers and cooperation between them. However, beyond that we need considerable public investment in the digital resourcing of the universities. We do not yet have a 'Digital Universities Pact'."

The Federal and State Governments agreed on the creation and funding of a research data infrastructure entity in November last year. The NFDI is intended to tap into the data inventories of science and research, secure them, make them accessible and network them both nationally and internationally. It is conceived as a structure of consortia, which will be constituted from the ranks of science. Up to 30 consortia are to be selected in three calls for proposals. A total of up to 90 million euros will be available annually from 2019 to 2028. The Federal Government will provide 90 per cent of the funding, and the states will cover the remaining ten per cent.