

# HR Policy

## of the Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB)

04 December 2020

### Preamble

IGB is an independent and interdisciplinary research institute dedicated to the generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge about freshwater ecosystems and inland fisheries. IGB's mission is to advance the understanding of the structure and functioning of inland waters as a basis for the sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems.

Scientific excellence is our primary aim. This can only be achieved by providing an inspiring, diverse place to work that attracts excellent staff and promotes targeted career paths for everyone. With our HR policy we therefore strive to provide the optimal working conditions for our excellent scientists and non-scientific staff at any career level. We explicitly welcome the increasing proportion of international colleagues and we work hard to overcome language barriers. We allow our employees maximum individual freedom, enabling them to develop and use their creativity to the best of their abilities. At the same time, we offer solid structures and an efficient administration that supports our scientific work. In addition to thinking and working across disciplines, we are appreciative of researchers who add to our experience with new methods and research approaches. We intend to support career paths in academic and non-academic environments. At IGB we want to enable and promote research that goes beyond existing paths.

## 1. Institutional practise at IGB (summary)

### Ethics

#### Good scientific practise and the ombuds system

Research ethics are essential to guarantee the integrity and impact of scientifically derived knowledge within the scientific community and society at large. We therefore aim at ensuring good scientific practise by strongly adhering to its principles.

#### Open science

Impact can only be generated by making the results of scientific research (including publications and data) accessible to all levels of the scientific community and society at large. Our aim is therefore to provide support for open, online, and barrier-free access to and exchange of research results.

#### Equal opportunities and diversity

At IGB we thrive to reach an equal representation of all genders at all career levels through creating a working environment that offers equal working and career conditions to all. We further actively promote tolerance and respect for all and encourage underrepresented groups to join IGB.

#### Sustainability

Sustainability is a broad term that in the first place refers to the foresighted operation of society in such a way that this operation can be sustained in the long-term. In practice that translates into an operation that takes into account environmental impact, and ensures that resource use and environmental impact do not surpass resource regeneration and environmental recovery. As an environmental research institute, sustainability is high on our agenda. It is our aim to implement sustainable operation in every aspect of our work as well as to communicate about scientific insights that can help to achieve sustainability goals.

### Recruitment and working conditions

#### Recruitment, permanency and work-life-balance

Qualified personnel are the key factor for the success of an institute. Our aim is therefore to recruit skilled researchers and support staff in a highly competitive labour market as the basis for an optimal personnel structure to tap the full potential in research activities and training of the next generation of freshwater scientists.

#### Internationalization

We welcome international scientists at IGB. We therefore aim at providing the best possible working conditions, taking into account the needs of our international employees and guests.

#### Participation

Participation of IGB's employees ensures the joint development of the institute through transparent and inclusive decision-making processes. Therefore, we aim at facilitating employee involvement in the development and decisions of the institute, through various boards, committees in which different categories of employees are represented through elections or for which staff members can volunteer to be active.

### **Career development and training**

Lifelong learning is a central concept to maintain enthusiasm and success in research and work. Therefore, we aim at offering opportunities to all our employees for continuing education and offer regular training to researchers at all career levels. In the annual appraisal interview, individual career goals and measures for their achievement are discussed with the supervisor. All researchers are encouraged to apply for person- or project-related prizes and awards.

## 2. Background information

### 2.1 Scientific landscape

In Germany, most of the publicly funded non-university research institutes are organized in one of the four major research organizations, the Leibniz Association (Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, WGL), the Helmholtz Association (Helmholtz-Gemeinschaft Deutscher Forschungszentren, HGF), the Max Planck Society (Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften e. V., MPG) and the Fraunhofer Society (Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung e.V., FhG). These research organizations are characterized by different governance and funding structures as well as differences in focus, e.g. infrastructure-intensive, basic or application-oriented research. The WGL connects independent research institutions that range in focus from natural, engineering and environmental sciences to economics, spatial and social sciences and the humanities. Leibniz Institutes address issues of social, economic and ecological relevance, combining fundamental and applied research.

The German Research Foundation (DFG) is the self-governing funding organisation for science and research in Germany. It serves all branches of science and the humanities. In organisational terms, the DFG is an association under private law. Its membership consists of German research universities, non-university research institutions, scientific associations and the Academies of Science and the Humanities. The DFG receives the large majority of its funds from the federal government and the states, which are represented in all grant conceptualisation committees. At the same time, the voting system and procedural regulations guarantee science-driven decisions. The main task of the DFG is to select the best projects by researchers at universities and research institutions on a competitive basis and to finance these projects submitted by individuals or higher education institutions. The DFG also counsels and participates in political decision-making processes with scientific expertise and makes recommendations concerning fundamental issues in science and concerning the responsible application of scientific findings in society.

The Joint Science Conference (Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz, GWK) was established by the Federal Government and the Heads of Government of the States in 2007 (based on Article 91b Basic Law) and started operation on 1. January 2008. Members are the ministers and senators of the Federal Government and the States responsible for science and research as well as for finance. The GWK deals with all questions of research funding, science and research policy strategies, and the science system.

### 2.2 Legal framework

General working conditions are regulated by German law, compliant with European and international law if applicable. The most important German legal framework for the HR policy regarding equality and antidiscrimination comprises the Basic Law (Art. 33 GG: equality of all people before the law, equality of men and women, anti-discrimination principle), the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG: implementation of the European anti-discrimination guidelines), the Federal Equality Act (BGleiG) and the Agreement on the Equal Treatment of Women and Men in Joint Research Funding (AV-Glei). The General Data Protection Regulation (DSGVO) ensures the safe processing of personal data of individuals. The Fixed-term Employment in Science Act (WissZeitVG: Wissenschaftszeitvertrags-gesetz) regulates the options for temporary employment of scientific personnel. The Labour Agreement of the Public Service (TVöD: Tarifvertrag für den öffentlichen Dienst) provides the framework for general work conditions, work time and holidays, and payment of all employees in federal institutions and institutes that are (largely) financed by a Federal Ministry. Foreign degrees are recognized as

equivalent to the corresponding German degree based on the decision of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK).

Institutional practises at IGB are based on these legal requirements and higher level-regulations by the GWK, the DFG, the WGL and the FVB (e.g. good scientific practise, equal opportunities, see links below), and guided by our own understanding of working together. The guidelines and regulations in place at IGB (see corresponding sections below) concern formal works council agreements (flexitime, work from home, performance-based payment, temporary employment of trainees), guidelines (recruitment, tenure track, doctoral research) and policies (environmental field data and open access). Compliance to these agreements, guidelines and policies (e.g., development of the gender ratio, use of the equal opportunity funds, open access publications) is reported to IGB's senior management board, the scientific advisory board and the supervisory board. Complaints against violation of the institutional practices can be brought up to the works council, the equal opportunity officer, the ombudsperson, the disability representative or higher-order complaint points, e.g. the AGG (general anti-discrimination) complaint person at the FVB.

#### **Links to DFG regulations and guidelines**

- [Promoting Equal Opportunity](#)
- [Good Research Practice](#)

#### **Links to WGL regulations and guidelines**

- [Guiding principles for our Actions](#)
- [Standards of good scientific practise](#)
- [Equal opportunity and gender equality](#)
- [Sustainability mission statement](#)
- [Open Access](#)

### **2.3 Funding and governance**

The institute was founded in 1992 following a recommendation by the German Council of Science and Humanities to merge three institutes of the former GDR. Two of them were affiliated with the Eastern German Academy of Sciences, the third with the Ministry of Agriculture. After being successfully evaluated in 1997, IGB became a member of the Leibniz Association in 2000 and was again positively evaluated in 2005, 2011 and 2018.

IGB's legal status is that of a registered association (e.V.). Together with six other Leibniz institutes in Berlin, IGB constitutes the Berlin Research Association (Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V., FVB), which acts as the legal entity of its members and provides administrative services to them. IGB is jointly directed by a scientific director and the managing director of the FVB. As a research institute of national importance, IGB is privileged to receive base funding from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the federal states (represented by The Governing Mayor of Berlin - Senate Chancellery). Both contribute half of the budget in accordance with Article 91b of the German Constitution. In addition, IGB acquires competitive grants from external sources, which should and in recent years have accounted for one third of IGB's total budget.

The FVB's and hence IGB's supervisory committee is the Board of Trustees. It comprises representatives of the Berlin Senate Chancellery and the BMBF as the funding organisations, along with an academic representative jointly appointed by the three main universities in Berlin, external academic members, representatives of industry and other stakeholders. The Scientific Advisory Board of IGB, comprised of 6-12 highly recognized national and international scientists in all of IGB's research fields,

provides regular advice to the director and Board of Trustees, evaluates the institute's performance, and oversees its scientific progress and strategic development. Within IGB, the director, the vice director and the head of administration consider all matters of importance to IGB and its employees. Strategic decisions are discussed with the Heads of Departments and broader panels of representatives where appropriate. All important decisions are discussed with the IGB Council (LGI) before the decision becomes formal. The latter consists of all heads of department, the speakers of the cross-cutting research domains, the equal opportunities officer, and representatives of the different staff categories (doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, technicians) as well as further members from the departments and central units (e.g., Public Relations). The heads of department are responsible for all scientific aspects in their department and those relating to working conditions and general organization. Research group leaders assume this responsibility for their own groups. Certain topics of central importance, e.g. career development, equal opportunities, communication and transfer, are handled by specialized personnel associated with the directorate. Most senior and some early career scientists are members of one or more representations, committees or elected bodies that contribute to certain aspects of IGB governance, ensuring participatory approaches.

## 2.4 The HRS4R-logo

In 2015, IGB was awarded the HR Excellence in Research logo by the European Commission in recognition of its exemplary staff policy and consistent optimisation of working conditions. The Human Resources Strategy Committee at IGB systematically analyses all working processes at IGB and plans improvements for all IGB members. These are recorded in the Action Plan, implementation of which is evaluated annually. Furthermore, we follow the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. In 2017 IGB passed the first evaluation based on the implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> action plan (2014-2017) and the measures defined in the 2<sup>nd</sup> action plan (2017-2020). Actions are continued from previous action plans, but new focus areas are developed as well, reflecting the dynamic governance and working environment at IGB. We include scientists from all career levels as well as all concerned people in the development and the implementation of the actions.

The 1<sup>st</sup> action plan included:

- internationalisation: translating all necessary documents, ensuring information flow
- recruitment and tenure track: clear procedures and criteria,
- doctoral students: doctoral supervision and duration of thesis,
- postdocs: initiate interactions (postdoc society) and develop training programme,
- ethical guidance: rules for authorship and plagiarism added to rules of good scientific practice.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> action plan focussed on:

- measures for a family friendly workplace,
- measures for the training of technicians,
- measures for data bank development,
- open data/open science strategies.

Link to IGB HRS4R action plans on homepage (as downloads): <https://www.igb-berlin.de/en/human-resource-development-hrs>

## 3. Implementation

### 3.1 Ethics

#### 3.1.2 Good scientific practise and the ombuds system

*Research ethics are essential to guarantee the integrity and impact of scientifically derived knowledge within the scientific community and society at large. We therefore aim at ensuring good scientific practise by strongly adhering to its principles.*

The scientific employees of the IGB elect an ombudsperson and a substitute. All IGB members can approach them with questions regarding good scientific practice. The names of the two ombudspersons are published on the IGB webpage and other internal documents. Due to the high importance of this function for the assurance of scientific quality and research ethics, the responsible persons keep their independence by being suspended from their information obligation and their dependency on directives. The ombudspersons' task is to receive possible accusations of scientific misconduct in confidence, to mediate between involved persons and to inform the responsible person in case of proven misconduct. Responsible persons are scientific superiors, the director, or, in case of a project funded by DFG, the DFG ombudsperson (as there is a penalty catalogue). Persons reporting justified suspicions of scientific misconduct must not have disadvantages for their own scientific and professional career. However, careless reporting or evoking of wrong accusations of scientific misconduct can constitute scientific misconduct itself. The ombudsperson decides individually if she/he investigates anonymous charges. In cases of conflicts and infringements against good scientific practice, the ombudsperson suggests solutions, after consulting with all persons involved. If the case cannot be resolved by mediation between the involved persons, the director is contacted and can decide whether an external ombudsperson (e.g. at the WGL) should be consulted depending on the severity of the conflict or the infringement. Proven infringements on good scientific practice may result in disciplinary actions and other penalties.

#### 3.1.2 Open Science

*Impact can only be generated by making the results of scientific research (including publications and data) accessible to all levels of the scientific community and society at large. Our aim is therefore to provide support for open, online, and barrier-free access to and exchange of research results.*

GeoNode and FRED are IGB's online data repositories. Both platforms are linked to each other and each has unique strengths when it comes to share or visualize data. [GeoNode](#) is tailored towards geo-spatial, or spatio-temporal data. Beside data archiving and sharing, GeoNode can be used as a basic Geographic Information System (GIS) for creating online interactive maps that can simply be shared with a weblink, inserted in a publication, or even embedded in (project) websites. [FRED](#) – the Freshwater Research and Environmental Database – has the advantage of archiving a variety of data types in so-called "packages". It allows, amongst others, to describe data with a wide variety of metadata, including tagging it with semantic annotations, and to pool data with other datasets in a unifying data structure. The GeoNode and FRED platforms are connected to enable synergies from both platforms when it comes to data sharing, including setting permissions, as well as contact and license information for data.

Open access is a key element in order to accelerate the academic innovation process and to improve the visibility of research results. IGB has an [Open Access Policy](#) since 2019, requiring its academic staff to make their results available open access. If an immediate publication in open access (Gold Open

Access) is not possible, corresponding authors from IGB are obligated to make the text available by self-archiving a copy of it (Green Open Access). These publications can be found via [LeibnizOpen](#). To increase the percentage of publications appearing immediately in open access, IGB participates in various transformation agreements, including the German DEAL agreements. Additionally, IGB Library offers comprehensive open access publication consulting to the academic staff.

The strategic opening of science can improve the quality and quantity of knowledge exchange between science and society, and strengthens the societal role of IGB. Therefore, as a result of the Science Society Interface initiative that was launched in 2015, IGB provides a strong stakeholder network and a range of established stakeholder formats that scientists can benefit from. Since researchers are the most important players when it comes to open knowledge exchange, personal consultations, and identification and arrangement of relevant stakeholder contacts are offered. Individual engagement of IGB scientists is facilitated for example through training within the in-house “Uncharted Waters” workshop series.

### 3.1.3 Sustainability

*Sustainability is a broad term that in the first place refers can also be applied to the foresighted operation of society in such a way that this operation can be sustained in the long-term. In practice that translates into an operation that takes into account environmental impact, and ensures that resource use and environmental impact do not surpass resource regeneration and environmental recovery. As an environmental research institute, sustainability is high on our agenda. It is our aim is to implement practise sustainable operation in every aspect of our work as well as to communicate about scientific insights that can help to achieve sustainability goals.*

The guideline for the sustainable operation of non-university research organizations (“Leitfaden Nachhaltigkeit”) provides a basis for the assessment and implementation of measures to ensure sustainable governance, research, buildings and infrastructure, and support processes. It has been developed by representatives of German non-university research organizations (WGL, HGF, FgH), funded by the BMBF. As of November 2019 is has been adopted by the WGL, with the ‘sustainability mission statement’ providing a framework for a culture of sustainability in the WGL and its member institutions – a culture that must be established and continuously built on (see link above). The mission statement is also intended to encourage the employees of the WGL institutions to reflect on their actions and to contribute to sustainable development. IGB is currently developing guidelines to increase the sustainability of business trips, procurement and event organization. A grassroots sustainability initiative makes suggestions to the management and employees how to make our work at IGB more sustainable.

#### **Links (IGB regulations, guidelines, policies and programmes)**

- [Good Scientific practise](#)
- [Data Policy](#)
- [FRED](#)
- [Open Access Policy](#)

## 3.2. Recruitment and working conditions

### 3.2.1 Recruitment, permanency and work-life-balance

*Qualified personnel are the key factor for the success of an institute. Our aim is therefore to recruit skilled researchers and support staff in a highly competitive labour market as the basis for an optimal*



*personnel structure to tap the full potential in research activities and training of the next generation of freshwater scientists.*

### *Recruitment*

IGB has set up recruitment guidelines that are based on the Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment practices of Researchers (OTM-R) developed by the Steering Group of Human Resources Management of the European Research Area, and thereby exceeds the legal requirements. The IGB guidelines apply to the recruitment of scientific, technical and administrative staff. They describe procedures for appointing selection committees, public advertisement of open positions, electronic submission of documents, adequate information of applicants, balanced assessment of merits and future potential, and dealing with complaints. The guidelines are available on the IGB webpage to ensure easy access and maximum transparency. In short, all job openings at IGB are publicly announced on the IGB webpage and on the webpage of the Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V. (FVB), and mostly in multiple other places such as euraxess. Selection of candidates is determined by a committee composed of scientists who understand the needs of the position, members of the Works Council, the Equal Opportunity Officer and, if applicable, the disabled persons' representative. Vacancy announcements contain all information on the desired qualifications of the successful applicant as well as a concise description of tasks. Tenure at institutionally funded group leader positions follows a standardised and transparent procedure.

The on-boarding process is aided by an electronically available welcome flyer which contains information on the scientific and administrative structure, contact persons and corresponding links, boards, committees and representatives.

### *Tenure track*

In Germany, early career researchers in the natural sciences are mainly financed through third party-funded projects and expected to demonstrate mobility. Therefore, long-term employment options usually only exist after the qualification phase. In a dedicated effort to provide reliable job perspectives to excellent early career scientists after their qualification and initial postdoctoral career stage, IGB offers permanent group leader positions to excellent postdoctoral scientists, following a tenure track-model with clearly defined, standardised and transparent procedures. Tenure decisions were initially based on a set of general evaluation criteria: scientific performance, scientific profile and strategic focus, people skills, and commitment. Since 2016, these general criteria have been complemented by an individually tailored concise target agreement developed by the scientist on tenure track and a tenure committee. In 2020 the guidelines have been revised. The tenure committee now consists of head of department, the IGB director, a mentor chosen by the candidate and another senior scientist. The criteria and the evaluation process have been updated to ensure a balanced assessment of the scientific output and achievements, the personality development, reflecting leadership and development as a mentor, and the strategic development of the research group. Criteria can be individualized (e.g. based on the type of research or the amount of service delivered through key expertise) and can in some cases be adjusted based on developments during the tenure track period. Exceptional conditions can also be taken into consideration – the evaluation of such exceptional conditions is done by the committee.

### *Work-life-balance*

IGB recognizes that a balance between time allocated for work and other aspects of life is essential for the well-being of all employees. This is addressed during the formal individual annual appraisal

interviews that are carried out annually. In addition, a systematic approach is being developed by IGB's newly established health committee. IGB supports flexible working time arrangements. A flexitime regulation regulates core working hours, which are from 9:00 to 15:00 (Fridays to 14:00).

There are multiple measures to increase the compatibility of family and a research career. Core working hours and flexitime can be individually adapted to family care needs. There is also the option of working from home for limited durations. IGB laptops are provided for such periods. Central colloquia and events of the IGB are arranged in a family-friendly manner, i.e. outside holiday periods and within core working hours, if possible. Full and multi-day events are announced early enough to arrange care of family members. IGB promotes part-time employment for employees with family responsibilities and preserves their right to the same career opportunities as full-time employees by determining performance criteria in proportion to work. Both male and female employees at IGB make use of the possibility of taking parental leave. Several IT measures have been implemented to allow for flexible working times and places. They include e-mail access via a web interface, a system for cloud storage and collaboration, an in-house hosted system for individual and group chats as well as video and audio conferencing. Full remote access to the IGB network is possible on IGB notebooks via VPN. All information and links are provided in the intranet. IGB also enables employees to bring their children to the institute in case of care shortages. For this purpose, a parent-child room has been set up, which is equipped with sleeping and playing facilities for a child to be looked after.

#### **Links (IGB regulations, guidelines, policies and programmes)**

- [Recruitment guidelines](#)
- [Tenure track guidelines](#)
- Intranet: [Flexitime regulations](#)
- Intranet: [Working from home](#) (old version, new one (mobile work) in preparation)

#### **3.2.2 Equal opportunities for female employees**

*At IGB we thrive to reach gender equality at all career levels through creating a working environment that offers equal working and career conditions to all. Employees of all genders are equally welcome.*

In order to reach the legally defined achievement of gender equality in accordance with the Recommendations to Promote Gender Equality at WGL institutes, IGB implements the guidelines issued by the WGL Equal Opportunities Working Group, and the Agreement to Promote Equal Opportunities (AVGlei) between the FVB and the Federal State of Berlin. In 2011, the German Joint Science Conference (Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz, GWK) requested all governmental research institutions and universities to set flexible gender quotas to achieve gender equality at all career levels. The Leibniz Association (WGL) has since applied the 'cascade model,' which strives to recruit scientists at the gender ratio realised at the next lower career level. The target ratios are calculated for five-year intervals based on the number of anticipated vacancies at each level. IGB has been successful at meeting these objectives, achieving higher quotas than projected. The WGL also develops standards and guidelines to ensure equality with regard to equal treatment and career chances of all employees and offers funding and mentoring programmes for female scientists. Activities are coordinated in networks and working groups. The focus here lies on diversity in general, i.e. with respect to age, gender identity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic background and more. Furthermore, all WGL institutes have created a position for an equal opportunity representative.

IGB's equal opportunity representative dedicates a substantial part of her work to this task. This is enabled by contract extension in case of part-time contracts or by delegation of defined work tasks to another colleague. In 2020 the current equal opportunities plan was published.

### *Career advancement*

To increase the proportion of women in academic and leadership positions, we are increasing our efforts to find suitable female researchers for vacancies at IGB. We have drawn up Guidelines for Vacancy Notices and Personnel Selection for transparent, professional procedures. The Leibniz Mentoring Programme provides support to our highly qualified women postdoc researchers on the path to gaining leadership positions or professorships. This programme helps female researchers to shape their careers in a targeted manner, and to establish specialist networks and take on managerial tasks with self-confidence.

In collaboration with the other institutes within the FVB, advanced training courses are held regularly for female doctoral students. In addition, female scholars at the institute are actively promoted during and after the successful completion of the doctoral research through our equal opportunity fund, which receives up to 50.000 € annually from the institute's core funding. This funding scheme supports excellent female researchers to develop further skills or even their own research proposal immediately after the doctoral phase. It further finances measures to improve the compatibility of research careers and care obligations, e.g. the return of women in temporary employment relationships following parental leave. It also enables our young researchers to pursue guest stays and employ student assistants, as well as giving them the time to write project proposals. The measures of the equal opportunity fund have been repeatedly adjusted based on current needs of female early career researchers. An equal opportunity commission led by the equal opportunity representative handles the applications.

### **Links (IGB regulations, guidelines, policies and programmes)**

- [Equal opportunity plan](#)
- [Intranet information of equal opportunities officer](#)
- [Intranet information on career development](#)

### **3.2.3 Internationalization**

*International scientists are very welcome at IGB. We therefore aim at providing the best possible working conditions, taking into account the needs of our international employees and guests.*

To ease integration, we train our technicians and administrative personnel in English language courses tailored to their needs. All relevant documents and forms needed for work are available in German and English. All research colloquia and all courses of the IGB doctoral programme are offered in English. Colleagues among the respective working groups as well as our multilingual departmental secretaries provide assistance in the cultural and language-related problems of everyday life. Furthermore, we assist international employees in finding German classes that fit their needs and compensate part of the costs.

Welcome information tailored to needs of internationals is provided before start of the employment. They include an extensive link collection and more detailed information on finding accommodation, applying for visa and other documents, registering in Germany, setting up a bank account and organizing health and other insurances.

IGB competes successfully for qualified international candidates when filling doctoral or postdoctoral positions. The fraction of international doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows has steadily

increased over the last decade, now reaching more than 50%. We also invite excellent postdoctoral and senior scientists to apply for positions or a sabbatical at IGB, respectively. Positions enable post-doctoral scientists to further their scientific development, while sabbaticals create freedom for senior scientists to contemplate and pursue new inspiring research ideas in collaboration with scientific staff at IGB.

#### **Links (IGB regulations, guidelines, policies and programmes)**

- [‘Frontiers in Freshwater Science’ guest programme](#)

#### **3.2.4 Participation**

*Participation of IGB’s employees ensures the joint development of the institute through transparent and inclusive decision making processes. Therefore, we aim at a comprehensive structure of employee involvement in the development and decisions of the institute. Important decisions at the institute are taken by mixed committees on the basis of transparent rules.*

By being elected for one of our employee representations or by joining or starting bottom up initiatives, everyone can get involved in different processes. As members of one of the numerous committees and commissions, employees directly participate in decision-making. Permanent commissions are complemented by temporary commissions to achieve clearly defined goals in the short to medium term. Information about the equal opportunity representatives and the ombudsperson is given above, some other representations and committees/commissions are listed below; more information can be found on our intranet.

##### *Works council*

In Germany the works council (Betriebsrat, BR) is to co-determine and to stand in for the interests of employees. The works council acts based on the German Works Constitution Act (Betriebsverfassungsgesetzes, BetrVG) and participates in certain institutional decisions. It takes care that common law will be complied with in favour of the employees. The BR has extensive information rights and can agree on mandatory work regulations with the management board. The BR and the (vice) director meet each month for a statutory appointment. Every four years employees vote for a new BR; the number of members depends on the number of employees.

##### *Doctoral student representatives*

All doctoral students regularly elect representatives who link the doctoral students to the institute's directorate and other scientists. They are contact persons for all sorts of aspects that might arise during the doctoral research at IGB. They also initiate a vivid exchange between doctoral students, e.g. in pub gatherings, outings or the doctoral retreat.

##### *Postdoc Society*

The IGB postdoc society represents all Postdocs at IGB, i.e. early career scientists, scientists funded via project grants, and all other non-permanently employed scientists. The IGB postdoc society is represented by an elected committee of representatives and meets once a month. The aims and goals are (i) to increase the communication and scientific cooperation among Postdocs at IGB, (ii) to facilitate the communication of postdocs with the rest of IGB, (iii) to organise training events and workshops to facilitate career building, and (iv) to organise social activities and support of postdocs at IGB.

### *Technical-Administrative Representation (TAV)*

The TAV represents the technical and administrative staff (administration, IT, technical services). It acts as a communication partner and brings wishes, ideas, suggestions, demands, problems and conflicts to attention of the management. In turn, The TAV is approached by the management for contribution of their specific perspective.

### *Health working group*

The health working group deals with the implementation of operational health management at IGB. Amongst other things it organises health days and informs on sport activities. The survey for mental and psychological risk assessment has also been coordinated by this group.

### *Further committees and commissions at IGB*

- Work safety commission
- Construction commission
- Library commission
- Third party funding committee
- Equipment commission
- Equal opportunity commission
- IT commission

### *Bottom-up initiatives*

The 'diversity and inclusion group' at IGB was founded in autumn 2019, after a group of early career researchers joined the conference iScientist and got inspired to make IGB a more inclusive work space. It meets for lunch once a month, discusses issues and proposes solutions to diverse topics including culture and gender bias, mental health and working conditions.

Sustainability is of key importance to IGB. A group of IGB employees from various backgrounds aims to steer the work environment towards reduced environmental impact, and engages in an open dialogue with anyone interested. Measures to improve the sustainable work environment at IGB are discussed with the director and implemented if feasible.

The IGB's 'nature and species conservation initiative' strives to optimise the open spaces around the IGB buildings with regard to nature and species conservation.

### *Surveys*

Every three to four years, all IGB staff members are asked to fill in a questionnaire about their opinion on the working conditions and governance of IGB. The results are analysed and communicated at IGB- and department level. Based on legal requirement regarding mental health care obligations of the employer, an extensive health survey was carried out in 2019, followed by an in-depth analysis and workshops to define measures for implementation.

### **Links (IGB regulations, guidelines, policies and programmes)**

- Intranet: [Organisation](#) (representatives, commissions and initiatives)

### **3.2.5 Transparency and internal communication**

Information on general working conditions is published on the homepage; more detailed internal information on everyday work life is available on the intranet. Since 2020 IGB has a weekly newsletter to aid comprehensive internal communication. Additionally, information is circulated via e-mail and

during department and institute meetings (at least three times and once per year, respectively). Scientific exchange is realized through seminars at the work group-, department- and institute-level. IGB invites external researchers for weekly colloquia and also organises workshops and conferences, promoting networking among colleagues.

### 3.3 Career development and training

*Lifelong learning is a central concept to maintain fun and success in research and work. Therefore, we aim at offering opportunities to all our employees for continuous professional development and offer regular training to researchers at all career levels. In the annual appraisal interview, individual career goals and measures for their achievement are discussed with the supervisor. All researchers are encouraged to apply for person- or project-related prizes and awards.*

#### 3.3.1 Appraisal

In the annual appraisal interview, individual career goals and measures for their achievement are discussed with the supervisor. Extensive feedback talks between staff members and direct supervisors are obligatory and a central part of the systematic performance assessment and target agreement. Based on the performance assessment, a small performance-based bonus payment is allocated. Guidelines for these feedback talks are available on the intranet and all superiors have been carefully trained to conduct these tasks.

#### Links (IGB regulations, guidelines, policies and programmes)

- Intranet: [performance related payment and annual feedback meetings](#)

#### 3.3.2 Early Career Scientists

IGB highly appreciates its doctoral students and puts strong emphasis on career development of the junior scientists. Accordingly, besides individual guidance by the doctoral thesis advisors and a mentor, a course programme, the so called doctoral programme, has been established. Doctoral candidates are thus supported to develop into creative, competent and well-connected members of the scientific community. The doctoral programme and all other career building activities are developed and coordinated by a dedicated coordinator. Funds are available for doctoral as well as postdoctoral training and networking activities.

##### *Doctoral candidates*

Training of doctoral candidates is, in accordance with the necessities at this career level, the most structured educational programme at IGB. IGB has continued and further developed its successful doctoral programme since 2009. It aims to promote the development of students towards competent, imaginative and independently thinking researchers that generate and publish genuinely original results of high quality. The programme consists of courses, coaching and a structured supervision. The 8-10 courses offered each year teaching essential skills, especially a solid grasp of statistics but also soft skills tailored to the needs of the doctoral students. That way, doctoral candidates at IGB receive a sound core expertise in ethical principles of scientific conduct as well as in academic writing and presentation, regardless of their specialization. Most courses are taught by IGB staff, but external lecturers are occasionally solicited when particular topics cannot be covered in-house. All doctoral students at IGB are free to choose their courses based on their individual needs. This provides flexibility to account for the vast differences in prior education and different requirements by universities and graduate schools. All courses are systematically evaluated by the participants. Results of these surveys have confirmed the high quality and excellent reception of the entire programme by the doctoral

students. IGB's partner universities in Berlin and Potsdam accept the credit points given for these courses. Individual coaching on demand complements the courses. This is ensured by a dedicated career development coordinator employed permanently on a 60% position. She also coordinates the entire programme and teaches some of the courses. Annual retreats for doctoral students foster networking and peer-coaching across projects and departments. Our Rules for Doctoral Research at IGB, updated in June 2016, detail rights and obligations of doctoral candidates.

IGB aims at enhancing the proportion of highly qualified women in science. We have thus launched the 'Equal opportunity fund for young female scientists and families'. This programme supports excellent female scientists during and after their doctoral graduation by financing training and other career advancement activities and by facilitating an adequate research-family balance through re-entry grants and other support measures during and after parental leave.

### *Postdoctoral researchers*

In 2015 a systematic skill development programme for postdoctoral fellows has been initiated. As a first step, the IGB postdoctoral society was founded to promote exchange among postdoctoral fellows across departments and to give this group of scientists a voice at the institute. The first annual postdoctoral retreats have been well received. Moreover, exchange is encouraged with postdoctoral scientists at other institutes, especially as part of a recent postdoctoral networking initiative within the Leibniz Association (WGL) including an annual meeting attended by the speakers of the IGB postdoctoral society. Postdoctoral researchers determine their own training needs. The IGB Postdoc Society has collected a variety of topics and ideas. Planning and implementation are supported by the institute. In 2016, senior IGB scientists provided coaching and training on topics selected by the postdoctoral fellows in three different sessions. In 2017, three training events involving a professional coach and an external expert were dedicated to the topic of acquiring research grants. Postdoctoral fellows are also coached to participate in the doctoral training as lecturers to improve their teaching skills, in addition to being eligible to attend the doctoral programme as participants. In addition, IGB provides an annual budget for in-house trainings. This is planned and organized by the spokespersons of the IGB postdoc society and the career development coordinator. IGB postdoctoral researchers are given the opportunity to learn how to teach and develop their own courses as part of the doctoral program, advised by the coordinator upon request. Female postdoctoral scientists aiming at a career in research are supported in applying and participating in the Leibniz Mentoring Programme.

### **Links (IGB regulations, guidelines, policies and programmes)**

- [Rules for doctoral research](#)
- Leibniz association: [Leibniz Guidelines on Career Development](#)
- Leibniz association: [structuring the doctoral phase](#)
- [Intranet link past postdoc training](#)

### **3.3.3 Senior scientists**

Group leaders receive [annual training](#) on varying aspects of their leadership duties, realized through an internal programme or via the FVB. In order to expand their practical and theoretical scientific expertise, they may apply for a sabbatical, i.e. a stay at another university or institute for an extended period of time. All scientists at IGB are furthermore encouraged and supported to participate in external mentoring and coaching programmes. The annual appraisal interview includes a discussion of individual career aims and the planning of necessary steps to reach these. Retreats for senior scientist are organized to enable exchange about governance as well as scientific aspects of working at IGB.



### 3.3.4 Technical and administrative employees

We provide our technical and administrative employees with opportunities for individual training. Furthermore, they are expected to attend in-house English courses in order to be prepared for the institute's increasing internationalization. Technical staff receives training upon the introduction of new devices or methods as well as when taking on new tasks. A systematic training programme for technicians was discussed at the technicians' retreat 2019 and is currently being further developed by the technicians' representatives. Administrative staff is trained as needed when work tasks, rules, or processes change. The head of administration and the head of IT coordinate the training.