

Evaluation Within the DFG

ESF Member Forum on Research Evaluation

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Structure of the Presentation

- The DFG at a Glance
- The Need for Evaluation Within the DFG
- The DFG's Principles of Evaluation
- Organisational Integration at the DFG's Head Office
- Evaluative Studies



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The German Research Foundation (DFG) at a Glance



Who We Are

- The central public funding organisation for academic research in Germany

What We Do

- Promote academic excellence on a competitive basis
- Serve science and the humanities in all fields
- Advise parliaments and public authorities on research questions
- Support the advancement and education of young researchers
- Encourage international research cooperation

The German Research Foundation (DFG) at a Glance

Programme Portfolio (and percentage of budget in 2006):

- Individual Grants Programme 37.4%
- Coordinated Programmes 52.0%
- Promoting Young Researchers 5.1%
- Scientific Prizes 1.0%
- Encouraging Scientific Contacts (and other) 4.5%
- Funding Scientific Instrumentation and Infrastructure
own budget up until 2007

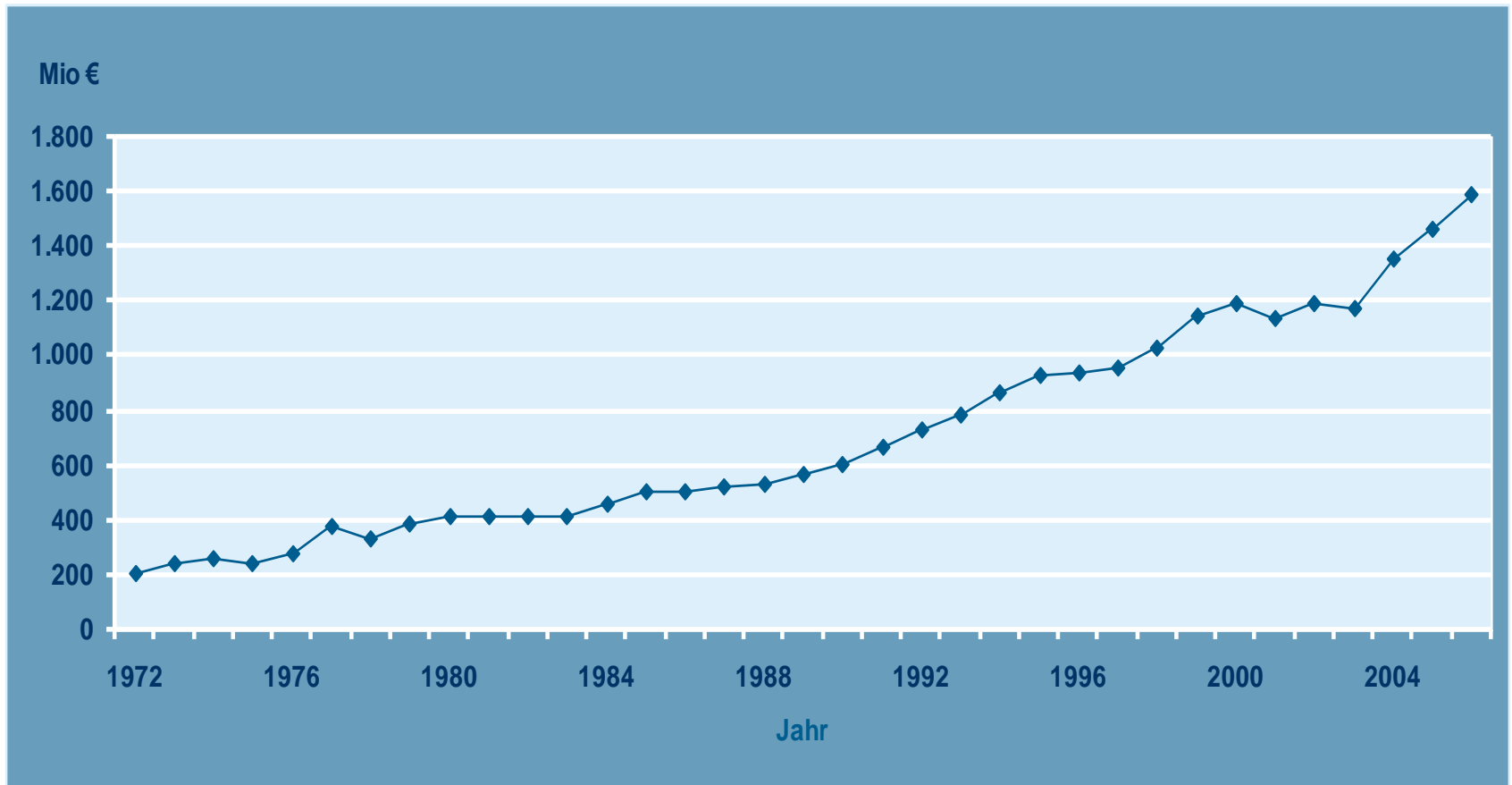
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The Need for Evaluation

Growth in the DFG budget: 1972 to 2006 (in millions of euro, inflation-adjusted)



Source: DFG Annual Reports 1972 – 2006 (excluding infrastructure funding)

The Need for Evaluation

- **Accountability:**
Stakeholders (financial backers and taxpayers) call for transparency in the way the funds provided are used
- **Public interest:**
Increased public interest in research and research-funding as well as in the results of DFG-funded research
- **Political advice:**
Demand for data as a basis for political decision-making (e.g. the Excellence Initiative)
- **Basis for planning purposes:**
The DFG is increasingly asked to legitimise its strategic decisions on the basis of empirical data

The Need for Evaluation

Consequences:

- To provide information about its own activities and projects/researchers funded
(= **Research information**) and
- To assess the activities of the DFG itself and its clients (= **Evaluation**)

Target groups:

- Statutory bodies
- Employees at the DFG's Head Office
- People working in research policy and scientific administration
- Interested members of the public

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The DFG's Principles of Evaluation

- Use of evidence-based information
- Use of high quality data: common data standards
- An instrument to identify dynamics and changing priorities in the research landscape and to adapt processes and programmes
- A basis for systematic and impartial assessment of the funding schemes
– discussion and decision by the statutory bodies

Funding data base (ElektrA – Electronic Processing of proposals)

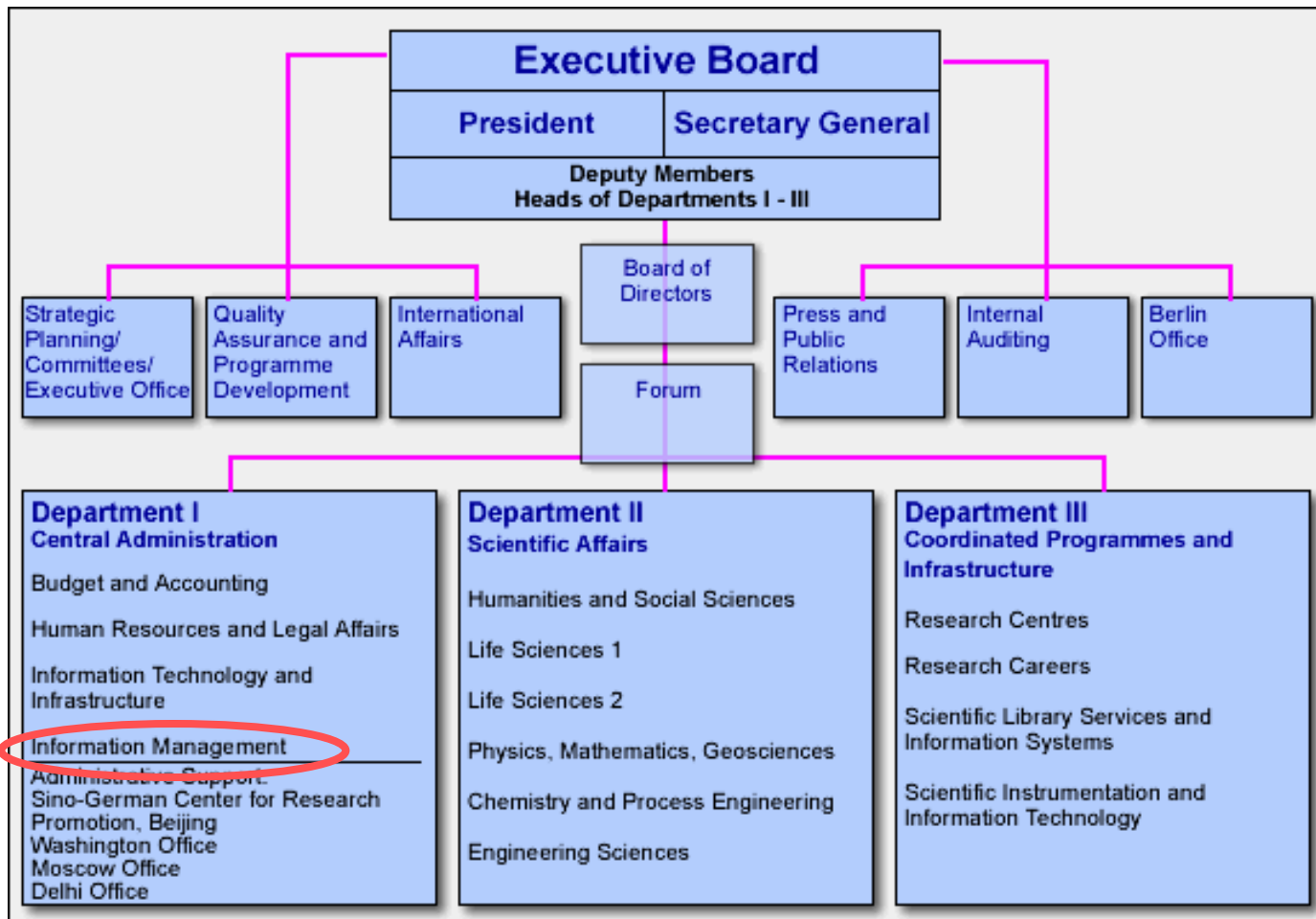
→ **Process-produced data:**

- Information about proposals (approx. 390,000)
- Information about institutions (approx. 30,000)
- Information about persons (approx. 130,000)
 - Applicants
 - Reviewers
 - Cooperation partners, visiting scientists, ...

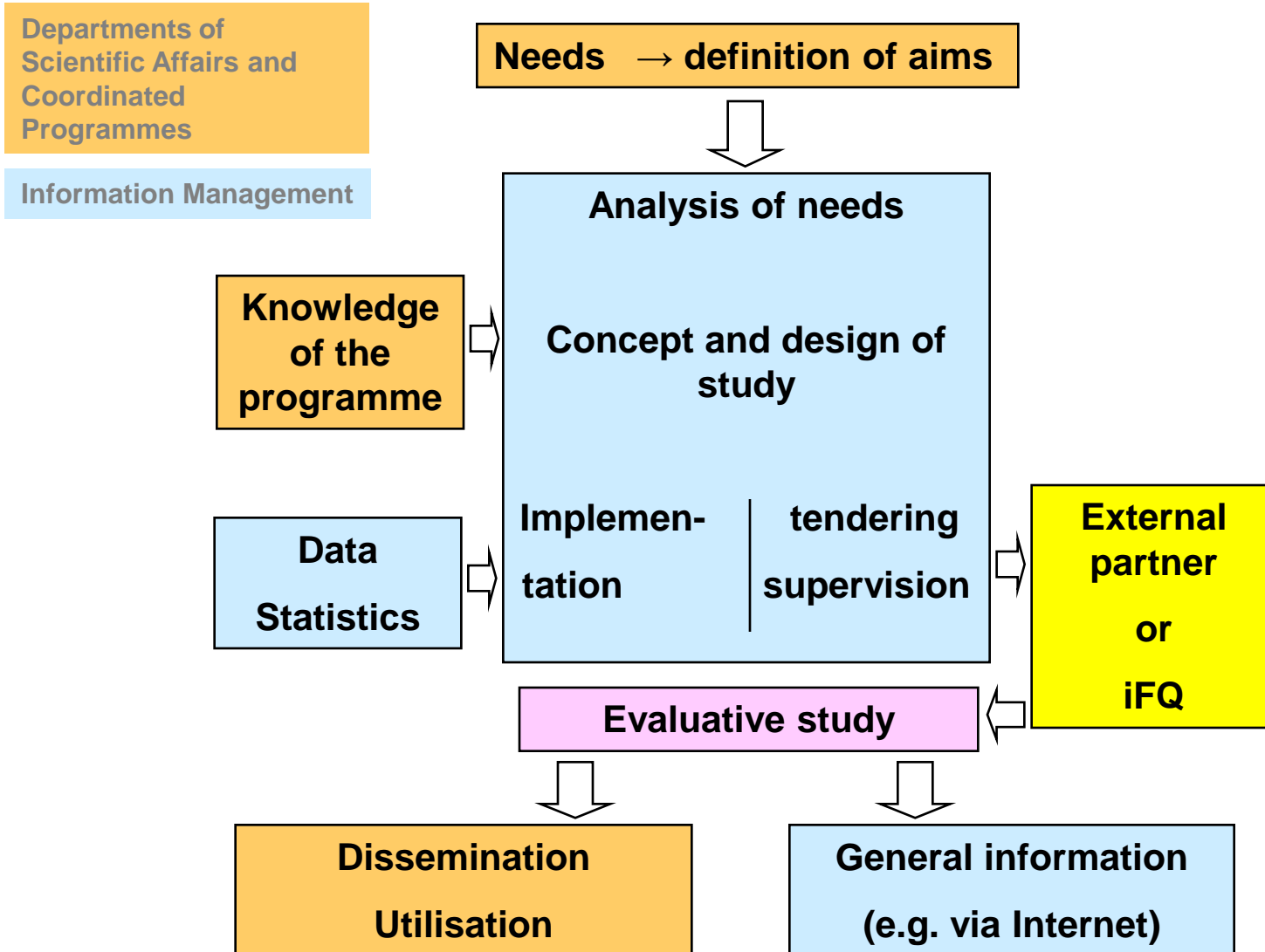
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Organisational Integration



Institute for Research Information and Quality Assurance (iFQ)

Formation:

- A system evaluation in 1999 called for an evaluation of the DFG's programmes
- Information Management Unit prepared the conception and establishment as a "Central Research Facility"
- Established in October 2005, now has 12 researchers

Aims:

- Providing information about research in Germany (participants, projects and results), in its initial phase only on DFG-funded research
- Monitoring of DFG programmes and project outcomes
- Developing new indicators
- Teaching young scientists in the theory and methods of research evaluation



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Evaluative Studies: “Female Scientists in the DFG (1991-2004)”

The Idea

- **Topic:** Gender equality has been one of the aims of the foundation since 2002 (Article 1 of its statutes)
- **Target group:** Statutory bodies, interested members of the public
- **The project team:** Prof. Thomas Hinz, Ina Findeisen, Kathrin Auspurg
University of Konstanz, Chair of Empirical Social Research
- **Data:** Mainly based on process-produced data, many other sources of data included



Evaluative Studies: “Female Scientists in the DFG (1991-2004)”

The Process

- **Preparation by the IM Unit:** Concept, design of the study, commissioning, support, delivery of data, training in the use of data
- **Working stay at Head Office by one of the researchers:** Training in use of the data, expert interviews at Head Office
- **Results:**
 - Percentage of women applying for individual grants is similar to the percentage of women professors.
 - Funding quota only slightly lower than that of men (1-2%).
 - Perception of opportunities significantly worse



Evaluative Studies: “Female Scientists in the DFG (1991-2004)”

Dissemination and Utilisation

- Thorough editing by the IM unit and experts within the DFG
- Discussion by the Board of Directors, forum, statutory bodies, departments
- Presentation to DFG employees at Head Office
- Publication package:
 - Study
 - Info-Brief
 - “Lessons learned” statement



Evaluative Studies and Surveys conducted by the IM Unit

- Funding Ranking (1997, 1999, 2003, 2006).
- Info-Brief (e.g. Junior professors, 2006).
- Survey of Collaborative Research Centres and Graduate Colleges, 2005.
- Survey of applicants, 1997, 2003.

Other Evaluative Studies

Studies conducted in close cooperation with other scientific institutes

- Evaluation of the Transregional Collaborative Research Centres, 2007/2008, Technopolis Group, Vienna.
- Gender Equality in the DFG, 2007, Hinz et al., University of Konstanz.
- Open Access Survey, 2004, Maiworm/Ower, Kassel.
- Survey of Former DFG Fellows, 2002, Enders/Mugabushaka, Kassel.

Studies conducted by the iFQ

- Survey of the members of review boards
- Funding Monitor
- Panel of doctoral students
- Survey of Emmy Noether fellows
- Final reports of DFG-funded projects

Thank you for your attention!

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http://www.dfg.de/dfg_im_profil/zahlen_und_fakten/