

Transfer Profile



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The science-practice transfer profile of INEF

In line with INEF's self-image, the transfer of research findings into practice is a key feature of the Institute's work. However, the transfer of research findings is not a one-way flow of information, but rather a target-group-oriented translation process that takes place in close interaction with the respective recipients in the spirit of a cooperative exchange, with both sides being open to learning experiences. Although the scope and quality of transfer activities always depend on the commitment and expertise of individual researchers, we nevertheless believe it is necessary to provide an institutional framework and appropriate support for this purpose, as well as to embed individual activities within a strategy tailored to the respective objectives.

At the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE), too, knowledge transfer and the associated intensive exchange with stakeholders from society, politics and business are a central element of research and teaching activities. The activities of INEF and the Faculty of Social Sciences as a whole are thus part of the strategy for [transfer and cooperation](#) through which the UDE aims to fulfil and strengthen its social responsibility. A key objective of the UDE's strategy for transfer and cooperation is to contribute from the academic sector to addressing the "major social, ecological, economic and technological challenges and transformations of the present" ([UDE 2021: Strategy for Transfer and Cooperation](#), p. 3; own translation). In this regard, the UDE is guided, among other things, by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. These touch upon issue areas that lie at the heart of INEF's theoretical and empirical research.

A key feature of knowledge transfer at INEF is that transfer activities are carried out within the framework of institutionalised collaborations with actors working in policy-related or policy-advisory fields. Knowledge transfer at INEF primarily focuses on the following areas: (1) Policy advice and the academic support of policy advice, (2) network building and multi-stakeholder exchange, (3) information dissemination and contextualisation of political and social developments in the media and through formats that address a wider public. Ideally, our knowledge transfer is based on an exchange with our target audiences, both in our various communication formats and in our research work.

The INEF approach: transfer projects and institutional transfer partnerships

Knowledge transfer between academia and practice at INEF is primarily achieved through two key instruments: third-party funded research projects and transfer partnerships. Among the transfer partnerships, two long-standing connections stand out:

- Firstly, since its foundation in 1990, INEF has been linked to the [Development and Peace Foundation](#) (Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden, sef:) through a cooperation agreement. The work of sef: is particularly geared towards knowledge transfer to decision-makers in politics, administration and civil society; it also makes current

research findings accessible to a wider public through publications, such as the series “[Global Trends: Perspectives on Development and Peace](#)”, which sef: and INEF publish jointly and which continues previous series in a new format.

- Secondly, as part of a long-term collaboration dating back to 2002, INEF is one of currently four publishing institutes contributing to the “[Peace Report](#)” (“Friedensgutachten”), the annual flagship policy-oriented publication of German peace and conflict research, the publication of which is funded by the German Foundation for Peace Research (Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung, DSF).

What is the aim of knowledge transfer at INEF?

Our transfer activities encompass the following tasks and objectives:

- Policy advice in the strict sense,
- helping to shape spaces for discourse and institutional frameworks for exchange and networking between (state and non-state) stakeholder groups,
- disseminating information in the context of political education and contextualising political and social developments in the media and through formats designed to reach a wider public.

INEF is active in **policy advice** in several respects:

- (1) Selected, application-oriented research projects within the framework of departmental research or projects funded by foundations also include a consultancy component, typically focused on development policy and/or human rights. This applies, for example, to the project on “[Ways out of Poverty, Vulnerability and Food Insecurity](#)”, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) across three phases between 2015 and 2025. Similarly, a project on “[Legal Struggles in Transnational Supply Chains](#)”, funded by the Hans Böckler Foundation and carried out in cooperation with other university partners, included transfer components that were embedded by the funder into a broader research network on “Social-Ecological Transformation”. Consultancy services are also provided through the expert work of individual researchers for development cooperation institutions such as the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).
- (2) Many research projects that do not focus directly on practical applications include a transfer component designed to feed socially and politically relevant aspects of research findings back into public discourse and to facilitate dialogue with key opinion leaders. This is currently taking place, for example, within the framework of the project “[African Non-Military Conflict Intervention Practices](#)” (ANCIP), funded by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR), through joint workshops involving researchers and civil society actors, and in particular through the provision of a publicly accessible database on intervention practices featuring various visualisation tools. The interdisciplinary collaborative project “[Verification in a Complex and Unpredictable World:](#)

[Social, Political and Technical Processes](#)” (VeSPoTec), also funded by the BMFTR, is now, in a second funding phase, focusing on the topic “Knowing the Nuclear Weapons World: political, epistemological, technical and strategic processes (VeSPoTec-Hub)”, designed to develop recommendations for action, in close consultation with practitioners, on how verification and confidence-building can succeed in conflict-ridden contexts.

- (3) Efforts are also being made to translate research findings into the political sphere in a manner tailored to the target audience, for example through the presentation of the Peace Report in Berlin and in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. This form of ‘event-driven’ communication reaches political decision-makers directly in parliament and government.

In addition to these activities focused on direct policy advice, INEF helps to shape **spaces for discourse, network-building and multi-stakeholder exchange**, for example through relevant formats of sef:. Particularly noteworthy here are the annual [Potsdam Africa Dialogues/Spring Dialogues](#), in which academics and practitioners from politics, business and civil society discuss selected key topics and the associated challenges in a safe and supportive environment.

In addition to the publication series mentioned above, **the dissemination of information** – and particularly the **academic analysis** of developments – takes place through various channels and in a variety of formats. For instance, application-oriented INEF research projects such as the BMZ-funded project “[Ways out of Poverty, Vulnerability and Food Insecurity](#)” or the BMFTR-funded project “[African Non-Military Conflict Intervention Practices](#)” have their own project publication series in which research findings are presented in a practice-oriented manner. INEF researchers also address current developments of social and political relevance through blog formats both on the INEF website (see the INEF/sef: [Development and Peace Blog](#)) and, for instance, through outlets of project consortia ([VeSPoTec Blog](#), [ANCIP Blog](#)), placing these within broader discussions.

How does INEF organise knowledge transfer?

To achieve our goals, knowledge transfer at INEF is designed primarily as an exchange. The focus is on **presenting and communicating application-oriented research results in a manner oriented at our target audience**

- through our own publication series,
- via direct exchange between academia and practice,
- in dialogue with a wider interested public, and through public relations work.

Traditionally, the focus of our communication work has been on written dissemination. Key tools for this are the aforementioned *publication series*, some of which are published in multiple languages and as open access. Experience shows that when knowledge is transferred via publications, the opportunity for feedback from the target audience is very limited, making it difficult to assess the impact individual publications

may have. Therefore, a *direct, two-way exchange between academia and practice* – for example, through workshops, focus group discussions or other dialogue-based formats between researchers and practitioners – provides a better means of identifying which research findings are in demand and in what form. Furthermore, one's own assumptions regarding the 'usability' and 'communicability' of research content and findings can be tested and adjusted. Furthermore, critical feedback and substantive input from representatives in practice and politics can feed back into one's own research work. Thanks to its involvement in institutionalised exchange relationships, INEF can also help to consolidate and communicate the current state of experience and research on specific transfer issues.

INEF staff are also available as experts for media enquiries, advisory board activities and public events. At the latter, they seek dialogue with a broader interested public as moderators or contributors.

Another component of the transfer of research results involves various forms and formats of *public relations work*. These include the [sef:/INEF News](#), published in collaboration with sef:, the [INEF Updates newsletter](#), the [website](#) (German/English), press releases, media interviews, the annual report (in German only), and activities on social media such as [LinkedIn](#).

An important aspect of our transfer activities relates to the **development of research questions and the implementation of projects with the direct involvement of practitioners**. This does not refer to a one-sided adoption of research questions by a potential funder in application-oriented projects. Rather, the aim is to systematically exploit the potential for exchange associated with application-oriented projects (proximity to government departments, implementing agencies and/or non-governmental organisations) in order to continuously take into account mutual needs and assessments, or the substantive expertise available on all sides, throughout the course of the project.

To **ensure the quality of its transfer activities**, INEF supports the training and professional development of its staff in the areas of science communication and the use of social media. This includes workshops led by external trainers, such as media training, a range of other training seminars on various aspects and formats of science communication, as well as various forms of 'in-house events' where INEF staff members reflect on their knowledge transfer experiences and share them with colleagues.

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