



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service



Executive Summary

Evaluation of the Network of the German Centres for Research and Innovation

July 2024



Background and objectives

The German Centres for Research and Innovation (DWIH) are a network of German research organisations, universities and research-based companies. They operate in six locations worldwide: Tokyo, New Delhi, Moscow, São Paulo, New York and San Francisco. Due to the current political situation, the DWIH Moscow has been operating on a limited basis since spring 2022. These centres serve as central hubs for showcasing Germany's research, science and innovation landscape. Beyond representation, the DWIH promote networking between academia and industry and provide advice and services to interested scientists and research institutions. German stakeholders collaborate at these locations, pooling their expertise and knowledge as DWIH supporters.

In 2015, the DWIH underwent a comprehensive evaluation. The resulting recommendations led to significant structural changes, particularly in the governance and support structure of the centres, which are administered by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Following this, the DAAD commissioned Syspons GmbH to conduct a second **evaluation of the DWIH**. The **primary objectives of this evaluation** were to report on the activities of the centres to the donor, the Federal Foreign Office (AA), to generate insights for programme improvement, and to assess the impact-oriented monitoring system. Based on these findings, recommendations were made for the further development of the DWIH network. The evaluation was conducted from May 2023 to May 2024.

Methodology

Based on the objectives of the evaluation and with the aim of maximizing its added value, the evaluation team specifically tailored the evaluation design to the key aspects of the assignment. The evaluation was based on the **OECD/DAC criteria** of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and considered cross-cutting issues: the monitoring system, the 2015 evaluation and diversity. To assess **relevance** the evaluation team explored the extent to which the DWIH network's activities are aligned with the strategic objectives of the donor and to what extent the objectives of the consortium partners are appropriately represented. In addition, the evaluation examined the extent to which the DWIH addressed the needs of the target groups. In terms of **coherence**, the evaluation team assessed how the measures of the DWIH network were coordinated with other DAAD programmes for the same target groups and whether synergies with other programmes arose. The assessment of **effectiveness** entailed an exploration of the use of available resources to implement the measures, as well as the empirical examination of the theoretical correlations between outputs, outcomes and impacts. For **efficiency**, the evaluation team analysed the governance and steering processes of the DWIH and the relationship between the resources used and the results achieved. The criteria of **sustainability** assessed the durability of the results achieved at both individual and institutional levels. Finally, **cross-cutting issues** such as the monitoring system, the implementation of the recommendations from the 2015 evaluation and the consideration of diversity within the activities of the DWIH were analysed. The evaluation covered the timeframe from 2015 to 2023, with special focus on the years from 2018 onwards. The **methods** used included secondary data analysis, an online survey conducted at the respective DWIH locations, 25 interviews and 10 focus group discussions.

Key findings

The evaluation found that the DWIH network is **relevant** for donors, consortium partners and participants in DWIH programmes. This is based on the close alignment of the DWIH network with the strategic objectives of the stakeholders and the needs of its target group. However, it was noted that the involvement of the research-based companies should be strengthened. Moreover, while the participants in the DWIH programmes expressed a high level of satisfaction, they indicated the need for more information on funding opportunities, for example for their research activities, and on the research-based companies in Germany and in the host country. Participants also expressed an interest in additional opportunities for dialogue with the research-based companies. When it comes to the relevance of the governance and support structure of the DWIH, the consortium partners and supporters indicated that the structure addresses their needs and mostly allows for their participation where relevant. However, findings indicate that associated supporters (they are located in Germany, not in DWIH locations) occasionally face restrictions in participating in joint, hybrid dialogue rounds.

Overall, the DWIH are also **coherent** with the DAAD programmes and their support structure. This is particularly evident in joint events held with members of the support structure. In addition, the DWIH were found to have identified opportunities to create further synergies with DAAD programmes in the future, for example, by using common themes with the DAAD programmes and linking the DWIH network with the BMBF initiative „Research in Germany“, which is now located in the same department as the central DWIH management office. Moreover, the evaluation found that DWIH already generated synergies with actors outside the support structure - in particular local actors and/or foreign representations of other countries - which show potential for expansion in the future.

In general, the DWIH were also found to be **effective** in achieving their goals. Within the visibility field of action, they succeeded in jointly presenting German stakeholders in the host country and in establishing the „DWIH“ brand. In the knowledge field of action, the DWIH succeeded in increasing the target groups' knowledge of Germany and the host country. Finally, in the advice and networking fields of action, the DWIH were found to promote international cooperation successfully through various activities like individual consultations and networking events. The results of the evaluation indicate a need to strengthen the involvement of the research-based companies as a central player in the innovation landscape. It was also observed that the abbreviation „DWIH“ can be difficult for non-German speakers to understand and relate to. Finally, the evaluation identified factors that either supported or hindered the DWIH in achieving their goals. Supporting factors include the increased presence of German actors in the host country, effective cooperation with representatives of the AA, increased interest in Germany within India and Brazil and increased interest in Japan and the USA within Germany. Another relevant supporting factor was found to be the contribution of scientific expertise (scientific system knowledge) by the DWIH teams through their personal commitment, continuous communication and their networking with relevant actors in Germany and the host country. On the other hand, factors that hinder the DWIH from achieving their goals include competition with the many other international players on site, a comparatively low level of interest in Germany within Japan and the USA, a comparatively low level of interest in India and Brazil within Germany and the rather remote location of the DWIH in São Paulo. At the same time, the DWIH teams' rather limited knowledge of economic systems compared to science and research, as well as their limited human resources were found to be weaknesses.

The DWIH were also found to run their activities mostly **efficiently**. Where the governance and support structure are concerned, duplication found between the Board of Trustees (strategic level) and the Programme Committee (operational level) poses a challenge. It results from members of the same organisation substituting for one another. The DWIH were also found to have a mostly efficient distribution of funds between operational costs and programme work as well as between events and public relations work.

Overall, the DWIH were found to act **sustainably** where possible. The visibility and knowledge of the DWIH network and the personal commitment of the DWIH teams support the continued success of the network. However, the durability of the results, such as the cooperation between actors in Germany and the host countries, is limited by external factors, including the lack of financial and human resources among the target groups.

Finally, relevant **cross-cutting issues** were taken into account in the evaluation of the DWIH. It became clear that a further revision of the DWIH monitoring system is necessary in order to improve the steering of the DWIH. This primarily concerns the lack of clear target values for indicators and a lack of consensus on what should be recorded and how this should be measured. Considering the recommendations from the 2015 evaluation, these have mostly been successfully implemented. Nevertheless, the need to improve the monitoring system and increase the involvement of the private sector remains. In addition, efforts at DWIH to diversify its target group were analysed and it became clear that each DWIH made a conscious effort to address a wide range of target groups, each tailored to the specific context.

Recommendations for action

Based on the findings and analysis, the following **twelve recommendations** are proposed. These concern the involvement of the private sector, the generation of synergies, the fields of action, the governance and support structure and the monitoring system.

4

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the DWIH network more actively involve relevant stakeholders from the research-based companies.

Recommendation 2: In order to enhance the involvement of the private sector, it is recommended that the DWIH network create additional staff positions where possible, especially for people with knowledge and expertise on economic systems.

Recommendation 3: it is recommended that the DWIH networks continue to create synergies with the support structure and consortium partners (including DAAD programmes) and intensify these where possible.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the DWIH network assess the extent to which synergies with stakeholders outside the support structure could be utilised.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the DWIH network deepen its interministerial coordination with other funding programs and initiatives (particularly the BMBF initiative „Research in Germany“).

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the DWIH network and consortium partners reflect on changing/adapting the name ‘DWIH’ in non-German-speaking countries.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that the DWIH network provide more information on the private sector relevant to the innovation landscape.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the DWIH network share more information on funding opportunities, especially for researchers and the transfer between science and industry.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the DWIH network strengthen the networking and exchange opportunities for its target groups, for example, between science and the research-based economy.

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the DWIH network and consortium partners more clearly separate the strategic and operational levels of the governance and support structure in practice.

Recommendation 11: It is recommended that the DWIH network determine whether separate discussion rounds should occasionally be held at the level of the individual DWIH for their main and associated supporters, to facilitate improved participation and/or identify specific needs.

Recommendation 12: To make the monitoring system relevant for steering, it is recommended that the DWIH networks develop a target value procedure, introduces suitable indicators at the outcome level to measure targets, and create guidelines to ensure a common understanding of the indicators and their measurement

IMPRINT

Publisher

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst e.V.
(DAAD)
Kennedyallee 50
53175 Bonn
Germany

Phone: +49 228 882-0

Fax: +49 228 882-444

E-Mail: webmaster@daad.de

Internet: <https://www.daad.de>

Authorised Representative of the Executive
Committee: Prof. Dr. Joybrato Mukherjee
District Court of Bonn

Register of associations, number VR 2107

Sales tax number: DE122276332

Person responsible according to § 18 Abs. 2 MStV:

Dr. Kai Sicks, Kennedyallee 50, 53175 Bonn

Section S12 - Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation

Project Coordination

Tabea Kaiser, Head of Section - K22

Florian Hillnhütter, Senior Desk Officer Evaluation
- S12

Conducting the evaluation

Syspons GmbH

Lennart Raetzell, Manager

Alexandra Hoppe, Senior Consultant

Layout

Atelier Hauer+Dörfler, Berlin

Published as a digital publication on the Internet
1st version, July 2024

© DAAD

The DAAD is an association of German universities
and their student bodies. It is institutionally funded
by the German Federal Foreign Office.

