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Appendix A:

Abridged iDiv Charter

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iDiv Directorate

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iDiv is a central facility of the Leipzig University within the meaning of Section 92 (1) of the Act on Academic Freedom in Higher Education in Saxony (Sächsisches Hochschulfreiheitsgesetz, SächsHSFG). It is run together with the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg and the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, as well as in cooperation with the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ.

The following non-university research institutions are involved as cooperation partners: the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, the Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry (MPI BGC), the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology (MPI CE), the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI EVA), the Leibniz Institute DSMZ-German Collection of Micro-organisms and Cell Cultures, the Leibniz Institute of Plant Biochemistry (IPB), the Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK) and the Leibniz Institute Senckenberg Museum of Natural History Görlitz (SMNG).

Mission

The iDiv charter is a living document created and maintained by iDiv. Here we describe our missions and the core elements of our approach.

iDiv's first mission is to provide the scientific foundation for the sustainable management of the earth's biodiversity. iDiv endeavours to address the following questions: (1) How can we quantify biodiversity (and all its relevant facets) and reliably detect spatial and temporal changes in response to natural and anthropogenic drivers? (2) What are the evolutionary and ecological processes generating and maintaining biodiversity? (3) What is the role of biodiversity in regulating ecosystem functioning and provisioning of services to humanity? (4) How should biodiversity be integrated in the management of our planet's resources and how can we safeguard biodiversity?

iDiv's second mission is to promote the development of the new field 'Integrative Biodiversity Research'. The complexity of biodiversity science requires integration across disciplines (e.g. natural, social, engineering sciences), and scales (e.g. from molecular to organisms, from experimental plot to landscape scales, from observations to predictions).

Approach

iDiv's approach is based on (i) our concept of scientific excellence, (ii) our commitment to foster integration across disciplines, cultures and institutions, and (iii) the need to create the next generation of biodiversity scientists.

Scientific excellence

We strive to conduct ground-breaking research. This means that the quality of our research is more important than its quantity in light of our mission. For this purpose, we are prepared to take risks and invest time.

Our scientific approach emphasizes two main elements: generalisation and detection. Generalisation is necessary for making socially relevant predictions. We accomplish this by promoting theory-driven synthesis and experiments and data-driven theory. The need for detection arises from large data gaps across many facets of biodiversity. By creating, acquiring, and using data with high temporal and spatial resolution, we will make important advances in the detection and prediction of biodiversity.

We recognize that excellent science is based on excellent support and open communication among scientists and non-scientific staff.

Integration

Integration is essential for understanding and solving the biodiversity crisis and for promoting biodiversity science. We believe that integrative science can only develop in an integrative environment.

Scientific integration

Scientific integration requires overcoming barriers by defining common goals and developing a common language. This requires a substantial investment in communication and willingness to share ideas and data. A defining element of iDiv is the combination of a full-scale research centre and a synthesis centre (sDiv) to form a 'melting pot' of experts in biodiversity science.

Cultural integration

The challenges biodiversity is facing are global and concern every culture. We welcome colleagues and guests from all cultures and work together to jointly create an inspiring environment for all.

Social integration

We are creating an environment that allows and inspires us to invest in collaboration and to explore new scientific ground. To do so, we agree to treat each other with Openness, Transparency, Respect and Trust.

Organizational and infrastructural integration

iDiv is a joint undertaking of three universities, the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research - UFZ, and seven other non-university institutions. It is the first excellence centre in Germany operating across three federal borders, and will be a role model for interregional Excellence Initiative. Developing administrative solutions for harmonising the operations is foundation for iDiv's success. We consider administrative support as an integral part of doing science. iDiv headquarters in Leipzig hosts working groups from partner institutions, and acts as a communication hub. The success of iDiv depends on maintaining and further activating collaborations within the entire iDiv consortium.

Training the next generation of biodiversity scientists

yDiv is our centre for young biodiversity researchers from across the world. We provide an interdisciplinary environment that challenges young scientists to guide the future of biodiversity research. We equip our graduates to assume leadership roles in academia and at the interface between science and policy.