

Sustainability Mission Statement of the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)

Adopted by the Executive Board of the GIGA on 30 March 2022.

Preamble

The GIGA sees sustainability as an important guiding principle informing its entire operations. Through its research and activities, the GIGA strives to support society's responses to the major challenges of our day. Within the political frame of reference provided by the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it aims to focus its research, research-based knowledge exchange, and services on the goal of sustainability. At the same time, it also contributes to the achievement of this goal through the sustainable design of operational and research processes.

Motivation and Definition

The GIGA, as a member of the Leibniz Association, is guided by the UN's international policy strategies, such as the Rio Declaration (1992) and the SDGs (2015), which employ the normative concept of "sustainable development" as defined by the Brundtland Commission: "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."¹ The Leibniz Association's involvement in the LeNa project and the resulting document on sustainability management in non-university research organisations² has already generated an understanding of the pertinent spheres of activity in the specific context of conducting research. The GIGA shares this understanding.

¹ <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf> last accessed 30 March 2022.

² Joint LeNa project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF): <https://www.nachhaltig-forschen.de> last accessed 30 March 2022.

Sustainability-oriented research applies equally to operational and to research processes, and therefore addresses all team members. The focus is on:

- Sustainability in organisational development,
- Sustainability in research processes,
- Sustainability in personnel management (employees and other team members),
- Sustainability management in the operation of premises and infrastructure, and in procurement and mobility.

This Sustainability Mission Statement provides a framework for a “culture of sustainability” at the GIGA – a culture that must be established and continuously built on within the Institute’s various spheres of activity. The Institute’s scientific freedom and economic and legal independence remain unaffected hereby. The aim of the Mission Statement is also for all GIGA team members to reflect on their actions in these different spheres and to contribute to the sustainable development of the Institute at large.

Strategic and Organisational Development

The GIGA enshrines the guiding principle of “sustainable development” in all its structures, procedures, and management processes. In doing so, it also refers to the “Guiding Principles for our Actions in the Leibniz Association.”³ For this, it is necessary to take account of sustainability and the requirements it gives rise to in all business processes, from programme planning to personnel management and operational processes, from management level to staff level, as well as in the research, knowledge-exchange, and service activities themselves. The systematic observance of sustainable-development aims in strategic and operational management will be supported by the Task Force Sustainability Management. To ensure the effectiveness of its sustainability efforts, the GIGA will monitor and periodically evaluate related actions internally and, where and when appropriate, externally (for example through an established certification scheme).

Safeguarding compliance is also a key priority, for example with regard to issues of research ethics, dual-use issues, (mis-)use of power, data protection, and alignment with legal frameworks like the Nagoya Protocol. Where relevant, from planning and carrying out individual research projects to setting up Research Programmes, the GIGA assesses ethical and safety-related risks against clear criteria and deals with them transparently at all times. The Institute is guided by all

³ <https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/en/about-us/leibniz-integrity/guiding-principles-for-our-actions.html> last accessed 30 March 2022.

relevant rules and standards, and sees adherence to ethical principles as an integral part of a modern sustainability strategy.

Sustainability in the Research Process

The GIGA stands for best research practice, incorporating scientific excellence and social relevance. Many of the UN's 17 SDGs and their targets are addressed by GIGA researchers in the existing [GIGA Research Programmes](#). In addition, the GIGA identified "sustainability" as one of a number of key strategic overarching themes in its 2021 Leibniz Evaluation, as closely linked to many of the Institute's core topics of research.

The GIGA uses its expertise to promote and develop a better understanding of sustainable development. In doing so, it actively integrates concepts, perspectives, and experiences from different world regions. It also involves team members in processes of change and strategy formulation, and works with external partners from science, politics, and society in the spirit of transdisciplinarity. According to the recommendations from the LeNa process, important evaluation criteria for responsible research are: an integrative approach; interdisciplinarity; focusing on target groups; reflection on effect and effectiveness; transdisciplinarity; transparency; ethics; and dealing with complexity and uncertainty. The rules of good research practice and Open Access are fundamental to sustainable research.

Sustainable Personnel Management

The success of any organisation depends on its ability to attract excellent team members at all levels, to harness their diverse skill sets effectively, and to support them in a targeted manner. This is reflected in the GIGA's "Personnel Concept," which emphasises the importance of career development. The GIGA pays particular attention to this: the leadership, the HR team in the Administration Department, the Equal Opportunity Commissioners, the Inclusion Commissioner, the Academic Development Manager, the Works Council, all other service departments, as well as specific committees and task forces constantly strive to improve working conditions and life at the Institute.

For the GIGA, systematically aligning the entire personnel-management system with the Institute's medium- and long-term aims is the key to ensuring sustainability here. At the same time, sustainable personnel management stands for equal opportunities, respect for diversity, taking into account responsibilities of care, and a good work-life balance.

To ensure effectiveness, and as guided by the LeNa recommendations, the focus is on the following:

- Service-oriented personnel management,
- Systematic personnel development, and
- Networking and cooperation in research, teaching, knowledge exchange, service activities, and the promotion of young talent.

These aims are an integral part of the GIGA's strategic and operational management.

Sustainability Management in the Operation of Buildings and Infrastructure, and in Procurement and Mobility

As part of its research, knowledge exchange, and service mission enshrined in the "GIGA Charter," the Institute operates the GIGA Information Centre, engages in public relations and the communication of research, participates in publication activities, maintains IT facilities, manages premises, carries out procurement, and conducts business trips. In the areas of building maintenance, operational processes, procurement, and mobility management, the GIGA sees numerous opportunities to further increase sustainability, and in particular to reduce its carbon footprint. It aims to systematically implement effective related measures as part of its guiding sustainability-management goals.