

Juli 2020

Evaluation des IHS 2019

Vorwort

Terms of References

Report of the Evaluation Panel

Ergänzende Bemerkungen



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Vorwort

Liebe Leserin! Lieber Leser!

Sie halten den Bericht über die Evaluierung des Instituts für Höhere Studien (IHS) in Ihren Händen, der vom Vorsitzenden des mit der Evaluierung beauftragten internationalen Panels, Professor Dr. Achim Wambach, im Jänner 2020 dem Kuratorium des IHS übergeben wurde. Das vorliegende Dokument beinhaltet auch die vom Kuratorium im Januar 2019 beschlossenen „Terms of Reference“ für die EvaluatorInnen, mit den konkreten Fragen, anhand derer das fünfköpfige Panel seine Evaluierung durchführte.

Aufgrund der massiven Umstellungen, die das Institut vor allem in den Jahren 2015 und 2016 erfahren hat, hielt das Kuratorium eine Evaluierung des IHS für geboten, um eine objektive Sicht über die Auswirkungen dieser großen Transformation gewinnen zu können. Damals war unter Direktor Sigurd Höllinger eine maßgebliche Richtungsänderung des IHS erfolgt. Bisher wirkte das IHS nicht nur als Forschungs- sondern v. a. als postgraduale Ausbildungsstätte in den Sozialwissenschaften (Ökonomie, Politikwissenschaft, Soziologie). Diese Struktur war eine Zeit lang sehr erfolgreich, aber durch die Professionalisierung der Universitäten wurde das relativ kleine IHS zunehmend marginalisiert. Bekannt war das Institut schon immer für sein zweites Standbein – die angewandte Forschung –, das aber nie formal in die Zielsetzung des Instituts aufgenommen und dem auch organisatorisch zu wenig Rechnung getragen worden war.

Verschiedene Umstände führten im Jahr 2014/15 zu jener Krise, die es erforderlich machte, die Ausrichtung des Instituts im Rahmen eines begleiteten Stakeholder-Prozesses neu zu definieren. Das Ergebnis war ein Mission Statement, das das Institut bewusst an die Schnittstelle zwischen akademischer und angewandter Forschung setzte. Dieser Bereich war implizit bereits in den Jahren zuvor zum wesentlichen Asset des Instituts geworden.

Die neue Zielsetzung war aber erst noch mit Leben und entsprechenden Governance-Strukturen zu befüllen – eine Aufgabe, die von den MitarbeiterInnen des Instituts teils enthusiastisch, teils auch erst nach einiger Überzeugungsarbeit wahrgenommen wurde. Den notwendigen Veränderungsprozess anzukurbeln und zu begleiten fiel dem neuen Kuratorium zu, das zunächst von den Mitgliedern des Vereins IHS durch neue, moderne Statuten ausgestattet wurde. Vor allem aber lag es an dem neuen Leitungsteam, das nunmehr aus wissenschaftlichem Direktor und Generalsekretär(in) bestand, die notwendigen Reformen intern voranzutreiben und zu koordinieren.

Eine wesentliche Wegmarke war in diesem Zusammenhang die Ablösung von nach Disziplinen organisierten Abteilungen durch interdisziplinäre, thematisch ausgerichtete Forschungsgruppen. Die neue Mission des IHS und die strukturellen Änderungen zeitigten schnell positive Wirkungen. Das IHS ist sowohl in Bezug auf das Auftragsvolumen als auch in Bezug auf die Zahl der MitarbeiterInnen in den letzten vier Jahren stark gewachsen. Dennoch war es immer klar, dass die Neuausrichtung des Instituts und seine Entwicklung einer kritischen Prüfung von außen unterzogen werden muss, nicht nur um sicherzustellen, dass hier der richtige Weg eingeschlagen worden war, sondern auch um sich Anregungen und Hilfestellungen zu holen, wie das Institut insgesamt noch besser die selbst gesetzten, ambitionierten Ziele erreichen kann.

Die Evaluierung war ursprünglich schon für 2017 vorgesehen gewesen, wurde dann aber aus praktischen Gründen verschoben. Es brauchte zuerst einmal genug Evidenz über die neuen Strukturen, um valide Aussagen darüber treffen zu können, ob und wie sich die neu gebildeten Forschungsgruppen etabliert hatten und welche Ergebnisse sie zeigten. Im Jahr 2019 war dieser Zeitpunkt gekommen, und er war auch deshalb gut gewählt, weil das Institut sich dem Ende seiner aktuellen Förderperiode durch die Bundesregierung nähert.

Die Evaluierung wurde von fünf namhaften internationalen WissenschaftlerInnen mit großer Managementenerfahrung durchgeführt. Prof. Dr. Achim Wambach, Präsident des Leibniz-Zentrums für Europäische Wirtschaftsforschung (ZEW) in Mannheim, hat den Vorsitz geführt. Die Mitglieder waren Prof. Dr.ⁱⁿ Jutta Allmendinger, Präsidentin des Wissenschaftszentrums Berlin (WZB); Dr. Daniel Gros, Direktor des Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brüssel; Prof. Dr. Shaun Hargreaves-Heap vom King's College, London; und Prof.ⁱⁿ Dr.ⁱⁿ Merle Jacob von der Lund University. Es war wichtig, dass für die Evaluierung hohe Maßstäbe an die akademische Leistung und die akademischen Fähigkeiten des IHS angelegt wurden. Es ging nicht nur um die akademische Wettbewerbsfähigkeit in Österreich, sondern um die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit mit vergleichbaren Instituten in Europa.

Wir bedanken uns bei den Mitgliedern des Evaluierungsgremiums für ihre hervorragende und nicht immer leichte Arbeit. Dank richten wir auch an das externe Sekretariat, das als neutraler Mittler zwischen Institut und Evaluationsgremium eingerichtet wurde, bestehend aus Dr. Michael Stampfer und Dr. Michael Strassnig vom WWTF. Sie haben das Panel durch den Prozess begleitet und maßgeblich zum Funktionieren des Prozesses beigetragen. Alle MitarbeiterInnen des IHS haben sich hervorragend eingebracht und weit über das erwartbare Ausmaß mitgearbeitet. Zahlreiche Stakeholder haben die Interviews mit dem Evaluationsgremium genutzt, um ihren Eindruck über das Institut zu übermitteln.

Die Evaluierung zielte vor allem darauf ab herauszufinden, wie weit es dem Institut seit 2016 gelungen ist, seine neue Mission umzusetzen. Zu evaluieren waren also drei Aspekte: erstens die Performance des Instituts zwischen 2016 und 2018; zweitens die „Vision“ des IHS bis 2025; und drittens die Kapazität des Instituts, seine Mission zu erfüllen. Die Evaluierung war also zu rund einem Drittel rückwärtsgewandt und zu zwei Drittel vorwärtsgerichtet; sie war auf die wissenschaftliche Leistungsfähigkeit und Potentiale des Instituts fokussiert.

In seinem Bericht befindet das Evaluationsgremium, dass das IHS einen sehr guten Zielerreichungsgrad und eine adäquate Mission sowie adäquate Zielsetzungen hat, sieht aber in insgesamt 14 Empfehlungen auch Verbesserungspotential, insbesondere in Bezug auf eine Fokussierung der akademischen Forschungsaktivitäten. Eine maßgebliche Vorbedingung, um erfolgreich sein zu können ist es, mehr finanzielle Planungssicherheit zu erreichen und einen moderneren Zugang zu (Register-)Daten zu haben – beides Vorhaben, die auch die neue Bundesregierung in ihrem Programm vorsieht.

Klar ist auch, dass das IHS mit der selbst initiierten internationalen Evaluation ein Beispiel gesetzt hat, an dem andere außeruniversitäre Institute in den Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften in Österreich nicht vorbeikönnen. Das IHS plant spätestens in sieben Jahren die nächste generelle Evaluation. Das Institut ist daher auch ein wenig stolz auf das, was damit gelungen ist.

Das Kuratorium hat gemeinsam mit der Leitung des Instituts beschlossen, den Evaluationsbericht öffentlich zu machen und auch aktiv zu diskutieren. Das fällt auf, weil vergleichbare Evaluationen meist von Trägerorganisationen durchgeführt werden und daher ohnehin eine wissenschaftsinterne Öffentlichkeit besteht. Eine Trägerorganisation, wie in Deutschland die Leibniz-Gemeinschaft, fehlt aber in Österreich. Das IHS hat sich immer wieder dafür ausgesprochen, eine solche Trägerorganisation auch bei uns zu gründen, um die zersplitterte Landschaft der außeruniversitären Forschung, gerade im sozial- und wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Bereich besser strukturieren zu können.

Mit der Veröffentlichung stellen wir Wissen bereit, das sicher auch für unsere KooperationspartnerInnen in der Wissenschaft, aber auch für die MitbewerberInnen hilfreich ist. Die Veröffentlichung ist ein, aus unserer Sicht, sehr guter Schlusspunkt der Evaluation und der Startpunkt, um die Empfehlungen zu diskutieren und möglichst viele davon rasch umzusetzen. Wir hoffen dabei weiterhin auf die Unterstützung und Begleitung durch alle MitarbeiterInnen des IHS, durch das Kuratorium und die Stakeholder des Instituts. Ein umfangreicher interner Diskussionsprozess zu den Schlussfolgerungen aus der Evaluation ist die Voraussetzung dafür, dass die Empfehlungen auch mit Leben erfüllt werden. Besonders freut uns, dass es aufgrund des guten Ergebnisses der Evaluation vor allem um Adaptierungen geht und keine großen Umwälzungen oder Neuorientierungen nötig sind.

Abschließend möchten wir darauf hinweisen, dass Evaluationsberichte nur im Kontext verstanden werden können. Zu den wichtigen Aspekten des Kontexts zählen die „Terms of Reference“, die gewünschte starke Zukunftsorientierung der Evaluation (daher auch die unüblich hohe Anzahl von Empfehlungen, die ganz in unserem Sinne ist) und der Fokus auf die Gesamtstruktur des Hauses. Die Aufgabe war nicht, die Qualität einzelner Forschungsgruppen am IHS im Detail zu bewerten – es ging vielmehr darum, einen objektiven Gesamteindruck von außen auf das Haus zu erhalten. Dass die verschiedenen Gruppen zum Teil Basisforschungsfianzierung in unterschiedlicher Höhe zur Verfügung haben, kann in der Kürze des Berichts natürlich nicht ausreichend gewürdigt werden. Selbstverständlich ist auch ein umfangreicher Selbstbericht des IHS, den wir im Juli dem Evaluationsgremium vorgelegt haben und der viele zusätzliche relevante Informationen enthält, ein integraler Bestandteil der Evaluation. Da dieser Selbstbericht allerdings auch vertrauliche Informationen wie Details zu am IHS tätigen Personen beinhaltet, kann er nicht veröffentlicht werden. Die Einschätzungen von einzelnen Organisationseinheiten im Haus machen vor allem in Zusammenhang mit diesem Selbstbericht Sinn. Eine solche nur auf Basis des Evaluationsberichts vorzunehmen, wäre weder angebracht noch sinnvoll.

Selbstverständlich sind wir jederzeit sehr gerne bereit, mit Ihnen über den Evaluationsbericht zu diskutieren und Fragen zu beantworten. Wir wünschen eine interessante Lektüre!

Caspar Einem, Vizepräsident
Franz Fischler, Präsident
Martin G. Kocher, Wissenschaftlicher Direktor
Thomas König, Leiter Strategie und Wissenschaftsservice
Eva Liebmann-Pesendorfer, Generalsekretärin

Terms of Reference for the External Evaluation of the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS)

1. Rationale for Evaluation

IHS has been founded in 1963 with the goal of bringing modern, empirical social science and economics research to Austria and Central Europe. For more than fifty years, the institute has carried out its initial mission, i.e. to train bright young scholars from Austria and neighboring countries in empirical methods for the social sciences and economics through competitive study programs (PhD and Master programs) and by inviting renowned international scholars to Vienna.

Today, IHS is the largest provider of empirical research in the social sciences and economics in Austria. Yet, during the past two decades, its position has become increasingly difficult. One reason for that was the reduction in the overall share of basic subsidy for the institute (to only 45% of the budget today; with a concurrent substantial rise of rental costs, which effectively reduced the basic subsidy for research). However, also its unique position in the tertiary sector of Austria has been challenged. Its initial mission is now more or less accomplished, as Austrian universities have built up enough formal training capacity in most social sciences and in economics.

In 2015, it was determined through a stakeholder process that a new mission should be adopted, not the least because, over the decades, IHS had successfully begun to conduct applied empirical research in various relevant policy fields for Austrian and European public authorities as well as private enterprises. The 2015 reform meant, inter alia, that a new mission was adopted which focused on bridging applied and academic research at the IHS. As a consequence, the formal study programs had been terminated, and the internal structure of the institute changed from disciplinary departments (economics, political science, and sociology) to interdisciplinary research units (for more details, see Appendix 1)

Between 2016 and 2018, the organization of the institute was gradually aligned to its new mission. Now, with the prospect of negotiating the next performance agreement with the Austrian government (from 2021-2025), it is time to take stock. According to its new bylaws, adopted in 2015, the institute has to be externally evaluated regularly, in intervals of five to seven years. The 2019 evaluation will be the first evaluation of its kind, and it is an opportunity for learning about how to further improve the IHS. The primary objective of the evaluation is to pitch the organizational reform and its results against the IHS mission and its implementation strategies. It should provide the management and the stakeholders of IHS with a fresh external perspective and a realistic assessment regarding **whether the institute in its current setup is capable of fulfilling its mission.**

IHS Mission Statement

IHS is a Vienna-based independent, post-university research institute in the domain of social sciences and economics. Its mission statement mentions “Economic and social scientific research for the public benefit”:

Today, there is high demand for analyzing the grand societal challenges drawing on evidence-based scientific methods and providing answers that are objective and independent. The Institute develops research questions in dialogue with policy-makers as well as among the academic world, and delivers answers that are relevant to both sides. Its researchers focus on topics of high relevance that are aligned with societal challenges and that anticipate issues of high relevance in the near future.

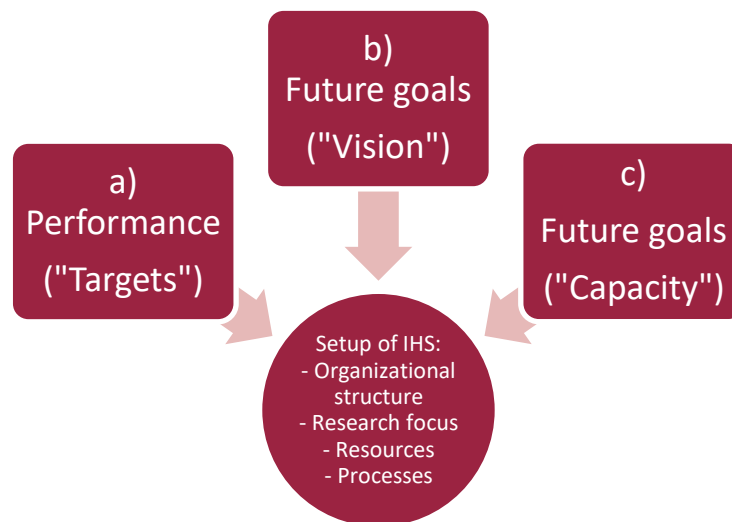
Strategic Outline:

- The Institute brings together, and entangles, social scientific disciplines. It organizes its research along thematic, versatile research units. The Institute is a reliable partner for policy-makers as well as society at large. Its expertise is brought to fruition both academically as well as in relation to policy-making for selected research involving longer term issues.
- IHS contributes significantly to scientific literacy in Austria by training future key personnel in society, academia, and in the public as well as the business spheres. Strong emphasis is laid on the development of appropriate innovative methods.
- IHS maintains a high reputation for its research and is a respected Austrian hub for engaging in international scientific debates. It brings renowned guests to Austria and facilitates connections between academia, business, and politics.

(see also: <https://www.ihs.ac.at/about/mission-statement/>)

2. Subject of the Evaluation

The mission statement (as quoted above) is the cornerstone for the evaluation; its subject is the assessment to which degree the institute has already made progress towards realizing the mission and how it can further improve on the pathway to fulfill it. The evaluation will consist of three parts: a) assessing the performance of the IHS over the past three years (2016-18); b) assessing the ambitious vision for the next years (2025); c) assessing the institute's overall capacity to achieve its mission.



Ad a) “Targets for 2020”

To assess the performance of the institute over the past three years, the evaluation will rely on the list of “**Targets for 2020**”, which was adopted by the IHS Board of Trustees together with the new mission in 2015. For the evaluation, the list shall serve as a guideline to examine whether the institute has actually managed to achieve its self-set targets and is on the pathway towards the targets, respectively. Further, the evaluation shall assess whether there are potential deviations from the targets. (The “Targets for 2020” are provided in Appendix 2)

Ad b) “Vision for 2025”

To judge the ambitious goals for the next seven years, the evaluation is tasked to critically assess the “**Vision for 2025**” paper. The “Vision” is intended to be used for strategic goal setting as well as a starting point for negotiating the next performance agreement with the Austrian government in 2021. (The paper is currently being drafted and will be provided as part of the self-report.)

Ad c) “Capacity”

The capacity of the institute to achieve its mission shall be assessed along four dimensions: its **organizational structure**, the focus **of its research units and research priorities**; its **personal and financial resources**; and its **managerial processes and governance, including digital management**, which have been overhauled to a large extent after the adoption of the new mission.

3. Aims

The results of the evaluation will provide insights for IHS leadership for ...

- **assessing** the degree to which the “Targets for 2020” have been met;
- **reviewing** the feasibility of the institute’s long-term goals, as described in the “Vision for 2025” draft paper;
- **adjusting** structure, focus, and management as a prerequisite to achieve the goals and, overall, the IHS mission;
- **preparing** of negotiations with the Austrian government for continued funding of IHS.

Objectives

As mentioned before, the overall objective of the evaluation is to provide the management and the stakeholders of IHS with a fresh external perspective and a realistic assessment regarding whether the institute in its current setup is capable of fulfilling its mission. More specifically, three objectives can be identified in relation to the overall objective:

- a) to take stock of the hitherto accomplishments of IHS;
- b) to review the draft version of the long-term goals (“Vision”) of the institute;
- c) to assess the institute’s capacity to achieve its mission, including managerial and strategic processes.

Overarching evaluation questions

1. To what degree and with regard to which aspects have the “Targets for 2020” already been met or are expected to be met by the end of 2020? (backward-looking)
 - Are the overall mission and its corresponding targets properly reflected in the internal structures and the overall performance of the IHS?
 - Are the research priorities of the IHS conducive to meeting the “Targets for 2020”?
 - Does the setup of the research units (in terms of scope, size, and structure) contribute to meeting the “Targets for 2020”?
 - To what extent have the research units met the “Targets for 2020” – in terms of academic excellence, policy relevance, and public perception?
 - Have the targets, given the mission of the IHS, set the right incentives for the management and the researchers in terms of academic achievement, focus (priorities), trade-off between applied and academic work, outreach (media and public event), and the culture within the IHS?

2. Is the “Vision for 2025” both ambitious enough and realistic to implement the IHS mission and to further advance the institute’s overall performance? (forward-looking)
 - How ambitious is the “Vision” if assessed in comparison to similar institutions?
 - To what extent does the “Vision”, if implemented, support the long-term interests of the institute? Does it fulfill its mission properly?
 - In which aspects can the “Vision” be further enhanced?
 - Are there emerging trends and/or future challenges with regard to academia and society that are of relevance to the institute and that should be addressed in the long-term strategy of the IHS?
3. How well is the IHS (along four dimensions: organizational structure; focus of research units and research priorities; personal and financial resources; and its managerial processes and governance, including digital management) equipped to fulfill its mission? (forward-looking)
 - Which of the four dimensions will have to be adjusted to meet the “Vision for 2025”, and how specifically?
4. Are there other important issues that are not addressed in this document but that need to be considered for further developing the institute?

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation should provide tangible and realistic recommendations regarding the means that the management requires to further improve the capacity of the institute. The main evaluation criteria should be:

- Relevance for and impact on the academic community, including quantity and quality of the research output
- Relevance for and impact on policy making and on society, including quantity and quality of applied output and perception.
- Future viability (of the “Vision” as well as of the corresponding institutional setup)
- Visibility of the institution and its output at national and international (with focus on Europe) levels

4. Governance and Procedure

This evaluation is commissioned by the IHS Board of Trustees according to the IHS bylaws. The evaluation panel members will be appointed by the IHS Board of Trustees.¹

The evaluation panel reports to the Board. The IHS Scientific Advisory Board provides comments to the evaluation report, and the IHS management is tasked with implementing major conclusions.

The panel will be supported by a local secretariat, the WWTF GmbH. The secretariat will serve as the contact point between IHS and the panel in all matters except for travel arrangements.²

Methods

A panel of five international experts will perform the evaluation. The panel will be led by a chair. The panel writes a conclusive evaluation report. The evaluation panel will base its report and recommendations on (1) a written self-evaluation report by the IHS, (2) a letter of IHS management, and (3) interviews with IHS staff, board members, SAB members and external stakeholders during a two-day site visit.

Important steps:

- The Panel receives a preliminary schedule (interview slots) for the site visit and a list of potential interview partners. Panel can ask for additional interviewees.
- Panel will receive self-evaluation report in preparation of the site visit (approx. two months prior to the site visit). On that basis, the panel will develop questions for the site visit and can ask for further information.
- Site Visit: Interviews with IHS members, board members, and external stakeholder. First assessments will be developed in a closed meeting of the panel members at the end of the site visit.
- Based on the information and the site visit, the panel will write an evaluation report. IHS will receive a draft version and has the chance to provide comments on the report.
- The chair of the panel will present the final report to IHS management and Board of Trustees.

Deliverables

A **written evaluation report** (preliminary structure see Appendix 3) is the main document. The report shall answer the evaluation questions with regard to the aims and objectives of the evaluation. The evaluation report will be prepared by the Panel Chair with input from the other panel members. The Chair takes the responsibility for the report. The panel will deliver a draft version of the report to the IHS, and the IHS management has the chance to provide comments and implications.

¹ According to IHS bylaws, §20(3)

² IHS will provide office assistance in all matters regarding accommodation and travel plans.

A **presentation** of the main outcomes and recommendations to IHS leadership will take place: The Panel Chair will give a presentation to IHS leadership summarizing the main outcomes and recommendations of the evaluation.

Preliminary time table (to be finalized together with Panel Chair)

20. Nov. 2018	Appointment of panel chair by the Board of Trustees
January 2019	Formal approval of evaluation panel and Terms of Reference by the Board of Trustees, based on recommendation by the IHS Scientific Advisory Board
June 2019	Self-report and management letter submitted to evaluation panel
July 2019	List of questions from panel for site visit, based on self-report and management letter
September 2019	Two-day site visit of the evaluation panel. Date to be determined with the panel members
October 2019	Evaluation Panel delivers the report
November 2019	Comments by IHS Scientific Advisory Board: Comments by IHS
December 2019	Evaluation Panel provides final version of the report
January 2020	Presentation to IHS by Panel Chair

Qualification of the panel members

The panel should be composed of internationally renowned experts. It should reflect the diversity of the research topics and identify with the mission of the IHS. The composition makes sure that there is balance between social sciences and economic expertise in line with the balance at the institute. The composition of the panel aims for gender balance and a balance in terms of expertise in academic and applied research.

The panel as a whole should have expertise in:

- managing academic research institutions / larger departments in the social sciences or economics,
- public policy making (e.g. by experts from a Think Tank), and
- academic research.

Individual panel members should have/be:

- a professional background and/or education in economics or the social sciences relevant to IHS,
- highly renowned with regard to certain expertise required for this evaluation (see above),
- an excellent academic track record or track record in public policy making or management, and
- extended experience in similar evaluation exercises

Rules Regarding Conflict of Interest

All members of the evaluation panel are required to declare any conflicts of interests. Panel members must have no current affiliation with IHS within the past five years, including fellowships at the institute.

There should be no co-publication, joint research projects, or similar collaborations with current and past IHS members within the last five years.

Earlier affiliations with the IHS and past collaboration with IHS members must be disclosed and could also be an exclusion criterion, depending on the scope of these activities.

Confidentiality

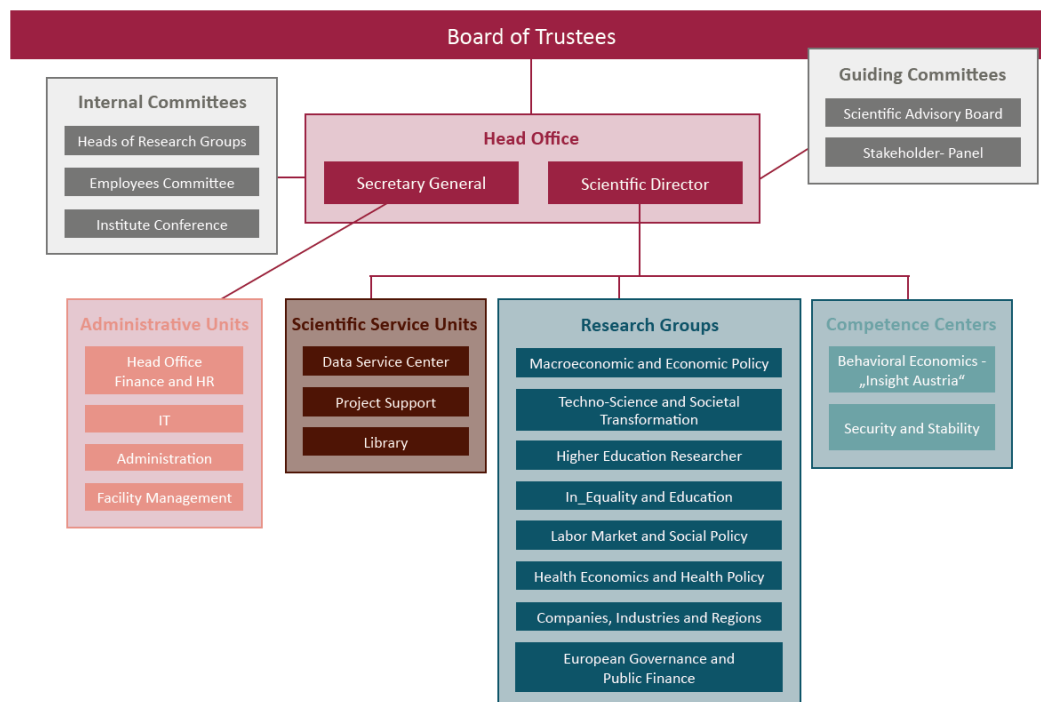
After accepting the invitation to act as an Evaluation Panel Member, members are asked to carefully read and sign the *Agreement of Evaluation*, including a data processing agreement and a non-disclosure agreement.

Appendix 1 Fact Sheet about IHS

Legal Status and Governance: IHS is a Vienna-based post-university research institute for the social sciences and economics. Legally, its status is that of a non-profit association ("Verein"). IHS was founded in 1963 and currently employs approximately 150 staff, of which approximately 80 are researchers, 20 are PhD candidates, 20 are student assistants, and 30 belong to the administration of the institute. IHS is led by the Scientific Director Martin Kocher (since 2016) and by the General Secretary Ralf Böckle (2017 -2019). The Board of Trustees is the governing body of IHS; the Scientific Advisory Board and the Stakeholder Panel are both advisory bodies. IHS is the only larger research institute in Austria dedicated to the social sciences in general.

Internal Structure: Research at IHS is aligned along three **Research Priorities**: "Economics, Markets, and Governance"; "Polarization versus Cohesion in Society"; "Innovation and Societal Change". Organizationally, these priorities are addressed by (mostly) interdisciplinary research units: Eight **Research Groups** (RGs) are the main research units at the intersection of academic and applied research, with basic subsidies as part of their annual budget. Two **Competence Centers** (CC) are research units focusing primarily on applied research and expertise-building. To create more visibility to some of its research, the institute started to establish several **Research Platforms**, with the additional aim to foster cooperation across research units.

The administration consists of the Head Office, the IT Department, administrative support to the research units, and the Facility Management. In addition, there are three Scientific Service Units: the Library, the Project Support, and the Data Service Center.



Funding: IHS has an annual budget of approximately € 11 Million. About 45% of the budget is covered by block funding from the Austrian Ministry of Finance (BMF) and the Austrian Central Bank (OeNB). In addition, there are several framework contracts with Austrian ministries and other public bodies for multi-annual research mandates.

Research Groups receive an annual funding from IHS, which consists of three parts: a block fund for covering personnel costs; funding for dedicated projects (including dissertation agreements with PhD candidates), also covering personnel costs; and funding for other expenses (such as travel costs). In 2018, € 1.4 Million were spent along these three categories, covering about 25% of the total personnel costs of research units.

About 55% of the overall budget (and 75% of the personnel costs of research units) are covered by third-party funding, primarily for research projects. IHS research groups engage in high-profile research projects (acquired from competitive funds such as EU Framework Program and national funding agencies) as well as commissioned research, mostly for Austrian public institutions (ministries, regional governments, NGOs,...).

Appendix 2 Targets for 2020

Targets for 2020

1. The institute achieves a general high scientific quality in its research work
 - Based on vigorous research, the institute provides contributions to solving specific societal challenges.
 - Both publicly and academically, the institute acquires thematic leadership in certain relevant social-scientific topics.
 - In selected topics, the institute closes existing gaps between long-term research projects of empirical analysis and policy advice. In addition, the institute competitively acquires third-party funding to engage in high valued project-based research.
2. The Institute attracts excellent researchers on the national and international level.
 - The IHS cooperates with selected universities that have a strong reputation in economics and social sciences, and jointly appoints senior researchers.
 - Both with respect to staffing and topics addressed, the IHS utilizes synergies with universities as well as independent institutional partners to advance its research agenda.
 - The Institute trains scientific talents through its junior research program for PhD candidates, and engages with the very best over a longer period of time.

Appendix 3 Evaluation Report Outline

The report should be concise, and its main part should not exceed 25 pages (without appendices). Each qualifying statement and recommendation should be based on evidence provided in the self-evaluation report and/or the interviews/site visit.

The following headings are suggested to structure the report:

- A. Executive summary (including a German translation: it should be written in a way to primarily address policy makers) (max. 2 pages)
- B. Description of the evaluation process (about 1 page)
- C. Assessment of the implementation of the IHS mission/strategy based on the evaluation aims, objectives and questions (10-15 pages)
- D. Evaluation questions structuring the report (in sync with questions formulated above):
 - 1. To what degree and with regard to which aspects have the “Targets for 2020” already been met or are expected to be met by the end of 2020? (backward-looking)
 - 2. Is the “Vision for 2025” both ambitious enough and realistic to implement the IHS mission and to further advance the institute’s overall performance? (forward-looking)
 - 3. How well is the IHS (along four dimensions: organizational structure; focus of research units and research priorities; personal and financial resources; and its managerial processes and governance) equipped to fulfill its mission? (forward-looking)
 - 4. Are there other important issues that are not addressed in this document but that need to be considered for further developing the institute?
- E. Recommendations: the recommendations should make clear to whom they are directed (e.g. Scientific Director, Board of Trustees, Scientific Advisory Board, Funders, etc.) Any recommendation should be based on evidence provided in section III. (about 3 pages)
- F. Appendices: Terms of References without its appendices, additional data

Institut für Höhere Studien – Report of the Evaluation Panel

January 2020

Achim Wambach (Chair)

ZEW - Leibniz-Zentrum für Europäische Wirtschaftsforschung

Jutta Allmendinger

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction and context of the evaluation

The Institut für Höhere Studien (hereinafter IHS) played an important role in the development of the social sciences in Austria. It was founded to help revive and develop the social sciences at a time when universities had poorly developed PhD training in the areas of economics, political sciences and sociology. Since that time, the research and educational capacity of Austrian universities has developed greatly and the original role for the IHS has in large measure disappeared. After a longer period of uncertainty, it reset its mission in 2014/15 with the objective of becoming a high-quality research institute capable of engaging in the public debate around key societal issues.

To evaluate the implementation of the reform, an international Evaluation Panel (hereinafter *Panel*) was asked to assess the research capacity of the IHS, its reform steps since 2014 as well as its plans for the upcoming years, to provide recommendations for the advancement of the institute. With this document, the panel presents its findings.

The evaluation exercise finds a research institute in the middle of a major change process, after a long period of stagnation and difficulties. This poses a specific context for the evaluation which has been consciously taken into account by the Panel when providing assessments and recommendations.

Key assessments and recommendations

The Panel endorses the overall mission of the institute (“The IHS in 2025”) and the ensuing “Targets for 2020”, especially the efforts to combine applied and academic research and to become a respected centre of expertise on a European scale. The focus on empirical research, cross-disciplinary work and societal challenges is consistent and adequate. For both main targets “achieving a high scientific quality” and “attracting excellent researchers” IHS has made good progress. **The Panel recommends IHS to stick to its “Vision” and increase efforts to reach the “Targets”.**¹

The 2015 reform introduced a new organizational structure of currently ten cross-disciplinary research groups/competence centres focusing along relevant policy fields and societal questions. The Panel sees this general structure of IHS as overall adequate and able to incorporate the current and future requirements of its academic and societal environment. However, research groups are uneven in academic quality and output, thematic range and profile and overall orientation. Not all groups have a clear profile. For the current basic budget available, the number of groups is too high and also difficult to manage. **The institute should**

¹ See Recommendations 1 and 2.

further develop and streamline its new inner structure along thematic areas (“challenges”). The competence centres should either be merged with research groups or become a group of their own. IHS should examine whether the number of research groups can be reduced as this would free some of the available resources for more mid- to long-term goals in research and for increasing academic quality of the output.²

Across the board, the output of the research groups can be termed as good, but not outstanding. Apart from funding, a major factor for not performing as expected in terms of academic quality of outputs is the group composition and the available competences in the groups. While some new methodological approaches have been introduced, some group portfolios are still dominated by descriptive research with limited academic impact and / or by more traditional methodological approaches. **IHS should be more ambitious regarding its research and its efforts to become a recognized player in Europe in a selected number of topics. Therefore, IHS should increase its share of mid- and long-term research in its portfolio as well as the number of top publications. A fully-fledged Data Service Centre should be established with high priority.³**

While IHS employs good personnel on all career levels, in order to live up with its ambitions, the institute still needs a number of senior researchers with an excellent academic record, including group leaders, to lift the academic profile and to introduce innovative methodological approaches. In addition, researchers must be in a position to spend sufficient time on basic research. The cooperation with strong academic institutions such as universities in Austria could be expanded. **The Panel recommends IHS to increase the efforts of to seek dual affiliations with universities, in particular in Vienna. This should be part of the effort to recruit a number of internationally researchers as group leaders. Joint grant applications, exchange or fellowship programmes could also serve as a remedy. IHS should also continue to invest in junior researchers by establishing a professional PhD track. A clearer career model and strong research environments should lead to the attraction of more excellent PostDocs.⁴**

The role of IHS is to combine excellence and relevance in the empirical social sciences, for it is the key to effective public engagement in issues of societal importance. To achieve this, a strong research orientation is a prerequisite but this is currently neither fully developed nor adequately covered in the current financial framework. IHS is lacking sufficient funding for mid- and long-term research, as the basic funding level on group level is rather low. Most of basic funds are being used to cover all kinds of administrative cost and parts of the overheads. This is also caused by the pricing policy for commissioned research at IHS, offering studies and services mainly at additional cost. **The Panel recommends a budget growth for**

² See Recommendations 3 and 4.

³ See Recommendations 5 and 6.

⁴ See Recommendations 9-12.

top-class research through. One step should be a higher basic budget for the institute, as both the amount and share are low in international comparison. In parallel, a new cost model should be developed. The Panel recommends IHS to cover a much higher degree of the general administration cost by project income (full-cost). In addition, the share of competitive money (research grants) should be increased.⁵

Finally, managerial processes and governance have been improved strongly over the last years. Internal governance mechanisms for targeting, planning and feedback are in place and appear to be appropriate for the current status of the on-going change process. However, there are a number of steps and measures that need to be taken in the upcoming years to put IHS on par with similar institutions on an international level. **The Panel recommends to further follow this path and to additionally professionalize digital management tools and mechanisms that foster the governance capabilities of IHS management. In order not to further decrease the share of basic funding that goes into research the Panel recommends negotiating with funders if the internal professionalization measures could be funded on a project basis.⁶**

2. Assessment along Main Evaluation Questions

In this section, the questions posed by IHS in the Terms of Reference are answered.

Main question 1: To what degree and with regard to which aspects have the “Targets for 2020” already been met or are expected to be met by the end of 2020? (backward-looking)

The “Targets for 2020” are the main point of reference for the evaluation of IHS’ performance. For both main targets “achieving a high scientific quality” and “attracting excellent researchers” the IHS has made good progress on an agenda of radical change when starting from a difficult position. Nevertheless, there is need for further progress, particularly with respect to attracting more top-class researchers at a senior level with the potential to head groups. This is a key to improving the scientific quality of the institute and acquiring thematic leadership in relevant topics. → See Recommendations 1 and 2.

Sub-question 1.1: Are the overall mission and its corresponding targets properly reflected in the internal structures and the overall performance of the IHS?

The evaluation panel endorses the overall mission of the institute (“The IHS in 2025”) and the ensuing “Targets for 2020”, especially the efforts to combine applied and academic

⁵ See Recommendations 7 and 8.

⁶ See Recommendations 13 and 14.

research and to become a respected centre of expertise on a European scale. The focus on empirical research, cross-disciplinary work and societal challenges is consistent and adequate. The same applies for the goals to set up a Data Service Centre and to the use of cutting-edge methods. IHS has made great progress in re-organising the capacities and internal structures along the “IHS in 2025” mission. Cross-disciplinary research groups focusing on relevant policy fields and societal questions have been established and some new methodological approaches have been introduced. However, over the next years the methodological arsenal should be further strengthened and vigorously diffused across the institute reflecting the state of the art in high-quality academic research. The Data Service Centre has yet to materialize and the evaluation panel recommends increasing the efforts here. → *See Recommendations 2-6.*

Sub-question 1.2: Are the research priorities of the IHS conducive to meeting the “Targets for 2020”?

In general, the research priorities are well chosen: They are well grounded in IHS legacy and they reflect the needs of policy makers, sponsors and scientific communities on a national and European level. Some of the research groups have a quite unique position in applied policy-related research in Austria. This, however, does not always translate into the development of innovative methods and long-term research programmes nor into adequate financial compensation for commissioned research. Some groups appear to be trapped in modestly ambitious equilibria of supply and demand. The main point therefore is not whether the priorities are well-chosen – in fact they mostly are – but whether the institute can deliver top-class research in up to ten different larger topics under the current tight financial framework (it might not). This means either more basic funding for mid- to long-term academic research as a basis for contract research / policy advice or less groups and topics. → *See Recommendations 2-6.*

Sub-question 1.3: Does the setup of the research units (in terms of scope, size, and structure) contribute to meeting the “Targets for 2020”?

See also the questions 1.1 and 1.2 above⁷.

In general, IHS is in a challenging transition period, not all groups have found their focus and optimal composition yet. Towards this end, our main observations are (1) that, given the available basic budget, the number of groups is still too high; (2) the group composition in some cases seems to reflect path dependence more than current needs; and (3) the groups are uneven in academic quality, thematic range and overall orientation. This unevenness is a

⁷ For notes on the scope, size and structure of the individual research groups, see chapter 6 of the report.

barrier to meet overall targets of the institute and works against a common understanding among staff of the direction of IHS. → *See Recommendations 2-6, 9-12.*

Sub-question 1.4: To what extent have the research units met the “Targets for 2020” – in terms of academic excellence, policy relevance, and public perception?

See also the questions 1.1 and 1.2 above.

The research groups have – in different degrees – contributed to the Targets for research output and impact of the institute. Across the board, this output can be termed as good, but not outstanding as the “Targets for 2020” have been partly but not fully met. This can be explained by two factors: first, the very ambitious wording of these targets, and second, the troubled history of IHS and its internal structures that are not always conducive to managing towards these targets. It is virtually impossible to achieve international competitiveness in a broad number of topics without proper research budgets and without a certain time period allowing the build-up of unique, research-based competence. More senior staff with a strong research track record and more time being devoted to academic research across the thematic portfolio are required if IHS is achieve these targets by 2025, . → *See Recommendations 7, 9-11.*

Sub-question 1.5: Have the targets, given the mission of the IHS, set the right incentives for the management and the researchers in terms of academic achievement, focus (priorities), trade-off between applied and academic work, outreach (media and public event), and the culture within the IHS?

The targets establish the right signals for management as they aim at an internationally competitive research institute, where relevance of the work and the ensuing policy advice is being firmly grounded in ambitious research. The first wave of incentives (i.e. measures) by the management and Board of Directors has already led to a strong transformative process that goes in the right direction. Now a second wave is needed to fully approach the targets, namely academic achievement, outreach and culture within the IHS. → *See Recommendation 7.*

Main question 2: Is the “Vision for 2025” both ambitious enough and realistic to implement the IHS mission and to further advance the institute’s overall performance? (forward-looking).

The vision is ambitious, especially given IHS’s current state in the change process. To maintain momentum the Board of Directors and the management should speed up their efforts in attracting senior staff members internationally regarded as research leaders in their fields, in some cases in dual affiliations with universities. → *See Recommendation 1.*

Sub-question 2.1: How ambitious is the “Vision” if assessed in comparison to similar institutions?

The high level of ambition expressed appears to reflect the specific situation of the IHS. Established Leibniz Institutes in Germany represent themselves in a matter-of-fact style, describing their main activities and thematic scope but rather avoid qualifying statements such as “leading” – for which there is rarely an objective benchmark. Still, they are keen to develop their own unique-selling-points (USPs), in order to define their position in the academic and policy landscape. For IHS in its current situation, the stated ambitious goals are appropriate, perhaps even necessary. → *See Recommendation 1.*

Sub-question 2.2: To what extent does the “Vision”, if implemented, support the long-term interests of the institute? Does it fulfil its mission properly?

The evaluation panel recommends that the institute should stick to this vision. Its level of ambition is right for the task at hand. However, it is still a vision on paper and a full realisation will depend both on internal change and on external factors: The tricky issue will arguably be to increase the ambitions on *both* sides, i.e. the institute and its main stakeholders and customers. If the latter are content with the current situation of relatively non-costly and expert reports that err on the side of descriptive, then the institute will either have difficulty developing a more ambitious research agenda or such a more ambitious agenda might impair the *perceived* relevance of IHS and its advice. In the latter case, the demand side might look for other suppliers of inexpensive and often descriptive research. → *See Recommendation 1.*

Main question 3: How well is the IHS (along four dimensions: organizational structure; focus of research units and research priorities; personal and financial resources; and its managerial processes and governance, including digital management) equipped to fulfil its mission? (forward-looking)

The *organizational structure* is now much closer to those of comparable research institutes abroad. A number of mechanisms have been established to deal better with thematic challenges and to improve important functions like inter-group and cross-disciplinary work or mid-term planning tools. The evaluation panel sees the general organizational structure of cross-disciplinary research groups with a well-defined mission as appropriate but the number of groups too high given the current budget. → *See Recommendations 3-4.*

The *focus of research groups and research priorities* differs across the institute. Some groups have a clear focus stemming from long-standing structures and interaction patterns with clients. There are other groups with either an unclear focus or a less distinct profile and this

also translates into sometimes less clear priorities. The evaluation panel, while endorsing the overall set-up, recommends further focussing activities in a number of thematic IHS areas.

→ See Recommendations 3-4.

The question of *human and financial resources* comes with a number of challenges. While IHS employs good personnel on all career levels there is still a strong need to recruit excellently qualified senior researchers to lift the academic profile and to introduce innovative methodological approaches. In addition, researchers must be in a position to spend sufficient time on basic research. However, IHS is lacking sufficient funding for mid- and long-term research, as the basic funding level on group level is rather low and most of these funds are being used to cover all kinds of administrative cost and parts of the overheads. The evaluation panel sees it as imperative to increase the “free” research budget and to hire a number of strong senior researchers with the ability to lead groups. → See Recommendations 7 and 9.

Finally, *managerial processes and governance* have been improved strongly over the last years. Internal governance mechanisms for targeting, planning and feedback are in place and appear to be appropriate for the current status of the on-going change process. The evaluation panel recommends to further follow this path and to additionally professionalize digital management tools and mechanisms that foster the governance capabilities of IHS management. In order not to further decrease the share of basic funding that goes into research the Panel recommends negotiating with funders if the internal professionalization measures could be funded on a project basis. → See Recommendations 8, 10 and 12.

Main question 4: Are there other important issues that are not addressed in this document but that need to be considered for further developing the institute?

IHS should – together with its main financiers and stakeholders – thoroughly discuss its financial framework. Currently the institute uses most of its basic funding upfront for all kinds of administrative cost and parts of the overheads, and only a smaller part goes into research, PhD- and other staff training and into activities to strengthen cross-disciplinary and inter-group work. However, applied research projects and expert reports do not cover the full cost. *Competitive grants* are mostly obtained from the Austrian research funding organisations with their rules for - overall very limited – overhead pay, so IHS cannot influence the level of cost coverage here. This is different from *commissioned/contracted research* where the principal asks for findings on her terms. Here, a full cost model including the payment of overheads should apply. The actual situation depends on the reputation and policy of IHS as well as on the willingness of the clients to pay. In particular, contract research commissioned by public bodies currently seems to come with no or little overhead pay. This situation is unsatisfactory for two reasons. First the institute lacks funds for mid- and long-term research work and appropriate research infrastructure for social science. Second the whole current set-up (basic funding guarantees subsidizes contracted research) prevents qualitative

growth and might even become a future issue with European standards and legal norms for subsidizing applied research. → See Recommendations 7 and 8.

3. Recommendations

Vision, mission and added value for Austria and beyond

Recommendation 1

The Vision “The IHS in 2025” is seen as ambitious and should continue to direct the IHS.

Recommendation 2

The “Targets for 2020” also point in the right direction. Some of the targets however will and cannot be (fully) reached in the current period (given the baseline of 2015), including academic leadership, longer-term research portfolios, strong record in competitive research funding, attraction of top-class researchers and intense collaboration with universities in recruitment and research matters. This does not mean that the targets have been wrongly chosen or that they should be abandoned. On the contrary, they are valid and necessary for long-term success. Arguably, the targets and the time window might have been too ambitious for the difficult transition period after a long crisis. The evaluation panel recommends that IHS should stick to these targets and there should be bold and adequate measures to implement them.

Thematic focus, research quality and profile of the institute

Recommendation 3

The main orientation and structure of the IHS is well-adapted to its mission. The institute should further develop its new structure along major thematic areas (“challenges”). Within these areas, efforts should be made to find the right focus as some groups are still quite broad while a few others concentrate on a (maybe too) small niche. Not all groups have a clear profile yet. The IHS in future can live up even more strongly to its cross-disciplinary potential.

Recommendation 4

The structure of IHS can be further streamlined. The competence centres can be either merged with research groups or become groups of their own. The three cross-cutting topics appear to have no real function currently and could be replaced by more operational incentives to collaborate across disciplines, groups and projects. Still, in the medium term it would be useful for the IHS to work on cross-cutting themes as an incentive for achieving a coherent research profile on the institute level. Further instruments would then be required to

better align the research groups with the cross-cutting themes. The number of research groups is still too high compared to the currently available basic funding. Further the institute should examine its thematic portfolio in the light of potentially greater compatibilities with mid- and long-term needs of the two main sponsors.

Recommendation 5

Parts of the institute's research portfolio are still dominated by descriptive research with very limited academic impact and by more traditional methodological approaches. The evaluation panel recommends that the IHS raises its current level of ambitions regarding cutting-edge methods. A first step in this direction would be to focus on diffusing available new methods like experimental economics across the institute. A fully-fledged Data Service Centre plus a data management plan incl. Open Data policy should have high priority. Finally, IHS should implement a policy that reports and studies generally must be published. This policy would not only justify public funding but would contribute to increasing the status and for academic reputation of the institute. Both of these outcomes would be of direct benefit not only to the institute but to its current and potential future stakeholders.

Recommendation 6

IHS should be more ambitious regarding its research and its efforts to become a recognized player in Europe in a selected number of topics. Therefore, the institute should increase its share of mid- and long-term research in the portfolio as well as the number of top publications. The annual targets for the research groups might not be well suited to the attainment of academic excellence because of the time lags in publication. Thus, IHS might consider employing three-year rolling targets. Further the panel recommends IHS to hire a number of senior and junior researchers with a strong track record.

Financial set-up

Recommendation 7

The role of IHS is to combine excellence and relevance in the empirical social sciences. To achieve this, a strong and ambitious long-term research orientation is a prerequisite but this is currently neither fully developed nor adequately covered in the current financial framework. Therefore, the evaluation panel recommends a strong budget growth for top-class research through a higher share of basic funding. In addition, the share of competitive money (both within IHS and from granting organisations) should be increased.

Recommendation 8

A new cost model should be developed and evaluated. The evaluation panel recommends the IHS to cover a much higher degree of the general administration cost by project income (towards full-cost basis). A related point is the need for IHS to improve its internal cost

monitoring systems. In order not to further decrease the share of basic funding that goes into research the Panel recommends negotiating with funders if the internal professionalization measures could be funded on a project basis.

Staff, competencies and link to higher education

Recommendation 9

The institute still needs a number of senior researchers with strong academic record to live up to the Vision “The IHS in 2025” and the “Targets for 2020”. The evaluation panel recommends IHS to increase the efforts to seek dual affiliations with universities. The ministry responsible for university funding should be asked for help to structurally and financially support this to the benefit of both IHS and universities. Efforts could also be made to secure dual affiliations with universities outside of Austria. This will strengthen the IHS profile in Europe and contribute to better academic standing and legitimacy.

Recommendation 10

Regarding junior staff, the evaluation panel recommends the IHS to: (i) proceed with the recruitment of talented PhD students for junior positions and to continue the efforts to offer structured tracks together with universities; (ii) A professional PhD track for applied economics and social sciences should be developed, also as a contemporary alternative to the former post-graduate education; (iii) A clearer career model and strong research environments should lead to the attraction of more excellent PostDocs.

Recommendation 11

The alignment, connections and collaborations with universities in Austria and abroad should be intensified. The current patterns are not numerous and so not entirely satisfactory. Dual affiliations, joint grant applications, exchange- or fellowship programmes could serve as a remedy. Some structured interaction with the nearby Complexity Science Hub might be considered.

Recommendation 12

The Panel acknowledges the gender equality plan of IHS. It succeeded in a balanced overall share of female and male researchers. However, IHS should further aim to increase the share of female group leaders and senior scientists over the next years.

Administration, professional services and public appearance

Recommendation 13

The evaluation panel recommends that the institute shall further modernize and streamline its (digital) administrative procedures to have an effective and efficient organisational backbone and also to raise synergies. While the panel supports the idea of sufficiently staffed and effective back office and administrative structures, this should not further reduce the share of basic funding available for research work.

Recommendation 14

While in classic media like television and radio IHS has a good coverage, the institute should improve its visibility in social media and its relations to the general public, e.g. through annual “main communication topics”. IHS should also broaden the scope of people active in public discourse starting with low-level-entry social media as spill-overs from social media to classical media can be expected if people develop a distinct profile.

4. Main Properties of the Institute

The Institute of Advanced Studies: A renowned name with a difficult legacy

The IHS, as a non-university research institute for social sciences in Vienna, was founded in 1963 to revive the then derelict social sciences in the Austrian university landscape. After 1945, Austrian Higher Education policy had no intent to set quality incentives nor to bring in (or bring back) productive generations to build up new research avenues. Universities were underfunded and in the hands of highly conservative gatekeepers. Therefore, the IHS was created as a stand-in organisation, by renowned emigrants and the Ford Foundation.⁸ In the following years IHS succeeded to establish itself as the core of social sciences in Austria and won strong acceptance with its post-graduate programmes which were then neither master or PhD programmes. IHS succeeded to establish itself as the core of social sciences in Austria.

From the (early) 1980s onwards, however, Austrian universities and their research underwent a number of substantial change processes: The universities improved strongly in research capacity and education quality and built up quite strong departments for economics and empirical social sciences, leading to PhD programmes and an ever-increasing academic output.

⁸ For an extended history of IHS in the early years see, e.g. Christian Fleck: Wie Neues nicht entstanden ist. Die Gründung des Instituts für Höhere Studien in Wien durch Ex-Österreicher und die Ford Foundation. Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften 11/1, 2000, 129-178, <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ss0ar-234866>

Contrary to that the IHS did not significantly adapt its own structure or offering in line with its environments and as a result gradually became an outlier, although still an important player in the overall national research context. Additionally, within the institute itself, there seems to have been two cultures. On the one hand, the economics department functioned like a well-funded “micro-university”. On the other, departments such as applied economics or sociology were more skewed towards commissioned research and research grants. The institute became less attractive for students and gifted junior researchers, as resource growth stagnated and other places improved. Senior researchers often did not gain prominence.

This uneven structure necessarily led to organisational and academic silos, low overall research performance in many departments and considerable identity problems. A strong leader was in place for a very long period and became a well-known public figure as director of IHS. However, he did not transform the institute nor introduced a modern structure. His successor then wanted to focus the institute mainly on economic research but could not win enough support for his plans with main stakeholders and as a consequence resigned. In addition to this the Science Ministry stopped providing basic funding due to a policy change, so the Ministry for Finance stepped in as main funder, together with the Austrian National Bank which had stayed on board. Other contributors had also withdrawn or significantly reduced their basic support.

In the early 2010s the situation for the IHS was definitely critical, so the renewed Board of Trustees and important stakeholders took action and opted for an all-out reform in 2014/15. Main changes, introduced by an interim director, included a new mission, the abandoning of the economics teaching element, a professionalization of in-house management, and most importantly a new inner structure with often cross-disciplinary, versatile research groups along thematic groupings (aka “grand challenges”). In addition, IHS got new bylaws, a new Scientific Advisory Board, and with Martin Kocher a new director. A next step was the introduction of a Vision (“The IHS in 2025”) and Targets for 2020.

As the IHS has had severe deficiencies over a long time, these structural, formal and managerial steps have been necessary for the *survival* of the institute. The *revival* and change in output and impact however cannot come overnight; and with revival the evaluation panel understands the IHS as a strong research institute with internationally visible academic credentials. In this context the effort for relevance should remain high, but on a stronger basis of academic research.

The Board of Trustees and the management have chosen to rebuild the institute with the current staff, and only few (namely “pure” academic) researchers left IHS in the last years. This policy is laudable, however to attain the goals, IHS should hire a number of new senior researchers with a policy orientation but foremost with strong academic credentials, in some cases also as group leaders. Otherwise the goal of being recognized as serious player both in the academic world and in the public realm will be out of reach.

Properties of the Austrian research system: A specific context

In short, a number of properties of the Austrian research system must be taken into account in this evaluation as IHS was and in many respects still is strongly influenced by these framework conditions:

- The universities dominate academic life both in research and education. They get most of the attention and public research budgets and in return, have improved in quality over the last decade.
- The academically oriented non-university research institutes are not part of a structured landscape (as e.g. in Germany).
 - In the Austrian case, the natural sciences display a number of strong institutes, e.g. within the Austrian Academy of Sciences.
 - The social sciences outside the universities live in smaller institutes organised as associations, with less stable income structures and a focus on very applied and rather short-term research agenda. One can therefore not speak of a “sector” outside the universities in the sense of German Leibniz- or Max Planck institutes.
 - There is therefore a clear need and a considerable niche for a high-class cross-disciplinary social science research institute tackling societal challenges on a high-quality level.
- Publicly funded sector institutes (e.g. for health, employment or social policy) generally play a weak role in Austria, they are – with a few exceptions – often small and either very close to the principal, or they are organised as private associations.
- This goes hand in hand with an apparently rather low absorptive public-sector capacity for empirical research, whatever the reasons may be. A direct consequence of that situation seems to be a limited willingness to pay full-cost, to support the build-up of long-term research agendas and the reluctance to allow study authors to publish their reports.

5. Overall Profile and Mission of the Institute

Profile and structure of IHS

Currently the IHS is a mid-sized social science research institute with an orientation on important societal challenges and policy fields like higher education, health, inequality or social policies. Further, the institute has an important focus on fiscal policy, selected macro-economic questions and economic forecasting. The overall staff amounts to approx. 150 (headcount, incl. PhD students), with 78 (again, headcount) working as researchers, most of them with a background in economics, sociology or political sciences. Apart from a number of administrative units, the IHS is organised in ten research units, i.e. eight thematic research

groups and two special competence centres. Research is supported by a still nascent data centre. The individual groups will be presented in chapter 6.

While the overall organisational structure of the IHS can be termed as appropriate, group size and composition are uneven and a number of small groups cover broad topics, while a few others have a too narrow focus. Some topics / policies are covered by more than one group. Not all groups have found their focus and optimal composition yet.

For the available basic budget, the number of groups is still too high. This uneven set-up of groups constitutes a substantial barrier to meet overall targets of the institute as it makes it challenging for staff to share a common understanding of the direction of IHS.

On the positive side, IHS has made great progress in re-organising the capacities and structures along the “IHS in 2025” mission. The classical mono-disciplinary department structures have been abandoned and cross-disciplinary research groups established along relevant policy fields and societal questions. Further some new methodological approaches have been introduced.

The evaluation panel sees the overall organizational structure as appropriate and well-chosen. It is now much closer to those of comparable research institutes abroad (however, it has been definitely far off before 2015). The IHS research priorities are well chosen: They have a legacy at the institute and they reflect needs of policy makers, sponsors and scientific communities on a national and European level. Some of the research groups have a quite unique positioning in applied policy-related research in Austria. There are other groups with either an unclear focus or a less distinct profile and this also translates into sometimes less clear priorities. The main focus on empirical research, cross-disciplinary work and societal challenges is consistent and adequate. In case the IHS can afford to cover additional fields, the evaluation panel sees an opportunity to engage with selected topics of direct relevance for the two main sponsors.

Over the next years the methodological arsenal should be further strengthened and vigorously diffused across the institute reflecting the state of the art in high-quality academic research. This includes methods present at IHS but yet barely diffused (like behavioural economics), but even more new methods coming in with new people. The Data Service Centre has yet to materialize and the evaluation panel recommends increasing the efforts here. Potential collaboration with the Complexity Science Hub within the IHS premises should be explored.

Mission and targets

To both guide and speed up the ongoing change process, the IHS Board of Trustees and the management have from 2016 onwards developed a mission for 2025 and targets for the current period.

The mission “The IHS in 2025” sets strong goals for the institute to become what it wants to be and what it should be: A fully fledged research institute.

The “Targets for 2020” might be a less straightforward case as they are the main point of reference for the evaluation of IHS’ performance and the year 2020 is around the corner. For both main targets “*achieving a high scientific quality*” and “*attracting excellent researchers*” the IHS has made good progress given the difficult situation and the all-out change process. Overall the “Targets for 2020” have been partly but not fully met. This can be explained by two factors: First, by the very ambitious wording of these targets. Second, by the troubled history of the institute, which introduces a substantial threshold for management to reach the targets. It is virtually impossible to achieve international competitiveness in a broad number of topics without a sufficient and well-funded realm for excellent academic research and without a certain time period allowing the build-up of unique, research-based competence.

There have been efforts to improve the scientific performance of the institute since then, however efforts should be considerably increased to quickly attract more top-class researchers with leadership functions. This is key to improving the scientific quality of the institute and acquiring thematic leadership in relevant topics.

The evaluation panel endorses the overall mission of the institute (“The IHS in 2025”) and the spirit of the “Targets for 2020”, especially the efforts to combine applied and academic research and to become a respected centre of expertise on a European scale.

Financial framework

The annual budget of the IHS amounts to approx. € 10.4 m and has grown over the last years thanks to more commissioned research and more multi-annual framework contracts to perform studies for sector ministries.

The basic funding is being provided by the Ministry of Finance and the Austrian National Bank; it has remained stable over the last years. Therefore, its relative share has decreased from approx. 53% to 47% over the last three years. The basic funding by the finance ministry is being set in five-year contracts, with the next due in 2021. The main share of the basic funding is being used to pay for all kinds of administration and overhead; only € 1.4m annually can be used for research in the current financial setting.

The commissioned research is characterised by many small contracts (typically in the lower five-digit range per contract) that as a rule neither allow for full-cost coverage nor for longer-term research agendas which then could translate into strong academic publication records.

IHS does regularly apply for competitive research on European and national level (34 projects from 2016-2018)⁹. The overall portfolio can be described as still quite moderate, with some larger participation in the current EU Framework Programme and a few projects sponsored by the Austrian Science Fund. However, most of the groups (have to) devote most of their time for commissioned research, often without permission to publish the results.

For its thematic scope and number of groups, the IHS has a meagre financial basis. The basic funding is too low to allow for a substantial research agenda. This scarcity is further aggravated by the need to use most of the basic funding for administrative costs including rent, as the income from commissioned research nearly ever pays for full cost. Only approx. 15% of the institute budget can be used for longer-term research. Under such conditions IHS will not be able to live up to its ambitious vision and targets to become a strong research institute again.

The evaluation panel sees it as imperative for IHS to regain such a position: Many commissioned studies can also be provided by commercially driven actors, while Austria needs a place where cross-disciplinary, mid- and long-term social science research is being performed on important policy fields and societal issues. At the end of the day, this issue is not only about high-impact publications, careers and academic reputation: The sponsors and customers themselves directly profit from deep insights, new methods, better data panels and internationally recognized work.

Research output

There are two equally legitimate approaches to assess the research output of the IHS: First, it must be asked whether the institute lives up to the standard of comparable research organisations across Europe. Second, if taking into account the specific context and legacy, how did IHS perform under these difficult conditions?

For the evaluation panel, all three output categories (i. academic quality; ii. policy relevance; iii. public outreach) are important. However, the panel is convinced that outstanding academic quality (publications, long-term research, sophisticated methods and data-sets) is the fundament of a research institute, as it yields a strong positive influence on the quality of the policy-relevant expertise, and at the end of the day, also on the degree of public appreciation.

IHS employs around 80 researchers. In the last years the output was constant with around 40 peer-reviewed journal articles (with a higher number in 2018), and 40-60 other research outputs like book chapters, edited volumes or other articles. Only a smaller fraction of the peer-reviewed articles has appeared in top-ranked journals. In the same line, the number of

⁹ E.g., Horizon 2020: 12; Other EC tenders: 13; FWF: 6; FFG: 3

competitive research grants is likewise low. There are also other academic activities like hosted guests, research stays abroad or teaching.

While the output level might be understandable or even satisfactory for the institute given its past and difficult change process, it is definitely still below the standards of comparable research institutes abroad and does not put the IHS in an internationally competitive position. Therefore, the real answer to the first question should be a vigorous and rigorous quality policy on all levels, also to make the second question irrelevant in the foreseeable future.

One hypothetical reason for the current state of the institutes' academic output could be an overwhelmingly attractive market for commissioned research, i.e. a situation where very applied long-term research comes in through large-scale, well-financed projects. However, this is not the case, as IHS performs many, but small and not well-paid contract research projects (also within the packages of the framework contracts with ministries).

The picture looks better with regard to policy impact. IHS staff was invited to many advisory committees and other groups. Further some of the impact stories in the self-report show that the institute has contributed to policy developments and changes over the last years.

In all, the two questions can be answered in the same way as above. For the IHS it is not mandatory to be trapped in a less demanding small home market. However, to be successful as a strong policy-oriented research institute on European level, much more substantial (long-term, academic) research must form the basis for the commissioned, policy-related work, with internationally competitive methods attractive for a wider market.

6. Research Groups and Competence Centres

According to the data provided by IHS, their current research staff is 78 people (about 60 FTEs; October 1, 2018). Staff numbers increased from about 50 FTEs in 2016 which marks a nearly 20% overall growth in staff. This is due to the fact that IHS has been successful to increase project funding as well as funding from framework contracts from 4.4m Euro (2016) to 5.37m Euro (2018) (see self-evaluation report, p. 26). The average size of groups is 6 persons (ranging from about 3 persons to about 10 persons).

Currently, IHS has an even gender distribution between all research staff (50% : 50%), however, only 30% of group heads are female.

From 2016 to 2018, IHS nearly doubled its contribution from basic funding for personnel costs in the budget of the groups (in absolute numbers, overall share of IHS contribution to the personnel costs only increased slightly). IHS management successfully departed from the former structure of very uneven funding of the groups from basic means. While in 2016, the basic funding for one FTE could differ up to a factor of 100, this factor has now been reduced to 2 at the most. In 2016 the share of basic funding for an individual group ranged from 1% up to 78%. In 2018, this has been successfully reduced to a range from 15% to 36% (and

differences can be partly explained with basic funding being necessary for tasks like the forecast). In effect, this means that groups that had basically taken care of their own income in the past, have more resources from IHS internal funding now.

The panel positively acknowledges this development, and expects that those groups that now have a larger share of basic funding will have a greater return of academic impact in the future. Still, the basic funding level on group level is low and does not allow for strategic action and long-term research. This has to do with the use of existing basic funding as well as with its low overall level.

Research Group: Companies, Industries, Regions (CIR)

*Current staff:*¹⁰ 4.5 FTEs (1.5 female / 3.0 male); *Staff growth (2016 – 2018):* 29%

The CIR group works on the basis of a well-developed multiregional input-output model to analyse intersectional and interregional linkages and effects in the Austrian economy, and complements this with other methods, such as econometrics, operations research, and efficiency analysis. This cross-disciplinary group (founded as an intra-departmental group in 2013) works for many customers on a variety of questions and in mostly smaller-sized projects. The group has also produced a few publications in peer reviewed journals. The quality of the work can be termed as good; however the strong engagement in contract research might lead to a number of challenges in the long run. On the one hand, it might be difficult to constantly guarantee the inflow of new academic ideas, people and state-of-the-art knowledge into the existing models and methods; on the other hand the academic community typically designs new models when new major questions do appear. “Spare-time” academic research and the existing cooperation and qualification strategies of the group members might create illusions of international state-of-the-art. The market and outreach of CIR are rather local, i.e. concentrated on Austria both in terms of policy relevance and public perception. In this context the input-output model also appears to have limitations like the missing NUTS2 level for European regions.

Research Group: European Governance and Public Finance

Current staff: 6.4 FTEs (1.8 female / 4.6 male), *Staff growth (2016 – 2018):* 64%

This research group combines a mixed portfolio of four major policy related topics, mostly dealing with more cross-cutting European and national issues. Research on fiscal issues centres around a model to analyse policy changes. Its array of customers and sponsors include European institutions. The group strongly contributes to the IHS publication record and also

¹⁰ All numbers are by October 2018.

to other output categories and is among those that appear to make most of available resources from basic and competitive funding. The number of researchers has been growing but still the number of researchers per sub-topic within the umbrella of “European Governance and Public Finance” is quite small and the linkages between the four sub-topics are still in an emergent state. While cohesion and focus should be strengthened, this group with its strong leadership shows that a strong research basis and relevant policy studies can be combined in the context of the IHS.

Research Group: Health Economics and Health Policy

Current staff: 4.3 FTEs (1.7 female / 2.6 male), Staff growth (2016 – 2018): -2%

This research group has a clear mission with a strong focus on health policy and economic as well as structural issues of the complex Austrian health system. As other thematic IHS groups, the health experts (have to) cover a broad variety of sub-fields. The group is one of the largest providers of expertise in their policy field in Austria in a comparatively small market for applied research in public health in Austria. This translates into many projects for Austrian public-sector institutions and also some international customers, but also into media attention and into a number of academic outputs like journal articles. The group employs a number of methodological approaches. However, the number of descriptive studies is high and the variety of topics could be too broad to gain international leadership in certain academic and policy-related questions.

Research Group: Higher Education Research (HER)

Current staff: 11.6 FTEs (9.3 female / 2.3 male); Staff growth (2016 – 2018): 35%

The HER group has very good access to public sector data and focuses on survey-based research about students, graduates and on related gender issues. This is one of the larger groups at IHS with very strong ties to the main customer, an Austrian ministry responsible for higher education. In addition, HER customers and funders include German and European institutions. Like with a few other policy fields covered by IHS, Austrian universities have neglected higher education research as a topic for a long time. This created a natural competitive advantage for IHS in a market with relatively unambitious signals and incentives regarding methods, academic output and education of a next generation of researchers. The HER group can therefore maintain a leading position with often descriptive studies, a comparably low academic output and – in the case of some projects – as a kind of extended part of the ministry realm. This relatively safe environment could be an opportunity to include new competencies, methods, and new senior researchers with strong academic credentials also to obtain a leading role on the European level in selected subfields of higher education research.

Research Group: Labor Market and Social Policy (LMSP)

Current staff: 4.6 FTEs (3.6 female / 1.0 male); Staff growth (2016 – 2018): 12%

The LMSP group covers the broad policy fields of labor market and social policy / welfare state. Like other groups this composition is a result of the 2015 reform. Integration work is still ongoing while cross-disciplinary work has become more common. The group can rely on well-established models and data-sets as well as on strong relations with research at Austrian universities (JKU Linz). On this basis the group contributes to research on societal challenges like polarization vs. cohesion. This mid-sized group has grown recently, with a good contribution to all kinds of IHS outputs (also in relation to the small share in basic funding). Methodologically, the group relies strongly on well-proven tools and might profit from innovative approaches. Again, like other groups, the focus on Austria, Austrian policy issues and key customers should be complemented by a higher degree of international grants, contracts and collaborators. Finally, the rationale for focus and composition of LMSP vis a vis other IHS groups is not fully obvious to the evaluation panel.

Research Group: In_Equality and Education (EQUI)

Current staff: 5.1 FTEs (2.9 female / 2.2 male); Staff growth (2016 – 2018): 24%

The EQUI group covers a broad thematic spectrum from social inequality to education and labor market outcomes. One key research target is to better understand the social situation of vulnerable Austrian population groups like early school leavers or migrants. Again, the rationale for focus and composition of EQUI vis a vis other IHS groups is not fully obvious to the evaluation panel when seen from a policy perspective. When seen from the multi-factorial vulnerability of the research “objects” the profile of the group is becoming clearer but this still has to translate into a clearer mission, more publications representing the whole group and a stronger common methodological backbone. The current research output is quite prolific in numbers. Regarding their future goals the group might be overambitious as EQUI intends to build an equivalent to Raj Chetty’s Social Mobility panel, without having all the prerequisites to do so.

Research Group: Macroeconomics and Economic Policy

Current staff: 9.2 FTEs (3.6 female / 5.6 male); Staff growth (2016 – 2018): 1%

This group consists of the former academically oriented macroeconomics department and the economic forecast experts of IHS. The latter part is perhaps representing the best-known part of the institute to the general public (*quarterly economic forecast*). The former part can

look back on a strong past when the IHS economists had a visible academic output, namely in general equilibrium models, and were engaged in student training, often together with Vienna university departments. Most of the more theoretical researchers have left since the 2015 reform that ended teaching at IHS. The current outfit is a sizeable group (with 26% basic funding) and a considerable output also on the academic side. However, taking a closer look there seems to exist two quite distinct sub-groups with their own research agendas respectively. It was not easy to find out for the evaluation panel which future-oriented vision the overall group and specifically for the academic macroeconomics unit might display.

Research Group: Techno-Science and Societal Transformation (TSST)

Current staff: 9.7 FTEs (4.4 female / 5.3 male); Staff growth (2016 – 2018): 40%

The TSST group, while the largest group at IHS, is very much specialised in a niche; this is applied policy research on *Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)* in the current EU Framework Programme. The group regularly has a role in analytical and accompanying EU projects with acronyms like *New HoRRizon*, *HEIRRI*, *JERRI*, *SATORI*, *ENERI*, *MoRRI* and *Super_MORRI*). Building on traditions in Science and Technology Studies, ELSA-approaches and concepts like the Quadruple Helix, the TSST group acts as a strong voice for RRI on national and European level in fields like biomedicine, mobility or security. The group has grown over the last years and so has its share of grant income. The number of academic publications is relatively high but concentrated in low to medium tier academic journals in the field. The evaluation panel suggests that the group attempts to diversify its funding portfolio to avoid an over dependence on one funder. It is also advisable to strengthen ties to other STS groups within Austria and abroad. The group may also benefit from attempting to raise its ambitions with respect to the types of journal outlets it targets and to investigate the possibility of exploiting some of the in house competence at IHS to diversify its arsenal of methods and approaches. The group's success in resource attraction outside of Austria is a competence that needs to be diffused throughout the IHS.

Competence Centre (CC): Insight Austria

Current staff: 2.9 FTEs (1.3 female / 1.6 male); Staff growth (2016 – 2018): did not exist in 2016

Insight Austria is a small and very recent group, strongly related to the research interests of the new director. It deals with behavioural economics and explores ways how (economic) incentives work to trigger behavioural changes. According to the IHS Self Report (p. 79), the CC sees itself as a quite unique “... combination of an academic department, a scientific consultancy and a ‘nudge unit’”. The centre could form strong links to the groups at the University of Vienna where the director has an affiliation as full professor. For the evaluation panel,

Insight Austria is a promising experiment that has not yet found its final shape: Open questions include potential trade-offs between research and consulting, the dual role of Martin Kocher as IHS director and head of unit and the potential to spread the powerful behavioural approach over the whole institute (as part of a needed methodological renewal). As a competence centre, this group receives no funding from IHS basic means – which seems necessary to generate considerable academic impact.

Competence Centre (CC): Security and Stability

Current staff: 5.7 FTEs (2.7 female / 3.0 male); Staff growth (2016 – 2018): 2%

This competence centre has a special tie to an Austrian ministry and deals with issues of inner security through studies and evaluations with different methodological approaches. A number of researchers work with sensitive data and the whole CC appears to be established to comply with customer needs. The results are many, often unpublished reports and a meagre academic outcome. The topics covered by the CC overlap to some degree with the work of other IHS groups. For such a special vehicle the project income is not overwhelming. Apart from the obvious topics, the CC could not effectively communicate to the evaluation panel what their rationale and main strengths are.

General observations on the research groups

Overall, some general observations can be made that are helpful to IHS management for the organisation and structure of the groups to increase coherence between the groups and to facilitate the overall mission of IHS. The following needs or To-dos can be listed as follows:

- A balanced funding portfolio of the groups that makes them more independent from single customers to gain leeway in the capacity to develop a longer-term research programme. This portfolio shall include sources of basic research funding because in general such funding is more long term and is able to contribute to the overall mission of IHS. IHS shall avoid groups that are largely dependent on a single customer, in particular if the results cannot be published, for there are no spill-overs of knowledge and reputation to IHS as a whole.
- A critical mass of researchers in the groups that have high academic reputation. This is also connected to the fact that the average group size is 6 persons while on the other hand the range of topics claimed to be addressed in the groups' name is rather wide. This either leads to the fact that for sub-topics there is only a single expert, or several sub-topics are not addressed in any substantial way by these groups.
- Change the use of basic funding. As one first step, the groups should be made aware that IHS basic funding is used to a certain degree to subsidize contracted research, which should not be the task of basic funding.

- A stronger European perspective for the research groups both topic wise and in terms of costumers (be it EU funding or costumers in other European countries).
- The thematic scope of the research groups is often owed to the institute's legacy. It should be stronger aligned to the "outside world" be it in academic terms and following the needs of customers.
- A stronger correlation between input (source of funding) and output, i.e. groups with stronger focus on competitive research grants should deliver on scientific output in terms of top academic publications.
- Strengthening of the methodological capacities of the research groups, i.e. not only deliver "descriptive research" to customers but more actively take up/contribute to innovative method development in the social sciences. Descriptive research means research that is not working with testable hypotheses using mainly descriptive statistics which is not able to reveal causal relations und thus barely publishable in top-journals.
- Strengthening the interaction with academia (see also section 5 below). Research groups should develop their own strategy on academic interaction, making stronger use of research partner e.g. for joint conferences, joint projects and sabbaticals from partners in the IHS and of IHS members in partner institutions.

Scientific support

IHS has made good progress of the last years to build-up and stream-line internal processes that support the research activities of the institutes. Furthermore, due to good customer relations, IHS has good access to large public data sets which help them to build up USPs in certain areas (e.g. health economics). Both aspects, however, need increased efforts in the future for to not fall behind comparable institutions nationally and abroad and to remain competitive. In particular, digitalization has also captured the social sciences and economics over the past years.

Hence, two measures are pivotal in the next years: (i) management has to become data based internally by implementing digital tools to cover the activities of the institute. In particular, IHS requires a Research Information System (RIS) that provides real time information to management and also to the research groups. It should include data on research projects (both competitive and commissioned work) as well as output data such as publications to support accounting, reporting as well as public relations. (ii) A fully fledged Data Service Centre should have high priority in the agenda of IHS management (as suggested in IHS "Vision 2025"). The main driver for this should be to centralize all data activities to safeguard data quality and data management and to allow for linking different data sets. Building-up high quality data sets is also key to publish in high-ranked journals. In this regard, an open data policy should be considered. IHS should also become a proponent of open access of publications, in particular on the area of commissioned studies.

7. Embeddedness of IHS: Cooperation Patterns, Networks, and Partners

To fulfil its mission the IHS needs strong partnerships, as grand challenges bear their name for a good reason and are characterised by many complex tasks that cannot be fulfilled by a single organisation.

IHS, like all research organisations, has a number of collaboration partners on project, group and institute level. There are long-standing ties with local universities, like the University of Vienna or the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Wien) in the realm of post-graduate education in finance and macroeconomics. This is a legacy from the past and can continue as a partnership in an adapted form. Overall, the current patterns cannot be described as satisfactory yet; only one IHS position – its director – comes as a full-blown dual affiliation with a university. Neither the self-report nor the site visit revealed too many vibrant and institutionalized collaboration networks of IHS in Vienna or beyond. This does not mean that IHS researchers are not respected actors and partners. For the evaluation panel, the revealed overall density and embeddedness of IHS is just too low to rate the institute as a central network partner for high-class research.

This is all the more worrisome as university-based social sciences are now in a much better state than they were 20 years ago and new complementary actors have entered the scene, in particular with a focus on quantitative social sciences and by strengthening cooperation between social sciences and informatics. One of them, the Complexity Science Hub, even lodges under the same roof, and another one, the Central European University – a dominantly social science and economics university –, is about to move 20 ERC grantees in social sciences to Vienna.

Neither the self-evaluation report nor the site visit revealed overly strong international cooperation. The guest researcher program – while already bringing some international researchers to IHS or maintaining relations with alumni – could be further strengthened, but also entering a European market for contracted research and also by a stronger focus on issues that have a European aspect in it, could provide leverage for stronger international ties.

The IHS has not only collaboration partners but also competitors. These are mostly national institutes in a range from private consulting bodies to various forms of applied research institutes. Building on academic expertise and on a strong relation with academia would contribute to set the IHS apart from many of these institutes.

The alignment, connections and collaborations with universities in Austria and abroad should be intensified. Dual affiliations, joint grant applications, exchange- or fellowship programmes and possibly also some structured interaction with the nearby Complexity Science Hub could serve as a remedy. In the long run, a good alumni culture and network could help IHS to sustain long-term research cooperation with institutions in Austria and abroad.

With regard to interaction with society, IHS has been active to engage with a public in its immediate environment in the neighbourhood. IHS could also maintain its central role in economic forecasting in the public and policy sphere. IHS shows very good presence in classical media such as television, newspapers and radio. As social media became more prominent in public discourse, the institute should improve its visibility in social media and its relations to the general public, e.g. through annual “main communication topics”. IHS should also broaden the scope of people active in public discourse starting with low-level-entry social media as spill-overs from social media to classical media can be expected if people develop a distinct profile.

8. Human Resources

Human resources and staff structure

The main point with regard to human resources, which is also key for IHS to strengthen its academic profile, has been stated explicitly above: at senior level, academically highly qualified personnel are key to the success of IHS. Thus, recruitment should focus on that.

Gender equality

The Panel acknowledges the gender equality plan of IHS. It succeeded in a balanced overall share of female and male researchers. However, IHS should aim to increase the share of female heads of groups where female researchers are currently underrepresented (30:70).

PhD students and other junior researchers

Regarding junior staff, the evaluation panel recommends the IHS to (i) proceed with the recruitment of talented PhD students for junior positions and to continue the efforts to offer structured tracks together with universities. (ii) A “professional PhD” track for applied economics and social sciences should be developed, also as a contemporary alternative to the former post-graduate education. (iii) A clearer career model and strong research environments should lead to the attraction of more excellent PostDocs.

9. Governance and Managerial Processes

The panel clearly acknowledges the efforts of the director and management to improve the managerial processes and governance over the last years. Management has succeeded in establishing a stable and neat organisational structure at IHS by introducing IHS-wide procedures by stronger mid-term planning, by elaborating an annual work plan with the research groups, by annual target agreements with the research groups and by introducing first quality assurance measures (e.g. evaluation research performance). In addition, there are some

instruments in place to facilitate intergroup collaboration. As also stated by the self-evaluation report and in the interviews, this is an on-going change process. The panel encourages IHS management to continue this effort and to widen them with further organisational processes required such as cost planning, monitoring and accounting tools and a research information system. The evaluation panel recommends to further follow this path and to additionally professionalize digital management tools and mechanisms to raise synergies.

10. Appendices

Evaluation procedure

Four years after this fundamental renewal of governance and structures the IHS Board of Directors commissioned an external evaluation through an international expert panel. The task of this panel is stated by the Terms of Reference (IHS, 2019) as follows: *“The 2019 evaluation will be the first evaluation of its kind, and it is an opportunity for learning about how to further improve the IHS. The primary objective of the evaluation is to pitch the organizational reform and its results against the IHS mission and its implementation strategies. It should provide the management and the stakeholders of IHS with a fresh external perspective and a realistic assessment regarding whether the institute in its current setup is capable of fulfilling its mission.”* The results of the evaluation shall feed into the negotiations with the main sponsors for a renewed performance agreement 2021-2025 as well as supporting the director and the Board of Directors in their efforts to further reform IHS.

To inform the panel, IHS provided a comprehensive “self-evaluation report” followed by a two-day site visit mid-September at IHS. The site visit included presentations and discussions with IHS management, research groups and competence centers, staff members and representatives as well as members of the Board of Trustees. Additionally, guests were invited for interviews. The self-evaluation report and the site visit provide the information basis for this evaluation report.

External Interviewees at the site visit

Jesus Crespo Cuaresma	Vienna University of Economics and Business
Ludovit Garzik	Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development
Kurt Hager	Federal Ministry of the Interior
Christian Helmenstein	Federation of Austrian Industries
Klemens Himpele	Municipality of Vienna
Johanna Hofbauer	Vienna University of Economics and Business
Alfred Katterl	Federal Ministry of Finance
Peter Mooslechner	National Bank of Austria
Josef Probst	Association of Austrian Social Insurance Carriers
Elmar Pichl	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
Christoph Schneider	Austrian Economics Chamber
Johannes Sorz	University of Vienna
Josef Wöss	Austrian Chamber of Labour
Manfred Zauner	Federal Ministry of Social Affairs

Comments and addenda from Heads of Research Units

The evaluation focused on the overall achievements of the IHS; the research units are the main organizational instruments for carrying out research. A detailed assessment of individual research units was not part of the Terms of References. Given the brevity of the descriptions for some of the research units, here is a collection of addenda and comments on the sections in the evaluation report that deal specifically with the respective research units.

Research Group: Companies, Industries, Regions (CIR)

The purpose of the group CIR has changed massively. Before 2016, the only tasks were to conduct commissioned research and to engage in advising policy makers; CIR was and is very successful in these fields as confirmed by very high media coverage and great financial performance. Since 2016, we have more freedom working towards a more academic profile, first successes have been achieved. We agree, a European NUTS2 input-output model would be great.

Research Group: Higher Education Research (HER)

HER mainly works on projects tendered out in competition (exceptions are follow-up projects or projects funded by research grants). More than half of our turnover comes from international sources, national funds come from various clients (universities, stakeholder organisations, etc.), and from the BMBWF. Many organisations and individuals from students to rectors to policy makers use and work with our results, which are in general publicly available. Particularly in evaluations of higher education policies carried out on behalf of the BMBWF, our critical results were frequently taken up by the Austrian Parliament and led to changes in laws or regulations. We have built up this basis over 20 years exclusively through project funding, and only in the last two years have we received approximately 5% of our turnover from the IHS basic funding freely available for basic research.

We therefore highly appreciate the evaluation's recommendation to invest in our academic output, the development of methods and in new senior researchers. The available expertise and data sources as well as our international network are a good foundation for this. However, additional basic funding would be needed to fully implement the recommendations.

Research Group: In_Equality and Education (EQUI)

Concerning the group's goal for regular empirical discussions of "social progress" in education and employment Raj Chetty's Equality of Opportunity Project is taken as a best practice example for the development of innovative indicators and interactive presentation in the web. The goal is ambitious given the available financial resources, but is based on a wide range and long history of studies on inequality and social indicators the group and its members conducted.

Research Group: Techno-Science and Societal Transformation (TSST)

The TSST group appreciates the evaluation and wants to highlight recent and ongoing developments regarding some of the critical issues raised. The group continues diversifying

funding sources, broadening its thematic scope and publishing in leading journals. Current funders include H2020, FWF, FFG, OeAD, OeNB, TA SWISS. Research topics cover artificial intelligence, digitalization, virtual reality, end-of-life care, genetic testing, genome editing, personalized medicine, critical automobility and RRI. The group publishes in Q1 journals (<https://www.scimagojr.com/>) such as “Big Data & Society”, “City and Community” “Journal of Responsible Innovation”, “Research Ethics”, “Science”, “Science and Engineering Ethics”, “Science and Public Policy”, “Social Science and Medicine” (<https://www.ihs.ac.at/ru/techno-science-and-societal-transformation/publications/>). The group cooperates within IHS in projects (auxilium, POPEYE, TAXUD), research platforms (Gender and Diversity, Science goes Public, Transport and Mobility) and acquisition activities. It will continue its existing involvement in Austrian and international STS and RRI communities (Critical Automobility Studies Lab, Österreich forscht, RRI Platform, STS Austria).

Competence Centre (CC): Security and Stability

- The set-up as a Competence Center (CC) was a management decision (founded in 2017).
- The group managed to win an additional federal ministry as a client, who is now stakeholder of the IHS.-
- According to the target agreement of the CC with the IHS management, it is not a target to produce academic outcome. Nevertheless, there are some (high-level) publications.
- Due to security requirements (sensitive personal / confidential data) of our clients the majority of the research reports cannot be published.
- In contrast to IHS Research Groups the CC is 100 % third-party funded.
- Overlapping with the topics of other IHS Research Groups is intended (multidisciplinary projects).
- Main strength of the CC is the application and development of research tools to measure interior security. Specific indicators are being developed for evaluating global security-relevant data. These are useful to measure safety in a broader sense.