

November 2023

Leibniz Senate Confirms Excellence of Research at LIKAT Rostock

23.11.2023

According to this year's evaluation, the Leibniz Institute for Catalysis in Rostock has achieved "outstanding research results" that are "highly regarded internationally". The Senate of the Leibniz Association expressly recommends that the federal and state governments continue to jointly fund the research institute. This can be read in the recently published report of the Senate, which had the institute evaluated by an independent panel of experts at the beginning of the year.

With its research, the Leibniz Institute for Catalysis, or LIKAT for short, provides the scientific basis for procedures and recycling processes that are essential for the goal of a climate-neutral society and for a resource-conserving economy. The institute also draws on solid expertise from 70 years of catalyst development in Rostock. Today, it is one of the largest research institutions in Europe in this field and was able to impress the Commission once again in its most recent evaluation in January 2023: since the last evaluation in 2016, the institute has made "excellent progress", the experts state in their report. The "highlights" of the research results included work on the development of chemical processes based on renewable raw materials instead of fossil sources such as crude oil and natural gas.

The criteria for assessing the scientific quality of a research institute include the number and reach of articles in specialist journals or books as well as registered patents. The reach is measured by how often the papers are cited. In addition, the relevance of the research for society, i.e. the possibility of putting the research results into practice, also counts. "The Institute [...] very successfully transfers research results into application," the report states. In the years 2019 to 2021 alone, LIKAT researchers were involved in 86 patent applications and transferred ten chemical processes from the laboratory to industrial production.

Another criterion used to assess research performance is the acquisition of third-party funding, i.e. additional research funds raised by LIKAT researchers. The Leibniz Senate rates these as "remarkably high", with 41 percent coming from industry. In general, LIKAT proves to be a valued research partner in Germany and abroad with around 50 cooperation projects every year. The "Catalysis2Scale" transfer pilot plant, which will open in 2022, will "significantly expand LIKAT's capacity to transfer projects to pilot scale".

The institute offers "excellent development opportunities for young scientists", the evaluation report continues. Between 2019 and 2021, a total of 81 people completed their doctorates, with a reasonable doctoral period of between three and four years.

The Senate of the Leibniz Association reaffirms LIKAT's wish to raise all joint professorships with the University of Rostock to W3 level. It was also suggested that a doctoral program tailored to the specific requirements of the institute be developed and that the proportion of women in the scientific field, particularly at management level, be increased.

The LIKAT is "delighted with the extremely positive assessment", according to the institute's statement. The Senate report provides significant impetus to further develop LIKAT scientifically and organizationally. The proposed measures are already being implemented.

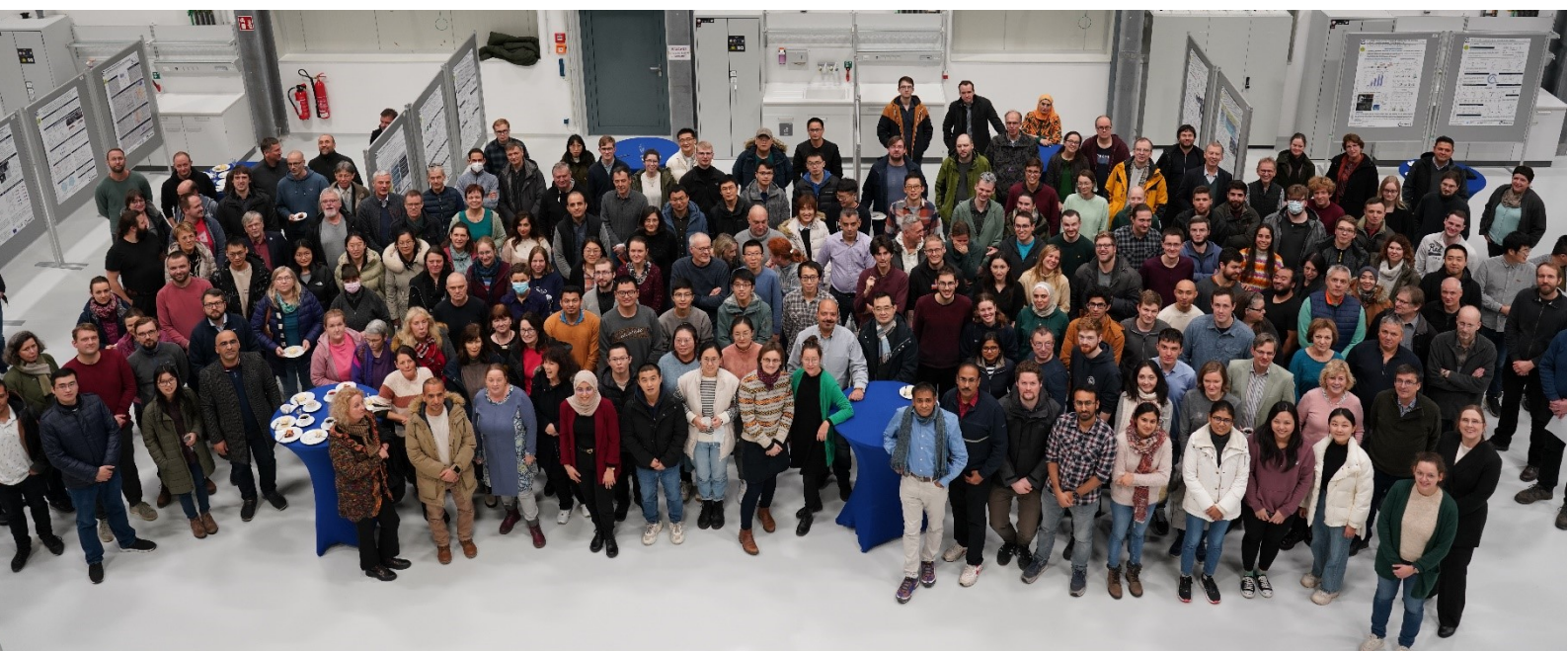
Leibniz Association Evaluates on a Rotational Basis

All Leibniz institutions are evaluated by an independent panel of experts at least every seven years in order to provide an objective assessment of the content and structural development of the institutes. The report of this committee forms the basis for the recommendation as to whether or not an institution should continue to be funded by the federal and state governments.

The Joint Science Conference (GWK) has generally transferred responsibility for the evaluation process to the externally appointed Senate of the Leibniz Association. In doing so, it relies on the proposals of the Senate Evaluation Committee (SAE), which also has external members. In addition to some members of the Senate, the SAE includes other scientists who do not work at Leibniz institutions, as well as representatives of the federal and state governments.

LIKAT researches the fundamentals of the phenomenon of catalysis in all its facets. It develops new catalytic processes with the aim of increasing reaction yields, conserving resources and avoiding emissions. This "green" chemistry should increasingly replace fossil fuels and raw materials with renewable raw materials.
www.catalysis.de

Fig.: On the day of the evaluation visit, all LIKAT employees came together for a poster session in the technical center hall. In addition to technical discussions, they also talked to the commission members about working conditions, satisfaction and wishes for LIKAT as a place to work and learn.



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