

# Evaluation des Departments für Raum, Landschaft und Infrastruktur 2013



## Executive Summary

Für das vom Rektorat beauftragte und von der Stabstelle Qualitätsmanagement begleitete Verfahren zur Evaluation des Departments für Raum, Landschaft und Infrastruktur (RaLI), das mit September 2013 gestartet wurde, konnten ausgewiesene ExpertInnen der Universitäten Wageningen, East London, Hannover, TU Berlin sowie aus dem außeruniversitären Bereich gewonnen werden.

Zu Beginn des Verfahrens, das die Anforderungen des UG 2002 sowie eine Reihe internationaler Standards erfüllt, erstellte das Department auf Basis eines Fragebogens sowie einer Reihe zentral zur Verfügung gestellter Daten einen Rückblick über die wesentlichen Leistungen der letzten 5 Jahre in den Bereichen Organisationsentwicklung, Forschung, Lehre und Weiterbildung, Personalmanagement sowie Beziehungen zur Gesellschaft; außerdem wurden Zukunftsperspektiven entwickelt. Dieser Selbstevaluationsbericht wurde neben einer Reihe weiterer Unterlagen den Peers zur Verfügung gestellt, die nach dessen Durchsicht das Department im Jänner 2014 vor Ort besichtigten.

Im Rahmen ihres Vor-Ort Besuchs führten die Peers Gespräche mit der Departmentleitung, den InstitutsleiterInnen sowie VertreterInnen des Mittelbaus, Doktoranden, nichtwissenschaftlichen MitarbeiterInnen und Studierenden. Gegen Ende des Besuchs lieferten die Peers erste Rückmeldungen und diskutierten die weitere Positionierung des Departments.

Im April 2014 fand ein abschließender Workshop mit dem Head of Peers, dem Rektor, sowie mit VertreterInnen des Departments statt, in dem auf Basis der Empfehlungen der Peers konkrete Maßnahmen erarbeitet wurden. Die Ergebnisse der Evaluation in Form von Empfehlungen wurden von den Peers folgendermaßen zusammengefasst:

*Firstly, RaLI should invest in developing common themes of interest that could form a solid basis for a revised Departmental profile and for the necessary shift from applied to more fundamental research. We believe that the study of 'land use and land use change' and 'healthy environments' have the potential of serving this purpose. In this respect we also consider it important to clearly delineate the boundaries between the Institutes and to identify the contribution that each Institute has to make to the revised profile. We also believe that RaLI has great potentials; the interdisciplinary composition of the Department is ideal for dealing in an integrative way with many of the grand challenges facing our society. Its strengths include a good working atmosphere, personal sympathy among colleagues and a well developed culture of dealing in a cooperative way with conflicts. These competences are important for improving the collaboration among the Institutes.*

*Secondly, although in recent years RaLI has taken important steps towards a more balanced research profile favouring fundamental research, further steps are needed. Many research projects are still practice oriented. This is, for example, illustrated by the large number of small research projects that generally do not result in SCI publications. To further increase the number of publications, the focus should be on larger research projects that have to be acquired in international competitive calls. This underlines the need for improved*

*collaboration, also within BOKU and with universities abroad. In this context, it is also important to clearly focus on PhD and postdoc research. Measures should be taken to substantially increase the number of PhD projects. Furthermore, RaLI should develop a collective Departmental sense of responsibility towards its PhD students and the important function they have for the vitality and reputation of the Department. The doctoral school dokNE should be considered an asset on which to build in future endeavours to improve RaLI's academic profile.*

*Thirdly, pursuing a better balance between research and teaching also demands changes in the study programmes and the way teaching is organized. It is without discussion that staff members have to deal with a high teaching load. BOKU should reconsider the focus of its study programmes in order to avoid mass courses. This may lead to less broad BSc programmes and increase the opportunities for students to specialize in an earlier phase of their study. RaLI should be as proactive as possible to negotiate its contributions to study programmes that are not its prime responsibility. It should also collectively consider how to reduce teaching, e.g. by improving teaching efficiency, reducing the number of exams, creating larger modules, and making full use of e-learning tools. Teaching should also be less practice-oriented and better connected to fundamental research. Moreover, the basic principle should be that all teaching is done by, or at least takes place under direct responsibility of, qualified teachers, regardless their contract with BOKU.*