



Status Conference Research Vessels 2026

Breakoutsession: Transfer and Innovation (04.03.2026)

Chair:

Kathrin Krüger-Borgwardt (GEOMAR)

Speaker:

Dr. Tobias Steinhoff (GEOMAR)

Dr. Greta Reintjes (Uni Bremen)

Dr. Anne Parge (BMFTR)

Dr. Regine Labrenz (IOW)

Notes:

Dr. Christian Stolle (PtJ)

Introduction:

Science needs to create impact. Transfer across all technology readiness levels are needed. However, a “valley of death” exists between basic research and entrepreneurs.

Panel talks:

Dr. Anne Parge:

High-Tech Agenda Germany (HTAD) from the Federal Government as an innovation campaign with strong orientation on outcome. It aims to accelerate development and exploitation of technologies. It is comprised of 6 key technologies and 5 strategic research fields, from which one is marine, climate and sustainability research. BMFTR has support programmes to enhance and help transfer from science to business (e.g. VIP+, GO-Bio, KMU innovative, SPRIND). There is a federal funding advisory service (beratung@foerder-info.bund.de; phone: 0800 2623 008)

Dr. Tobias Steinhoff:

SOOP as a Helmholtz funded innovation platform will end by 2026. The support office will continue to help non-scientific platforms to do ocean observations. GEOMAR will continue this work in OOS, i.e. the Ocean Observation Services. Whole range of services will be offered to the scientific and non-scientific community. Examples are lab facilities for sensor calibration / validation or to produce and distribute reference gases.

Dr. Greta Reintjes:

Thalassys is a start-up founded on scientific innovation at the Max-Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology, Bremen, and seed-financed through the MAX!mise incubator program. Dr Anneke Heins, Dr Jan Brüwer and Dr Greta Reintjes have developed a new filtration device, which is a central technique for the analysis of environmental and industrial water samples. The new device enables simplified, standardised, smart and sustainable water filtration for multiple industries ranging from monitoring to wastewater management.

Dr. Regine Labrenz:

IOW has established good practices for technology transfer and gained experience over several years on how scientific questions fostered the development of new, even patented techniques. As a prominent example the AFIS-collection device for sampling and preserving water samples was introduced. Another example is the Ocean Technology Centre Rostock, which acts as a role model for an overarching transfer structure, a network of 60+ partners to create an innovation ecosystem. It is well established on regional level, helping especially smaller institutions to increase visibility of their findings / innovations.

Panel discussion:

- One of the biggest challenges for scientists thinking as an entrepreneur is to gain new knowledge and skills. Communication is important to really step forward and to overcome doubts.
- It is also important that researchers are open for transfer. There are little incentives for entrepreneurial thinking and entrepreneurial action within the scientific system. In addition, for some scientist it does not feel natural to ,earn' money from their research results. Thus, it is important to constantly exchange and establish connections between research and companies.
- Researchers should consider T&I from the beginning, already when planning the projects. PIs should look out for advanced students to help them with creative ideas and starting their own businesses. Also, transfer positions at institute level are important to connect different players (research, companies, etc.).
- Basic researchers are needed in the science world, but also application-friendly researchers should be encouraged as well as supported. Both have an important role. Not every researcher needs to create a start-up, but setting-up networks is a valuable instrument to help a perception change.

- It should be examined how transfer and basic entrepreneurial skills can be integrated into marine science curricula. This might be helpful for increasing the transfer of research results (and byproducts) into practical application.
- Scientists should be encouraged to find the 'courage' to follow pathways of innovation transfer and foundation of start-ups.