Interdisciplinary Doctoral Training Programmes
What is the DFG?
Germany’s largest research funding organisation

The DFG

► serves all branches of science and the humanities by funding research projects and facilitating cooperation among researchers

► supports the education and advancement of young scientific researchers

► promotes equality between men and women

► advises parliaments and public authorities on scientific matters

► fosters relations between research and the private sector and between scientists and academics at home and abroad
What is the DFG?
Germany’s central, self-governing research funding organisation

Member institutions include

► German universities (69)
► non-university research institutions (16)
► German academies of sciences and humanities (8)
► scientific associations (3)

List of members: www.dfg.de/dfg_im_profil/struktur/gremien/mitgliederversammlung/mitglieder.html

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Education in DFG Programmes Dr. Anselm Fremmer, Washington DC, 7 December 2012
What is the DFG?
An association under German private law

The DFG is funded by

- German federal government (67%)
- German states (32.7%)
- Private sources (0.3%)*

The DFG’s 2011 budget totalled €2.4 billion (= $3.1 billion)

* Figures refer to revenues in 2011
What does the DFG fund?
The DFG funds interdisciplinarity through programmes such as

- Collaborative Research Centres and CRC/Transregios
- DFG Research Centres
- **Research Training Groups** and International Research Training Groups
- Priority Programmes
- Research Units and Clinical Research Units

Coordinated programmes are national, international and/or interdisciplinary. They provide opportunities for cooperation with other universities and non-university research institutions (e.g. partners in industry) and bundle expertise at a university or several university locations.
What does the DFG fund?
The DFG funds the three pillars of the Excellence Initiative

- graduate schools
- clusters of excellence
- institutional strategies

Further information: www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/coordinated_programmes/excellence_initiative/index.html
What does the DFG fund?
The DFG funds interdisciplinary doctoral training through

~ 230 Research Training Groups

- 10 – 15 PhD students, ~ 10 PI
- Focused research area
- Similar to IGERT (NSF)
- Can be / should be interdisciplinary

45 Graduate Schools

- 50 – 500 (and even more) PhD students, 25 + x PI
- Broad research field
- Overarching generally some departments
- Have to be interdisciplinary / multidisciplinary
Interdisciplinarity in real life
Does it works?

What makes a doctoral programme interdisciplinary?
- Interdisciplinary supervision?
- Interdisciplinary thesis / project?
- Joint publications?
Interdisciplinarity in real life
Does it work?

In Graduate Schools

- In most cases a disciplinary thesis is better for the careers
- No demand for hundreds of interdisciplinary projects in one research area
- Interdisciplinary discussions help PhD students to find their disciplinary identity
- Better projects and better research because of exchange of methods, theory, and even results
- Ideas for new projects in the own discipline / field
Conclusion

- Interdisciplinary doctoral education does make sense
- The success depends on the goals / the benchmarks
Thank you for your attention

For more information
► on the DFG: www.dfg.de/en/
► on DFG-funded projects: www.dfg.de/gepris/
► on over 17,000 German research institutes: www.dfg.de/research_explorer/