

The Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity (HIFMB) is a research institute located in Oldenburg. It studies marine biodiversity and its importance for the function of marine ecosystems, the people linked to those ecosystems, and their governance. In doing so, it develops the basis for marine nature conservation and management. The HIFMB was founded in 2017 and is an institutional cooperation between the Alfred Wegener Institute in Bremerhaven, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI), and the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg linked to the Institute of Chemistry and Biology of the Marine Environment (ICBM) and Institute for Social Sciences (IfSol).

Postdoc in "Science Narratives" (m/d/f/x) (HIPP 27.5)

Background

HIPP is the HIFMB Integrative Postdoc Pool and publishes a thematic call for a cohort of early-career researchers once a year.

The HUMAN PROGRESS project aims to advance research in the natural sciences by drawing on methods, insights, and knowledge from across the humanities and social sciences. In doing so it also offers fresh frameworks of thinking for the humanities and social sciences, and works to develop the modern, integrated, and broadly interdisciplinary approach that is necessary to tackle complex environmental problems. Postdoctoral researchers funded under this project will work together as a team and in collaboration with experts from the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences. Our criterion of success is to make a demonstrable impact on research in the natural sciences by drawing on social data, humanities approaches, and ways of thinking. Along the way, all disciplines involved will have to adapt, extend, and to some extent automate their methodologies, to create impact in applications while maintaining a human perspective and mindset.

The title HUMAN PROGRESS is intended to provoke critical inquiry. It combines the progress-oriented thinking of the natural sciences and engineering with the word 'human' to invite critical reflection on how progress can be achieved that takes humans into account, from the initial phrasing of problems to the impacts of eventual solutions.

We invite applications for **five positions**, with the shared goal of leveraging modern approaches to bridge the gap between natural sciences and humanities and to strengthen existing collaborations between HIFMB and the Carl-von-Ossietzky University of Oldenburg.

Postdocs in the cohort will undertake independent projects in collaboration with a principal investigator and a strong interdisciplinary team of collaborators, while also meeting as a unit to work together on joint goals related to the overarching research topic.

Further information is available on the project website: [HIPP 27: HUMAN PROGRESS - HIFMB Oldenburg](#)

Project 5: Science Narratives

Narratives are commonly studied in the context of fictional works or political agenda-setting, but narratives also exist in sciences. Scientific narratives shape fields of study and thus

determine what is explored and what is ignored. Yet we have essentially no research on how scientific narratives are formed, how they work on the page, how they shape research, and how they change when communicated to the public. Hence, this project aims to lay the foundations for a narratology of the sciences, with a focus on complexity and biodiversity research.

Your Tasks

The work will involve an analysis of narratives in scientific papers and beyond, including both human-led text analysis and the use of automated methods such as language models. We will formulate and test hypotheses on the generation and propagation of narratives in science and critically examine the role of narratives both within individual papers and across research fields.

Key questions include:

- How and where do narratives emerge, how do they evolve, and eventually vanish?
- How are narratives presented in different papers?
- To what extent is disciplinary progress driven by narratives or vice versa?

You'll be working with an interdisciplinary team of experts that includes, among others, Anton Kirchhofer (Literature), Sina Farzin (Social Science) and Thilo Gross (Network Science), as well as experts from application domains.

Further details

As a Helmholtz Institute, the HIFMB contributes to one of the Helmholtz Research Programs (currently 'Changing Earth – Sustaining our Future') as part of Topic 6 (Marine and Polar Life). The cohort work will directly contribute to the scope and challenges of Topic 6 by researching how marine ecosystems will adapt and respond to human impacts (e.g., fishing and tourism), and by assessing options to remedy and mitigate human impacts. Within Topic 6, this cohort work attends especially to Subtopic 6.1, which is central to the HIFMB mission on "Future Ecosystem Functionality", and Subtopic 6.4, "Use and Misuse of the Ocean".

Your Profile

We are looking for an interdisciplinary researcher with experience in literary studies, social science, or another relevant field, as well as an interest in understanding scientific writing.

Requirements include:

- PhD in a relevant subject (e.g., literary studies)
- Interest in natural science, specifically marine biodiversity
- Willingness to engage in interdisciplinary research
- Good knowledge of the English language (approximately equivalent to **CEFR** level B1+B2).

Further Information

- **Contact in day-to-day work:** with up to 5 people
- **Communication:** predominantly internal (with colleagues and other departments) in the following ways
 1. By telephone: almost never (only in very rare cases) or never

2. E-mail: frequently (daily or several times a week)
 3. Video conferencing (e.g., Webex): occasionally (several times a month)
 4. Personal contact in presence: frequently (daily or several times a week)
- **Movement around the workplace:** regularly within the building (e.g., between departments or floors)
 - **Business trips:** rather infrequent (once or twice a year)
 - **Expeditions:** do not occur.

Please note that the general conditions listed serve as a guide and may vary depending on the specific area of application.

For further information on the specific position, please reach out to **Prof Dr Thilo Gross (thilo.gross@hifmb.de)**.

If you have any general questions about the application process, our Recruiting team will be glad to support you – please contact Elisabeth Wildt (**bewerbungsmanagement@awi.de**, +49 471 4831-2236).

In **this overview** you will find further contact persons for various matters.

This is a full-time position, limited to 3 years. It is also suitable for part-time employment. The salary will be paid in accordance with the Collective Agreement for the Public Service of the Federation (Tarifvertrag des öffentlichen Dienstes, TVöD Bund), up to salary level **13**. The place of employment will be **Oldenburg**.

All postdocs will register with AWI's postdoc office **PROCEED** and thus gain access to a set of tailor-made career development tools.

We offer

- Excellent research environment with access to globally unique infrastructure, comprehensive datasets, and international expeditions
- Opportunity to develop and pursue independent scientific ideas and innovative research approaches addressing societally relevant questions
- Close scientific collaboration and interdisciplinary cooperation within the institute as well as with national and international partners
- An international working environment with daily interaction with colleagues from around the world
- Opportunities for professional and personal development
- Flexible working hours and the possibility of mobile working for up to 50% of regular working hours
- 30 days of annual leave (full-time), plus additional days off on December 24th and 31st
- Annual special payment in accordance with the German public sector collective agreement (TVöD Bund)
- Occupational health promotion and company fitness programme with Hansefit
- Support services and an established culture promoting work–life balance, e.g. through our family office offering childcare services (e.g., holiday programmes) as well as advice on family and care responsibilities
- Occupational pension scheme (VBL).

AWI values diversity and actively promotes gender parity, as well as an open, inclusive environment that provides equal opportunities. We are convinced that diverse teams and a variety of perspectives enrich our work and our daily collaboration. In a continuous process of learning and reflection, we aim to ensure that all our employees can be themselves and feel a sense of belonging. We welcome applications from qualified people regardless of binary and non-binary genders, race and nationality, ethnic and social background, religion, age, disabilities, neurodivergence, sexual orientation, and other identities.

Applicants with disabilities will be given preference when equal qualifications are present.

AWI fosters work-family compatibility in various ways. And as a new international member of our team, you can be sure that we will help you settle in. **Our Family Office and International Office will be glad to support you**, even before you start at AWI.

We look forward to your application!

Please submit your application online only by **July 20th, 2026**. We kindly ask you to apply in English. No photo is required – we value your qualifications and experience.

Interviews are planned for the mid until end of August, 2026.

Employment for this post is subject to the provisions of the German Act on Fixed-Term Employment Contracts in Academia (**Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz – WissZeitVG**). According to WissZeitVG § 2.1, researchers may in general be employed in Germany on fixed-term contracts for a maximum of twelve years before and after their doctorate. Previous academic fixed-term employment in Germany counts, in principle, towards this maximum limit, while academic positions abroad usually do not.

Applicants are required to submit an extended cover letter (max. 2 pages) describing their fit to the position and criteria, and complete the **template CV** provided (please do not submit a CV not in **this format**).

If you are applying from abroad and are interested in academic positions in Germany, it may generally be helpful to check and possibly have your degrees recognized in advance via the ANABIN database (<https://anabin.kmk.org/cms/public/startseite>).

Reference number: 26/61/G/HIPP-b

[Apply here](#)