

Darmstadt, May 4, 2026

# Think like a Fish.

 WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL  
FRANKFURT RHEINMAIN 2026



2021  
2030 United Nations Decade  
of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

## Nature design and restoration between different forms of knowledge

Many European landscapes have been heavily engineered over centuries. Today, restoration and rewilding initiatives are emerging, raising important questions about the knowledge systems guiding these transformations. Especially since the Montreal Agreement to protect 30% of the ocean and the land, designing new protected areas is crucial, but there are also critical voices towards this approach. In Germany, rewilding often means excluding human activity, while in many other knowledge traditions (traditional ecological knowledge, TEK), the separation between human and non-human, nature and culture, is much less strong and human guardianship is much more common.

What happens when those different knowledge systems are brought together? And, viewed from a Western perspective, to what extent are learning and co-operation possible without violating indigenous self-understanding or local knowledge in the context of landscape rewilding and design?

Frankfurt and the Rhein-Main region are World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026, under the theme "Design for Democracy – Atmospheres for a Better Life."

Inspired by the subtitle "Atmospheres for a Better Life", this workshop explores how human societies design their relationship with nature. This includes how landscapes are shaped, restored, and protected, as well as the narratives and knowledge systems – scientific, traditional, local, and Indigenous – that inform these processes.

Our discussions examine how ecological design decisions are guided by different ways of knowing and how these perspectives influence environmental stewardship and long-term guardianship of ecosystems.

The event is part of the "From Takutai to Waterkant: Pacific-German Knowledge-Sharing Visit", organized by **Deutsches Komitee der UN-Ozeandekade (ODK)** and the **Kāhui Manaaki Tangaroa - Aotearoa New Zealand National Ocean Decade Committee**.

Registration is required to attend the event: [www.schader-stiftung.de/think\\_fish](http://www.schader-stiftung.de/think_fish)

**h\_da** hochschule  
darmstadt

member of  
**-EUT+**  
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY

STIFTUNG FÜR DAS MEER  
**oceanos**



**unesco**

New Zealand  
National Commission  
Te Kōwhirihiā Matua o Aotearoa mō UNESCO

 **Schader  
Stiftung**

**Deutsches Komitee der  
UN-Ozeandekade (ODK)  
2021-2030**

# Programme

Monday, May 4, 2026

**13.45 h**

Welcome round and introduction

*Alexander Gemeinhardt,*  
Schader Foundation,  
*Jana Steingässer,* Okeanos Foundation  
*Prof. Dr. Torsten Schäfer,* h\_da

**14.00 h**

Think like a Fish?

Introduction of a more-than-human  
perspective within Maori thinking

*Dr. Dan Hikuroa,* Culture Commissioner,  
New Zealand National Commission for  
UNESCO; Member, Kāhui Manaaki Tangaroa  
– Aotearoa New Zealand Ocean Decade  
Committee

**14.30 h**

Indigenous and local knowledge and  
practice: Protecting fish resources with  
Rahui management

*Ihirau Piton,* Young Pacific Leader,  
environmental and cultural activist

**15.00 h**

QUESTIONS

**15.15 h**

BREAK

**15.30 h**

Rewilding our knowledge?  
About the applicability of TEK in German  
river and peatland protection – chances  
and obstacles

*Prof. Dr. Torsten Schäfer*

## LOCATION

Schader-Campus  
Goethestraße 2, 64285 Darmstadt

## ARRIVAL

Travel instructions can be found  
**here.**

## ENROLLMENT

Participation in the event is  
free of charge. The number of  
participants is limited. You will  
receive a confirmation email upon  
registration.

## EVENT

### RESPONSIBILITY

Jana Steingässer,  
Okeanos Foundation  
Prof. Dr. Torsten Schäfer, h\_da  
Dr. Gösta Gantner,  
Schader Foundation

## SCHADER FOUNDATION

Goethestraße 2, 64285 Darmstadt  
06151 17 59 17  
gantner@schader-stiftung.de  
www.schader-stiftung.de

Accessibility information can  
be found **here.**

**16.00 h**

River design and restoration – a historical  
perspective on the German Rhine river

*Dr. Christian Damm,*  
Institute for Geography, KIT Karlsruhe

**16.30 h**

TEK – a helpful source to save and redesign  
nature in every context?

Fish bowl debate with  
*Prof. Dr. Torsten Schäfer*  
*Dr. Christian Damm*  
*Dr. Dan Hikuroa*  
*Ihirau Piton*

Moderation:  
*Dr. Sara Lüttich,*  
Schader Foundation

**17.00 h**

BREAK

**17.30 h**

Introduction by *Ihirau Piton*

Film presentation:  
Tiaki Moana – Guardians of the Ocean

**18.15 h**

Open discussion with *Ihirau Piton*  
and guests

Moderation:  
*Dr. Ulrike Heine,* Geschäftsstelle Deutsches  
Komitee der UN-Ozeandekade (ODK)

**19.00 h**

END