

# Guidelines

## Preparation of an On-Site Review in the Collaborative Research Centres Programme



Disclaimer: The English translation of this document is provided for informational purposes. In the event of a discrepancy between the English and the German versions, the German text takes precedence.

These guidelines are intended to help Collaborative Research Centres (CRCs) and CRC/Transregios to plan and prepare for on-site reviews. They are organised by factual context in the following sections:

- 1. Scheduling and timeline up to the review**
- 2. Agenda and organisation of the review**
- 3. Accommodation and catering for guests**

This overview cannot replace regular dialogue with the DFG Head Office; rather, it is meant to facilitate and complement it. Support for Collaborative Research Centres is provided by the programme officers in the DFG Collaborative Research Centres division and the Excellence Strategy and Research Impulses division in conjunction with the Scientific Affairs Department.

Proposal submission to the Collaborative Research Centres Programme must be preceded by the submission of a concept paper and a consultation phase. The consultation phase provides the basis for the first selection step. Further information can be found in DFG forms 60.003 and 60.17.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/60\\_003](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/60_003)

[www.dfg.de/formulare/60\\_17](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/60_17)

In preparation for submitting a proposal, please refer to DFG form 60.011.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/60\\_011](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/60_011)

We ask you not to contact the reviewers or the rapporteurs regarding the proposal, either before or after the review, until the Grants Committee has made its decision.

## 1. Scheduling and timeline up to the review

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### Determining and setting dates: General Information

The date of the review is set by the DFG Head Office in consultation with the relevant DFG committee members and the Collaborative Research Centre. Please inform the university administration(s) as soon as possible and continuously regarding the proposal preparations.

The most time-consuming tasks are the drafting of the scientific details of the proposal and the compilation of the general information required for the proposal. It is recommended to allow several months for these tasks. The timetable should also leave enough time for the internal evaluation of the projects that will be included in the proposal. Thorough internal self-monitoring has proven to be a critical success factor for the establishment and continuation of Collaborative Research Centres.

### Timeline leading up to the review

<p><b>Approx. 9 – 12 months before the review</b></p>	<p>Existing Collaborative Research Centres: Schedule the review date with the responsible programme officer at the DFG Head Office (after having identified favourable time windows). Collaborative Research Centres applying to be established: As soon as possible after receiving the recommendation to submit a proposal, contact the Head Office to schedule the review date.</p>
<p><b>At least 6 months before the review</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit preliminary proposal (see DFG form <a href="#">60.011</a>)</li> <li>• Reserve approx. 15 hotel rooms for members of the review panel, rapporteurs and DFG Head Office staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>As the situation in connection with the coronavirus pandemic is still uncertain, it is strictly necessary to make bookings which can be cancelled on short notice.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserve meeting rooms</li> </ul>

<b>Approx. 8 weeks before the review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit proposal and research profiles to the DFG Head Office (see DFG form <a href="#">60.011</a>)</li><li>• Discuss presentation procedure with the responsible programme officer at the DFG Head Office</li></ul>
<b>Approx. 6 weeks before the review</b>	The DFG sends final invitations to the review panel, the university administration(s) and the relevant state ministries. The Collaborative Research Centre will receive copies of all invitations.
<b>Approx. 2 weeks before the review</b>	The Collaborative Research Centre sends hotel, meeting-venue and agenda details to the guests and informs them when they will be picked up from the hotel and escorted to the meeting venue.

## 2. Agenda and organisation of the review

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The two-day review of a Collaborative Research Centre or CRC/Transregio takes place in one location. Please provide wireless Internet access for the duration of the review. In the relevant meeting room(s), please also make sure that the technical arrangements necessary for having individual review participants join the meeting by video have been made. If required, the responsible programme officer at the DFG Head Office will contact you.

**Note:** *As the situation in connection with the coronavirus pandemic is still uncertain, the mode of the review session may need to be changed on short notice. In particular, the entire review may need to be held in a video conference format.*

### Day 1

<b>By 8:45</b>	<b>Transfer from the hotel to the meeting venue at the university</b>
<b>Internal briefing of the review panel</b>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Orientation to the review</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> Members of the review panel, rapporteurs, DFG Head Office staff</p> <p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting room for 20 people, close to but separate from the room where the presentation of the Collaborative Research Centre (“plenary session”) will be held; subsequently to be used as a retreat area and for debriefing</li> <li>• Name plates and name badges</li> <li>• For each person a USB stick containing additional documentation (e.g. publications, offers for major research instrumentation, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>09:00 – 10:45</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical equipment (laptop, projector, camera, if necessary, microphone or videoconferencing system) in consultation with the responsible programme officer at the DFG Head Office</li> </ul>
<p><b>Plenary session</b></p> <p><b>11:00 – 14:00</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation of the Collaborative Research Centre and the university administration(s) (approx. 90 min.), followed by a discussion (approx. 60 min.), including coffee break with light snack</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p>Presentation by the members of the Collaborative Research Centre describing, for renewal proposals, the achievements to date and future plans. For establishment proposals, the focus is on plans and preliminary work.</p> <p>Statement by the administration(s) of the applicant university(-ies); subsequent discussion with the review panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening and moderation by rapporteurs to the Grants Committee on Collaborative Research Centres from relevant subject areas</li> <li>• Presentation of the Collaborative Research Centre on the topics of general orientation and structure of the Centre, strategy, objectives, preliminary work, results and plans</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>This presentation is meant to give a comprehensive overview of the Centre. There is ample opportunity to present and discuss individual projects during the poster session.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement by the administration(s) of the applicant university(-ies) on prioritisation and support structures with regard to the Collaborative Research Centre: core support, development of structure and research profile, support of researchers in early career phases, promotion of gender equality in academia. Statement should be limited to 10 minutes (20 for CRC/Transregios).</li> <li>• Discussion with the review panel: please allow sufficient time for this.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Participants:</b></p> <p>Representatives of the university administration(s) and possibly of the participating institutions and departments, the entire research staff (or as many as possible) involved in the Collaborative Research Centre, other university staff with an interest in the subject matter, members of the review panel, rapporteurs, DFG Head Office staff; if requested: representatives of the relevant state ministries</p> <p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large classroom, hall or auditorium</li> <li>• Name plates and name badges for all participants</li> <li>• Microphones and related technical equipment</li> <li>• Minute taker: The Collaborative Research Centre is requested to take minutes of the plenary discussion.</li> <li>• Coffee and light snack</li> </ul>
<p><b>Poster session (including light lunch)</b></p> <p><b>14:00 – 17:00</b></p>	<p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p>In-depth conversations between reviewers and individual working groups; in exceptional cases tour of laboratories, workstations, major instrumentation or animal keeping facilities (after prior consultation with the responsible programme officer at the DFG Head Office)</p> <p><b>Participants:</b></p> <p>Project leaders and Collaborative Research Centre staff, members of the review panel, rapporteurs, DFG Head Office staff</p> <p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate space</li> <li>• List of relevant rooms (if necessary)</li> <li>• Signage (if necessary)</li> <li>• Escort for all reviewers and rapporteurs if path from project to project leads through different buildings or sections</li> <li>• Retreat area for members of the review panel</li> </ul>

<p><b>Debriefing of the review panel</b></p> <p><b>17:00 – 19:00</b></p>	<p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p>Internal discussion between the members of the review panel Identification of any further questions to be addressed and missing information for the closed meeting of the review panel on the following day</p> <p><b>Participants:</b></p> <p>Members of the review panel, rapporteurs, DFG Head Office staff</p> <p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Room for 20 people (no time limit)</li> <li>• Name plates on tables</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approx. 19:00</b></p>	<p><b>Transfer from the university to the hotel</b></p>
<p><b>Review panel dinner</b></p> <p><b>from 19:30</b></p>	<p>The dinner will be organised in consultation with the responsible programme officer at the DFG Head Office</p>



## Day 2

<b>By 8:45</b>	<b>Transfer from the hotel to the meeting venue at the university</b>
<p><b>optional:</b> <b>Time window for further questions to the Collaborative Research Centre</b></p> <p><b>09:00 – 09:30</b></p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Opportunity for the review panel to address further questions (The Collaborative Research Centre will be informed on the previous evening, directly after the debriefing, of whether further questions are required.)</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> Executive board of the Collaborative Research Centre, selected project leaders, if required, and - in exceptional cases - a representative of the university administration(s), members of the review panel, rapporteurs, DFG Head Office staff</p>
<p><b>Closed meeting of the review panel including coffee and lunch breaks</b></p> <p><b>09:00 / 09:30 – approx. 14:30</b></p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Assessment and grading of individual projects and the Collaborative Research Centre in its entirety</p> <p><b>Participants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the review panel</li> <li>• Rapporteurs</li> <li>• DFG Head Office staff</li> <li>• Representatives of the relevant state ministries</li> </ul> <p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting room for 20 – 25 people</li> <li>• Name plates on tables</li> <li>• Technical equipment (laptop, projector, camera, if necessary, microphone or videoconferencing system) in consultation with the responsible programme officer at the DFG Head Office</li> <li>• Beverages, coffee and light snacks</li> <li>• Light lunch (possibly lunch bags)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Departure of the review panel</b></p> <p><b>Following the closed meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Departure of the members of the review panel</b></p> <p>Return to the hotel or transfer to train station or airport</p>
<p><b>Final meeting</b></p> <p><b>Following the closed meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p>Submission of the recommendations of the review panel, which will provide the basis for the funding decision of the Grants Committee on Collaborative Research Centres at its next meeting.</p> <p><b>Participants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-ranking members of the university administration(s): rector/vice rector, president/vice president, chancellor</li> </ul> <p><i><b>Note:</b> For CRC/Transregio, the administration of the host university may receive the result on behalf of the other applicant university(-ies). As an alternative, the university administration(s) may join the meeting by video.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Collaborative Research Centres with a medical focus, the dean of the medical school, or the medical or administrative director of the university hospital may attend.</li> <li>• Executive board of the Collaborative Research Centre (up to three people)</li> <li>• Rapporteurs</li> <li>• DFG Head Office staff</li> <li>• Representatives of the relevant state ministries, if necessary</li> </ul> <p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting room for 8 – 12 people</li> </ul>

**Special procedure in case of negative recommendation by the review panel**

If the review panel decides not to recommend the establishment and funding, or the continued funding, of the Collaborative Research Centre at the time of the review, the spokesperson will be informed immediately. The further course of the review will depend on the individual case. The university administration(s), members of the Collaborative Research Centre and state representatives will be informed by the DFG Head Office staff regarding the reasons for the negative recommendation.

### 3. Accommodation and catering for guests

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#### Hotel

The hotel should have a sufficient number of single rooms to accommodate all guests and offer a good quality standard. Before making the final hotel reservations, please contact the DFG Head Office ([SFB-Begutachtung@dfg.de](mailto:SFB-Begutachtung@dfg.de)) to ensure that the current upper price limit for an overnight stay with breakfast is not exceeded. As a general rule, please make a reservation for two overnight stays, from the day prior to the review (day of arrival) until the day 2 of the review. The hotel should be easily accessible from the meeting venue. Collaborative Research Centres should seek a reasonable discount when making reservations.

**Note:** *As the situation in connection with the coronavirus pandemic is still uncertain, it is strictly necessary to make bookings which can be cancelled on short notice.*

Please arrange for the hotel to submit to the DFG the total invoice for the accommodation costs including breakfast (excluding extras such as telephone calls, minibar, etc.) for the members of the review panel, rapporteurs and DFG Head Office staff (but not for any other persons). Members of the Collaborative Research Centre may not be accommodated in the same hotel as the review panel.

#### Catering

The Collaborative Research Centre is requested to organise the following catering during the review:

- light lunch at the beginning of the poster session on day 1
- light lunch on day 2 (possibly lunch bags)
- Please remember to include vegetarian and vegan dishes, as well as pastries, fruit and sufficient beverages in the meeting rooms.

In the interest of participants with food allergies or intolerances, we ask that a list of ingredients and food additives be displayed. Please do not provide alcoholic beverages at any time during the review.

Please note that the DFG cannot reimburse costs for catering and room rental.

#### Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

Kennedyallee 40 · 53175 Bonn · Postal address: 53170 Bonn, Germany  
Tel.: + 49 228 885-1 · Fax: + 49 228 885-2777 · [postmaster@dfg.de](mailto:postmaster@dfg.de) · [www.dfg.de](http://www.dfg.de)



We also ask you to organise dinner on the evening of the first day of the review at a restaurant close to the hotel in consultation with the responsible programme officer at the DFG Head Office. The DFG will bear the costs of this dinner.

### **Arrival and departure**

The Collaborative Research Centre is requested to organise rides or escorts on both days from the hotel to the meeting venue in the morning, and if necessary from the meeting venue to the hotel in the evening. For departure, it is helpful to assist guests with transportation to the train station or airport.