

Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft
German Research Foundation

Guidelines

**for Proposals for the Establishment of a Priority Programme
and
Points to Note in Connection with Existing Priority Programmes**

Contents

Page

- A. Guidelines for Priority Programme Establishment Proposals1
 - I. Programme Objectives1
 - II. The Coordinator’s Role2
 - III. Preparation of a Priority Programme.....2
 - IV. Selection Procedure.....2
 - V. Evaluation Criteria.....2
 - VI. Proposal Process3
 - 1. Eligibility requirements.....3
 - 2. Submission deadline3
 - 3. Proposal format3
 - 4. Funding period.....3
 - 5. Proposal contents.....3
 - VII. Final Reports.....4
- B. Points to Note in Connection with Existing Priority Programmes5
 - I. Eligibility Requirements.....5
 - II. Application Period5
 - III. Integration of the Project into the Priority Programme5
 - IV. Funding for Coordination of the Priority Programme.....5
 - V. Funding for Measures to Promote Equality.....6
 - VI. Funds for Colloquia and Coordination Meetings.....6
 - VII. Obligations of Priority Programme Participants6

A. Guidelines for Priority Programme Establishment Proposals

As a topic-oriented funding programme with an open call for proposals, Priority Programmes provide the opportunity for interdisciplinary networking and nationwide coordination of research projects in fields of current research interest.

Priority Programmes are established for a period of up to six years, which can be divided into several funding periods. Once a Priority Programme has been established, the DFG announces a call for proposals for each funding period within the field of research as specified in the call for proposals. Projects to be funded will be selected from the proposals submitted.

Priority Programme establishment proposals should be addressed to the DFG Senate. The proposal should describe how the three programme objectives set out below will be met.

I. Programme Objectives

1. Novelty in terms of topic, cooperation or methodology

This programme objective may be fulfilled if, for example:

- the Priority Programme encompasses subjects which would have been inconceivable a few years ago, and/or
- the Priority Programme explores bold, new methods and approaches, and/or
- it establishes new avenues of research which may influence other research areas, and/or
- the Priority Programme has the potential for increasing international importance, or is likely to have a lasting impact on the scientific landscape.

Priority Programmes will not be announced for research areas that are already well established and currently receive adequate funding from other sources.

2. Added value through interdisciplinary cooperation (interdisciplinarity)

This objective can be fulfilled by coordinating all of the areas of research that are relevant to the scientific objective of the programme and by including the necessary technical expertise.

3. Added value through cooperation between different locations (networking)

A third objective of the programme is the formation of networks. Priority Programmes will only be established for topics that receive a significant boost as a result of nationwide networking. Potential participants must have demonstrated scientific expertise.

II. The Coordinator's Role

Those responsible for initiating the programme appoint a coordinator. In addition to fulfilling an advisory role for the applicants for the various individual projects, the coordinator has a guiding role for the programme as a whole, and also acts as a representative to the review panel. Ideally, the role of the coordinator should include holding the first roundtable discussion for preparation of the Priority Programme proposal, encompass the organisation of the preparatory stages and all activities within the Priority Programme, and extend to holding the concluding colloquium and writing the final report.

The coordinator submits a progress report on the overall development of the Priority Programme at each project renewal review and is also responsible for submitting the final report to the Senate. The coordinator is authorised to obtain the information required for this purpose from the Priority Programme participants (see also section B. IV below).

III. Preparation of a Priority Programme

The DFG offers potential applicants the opportunity to hold roundtable discussions in preparation for submitting a proposal. These are particularly well suited to planning a Priority Programme that is in the course of preparation.

IV. Selection Procedure

The decision to establish a new Priority Programme is made annually by the DFG Senate, with the involvement of members of the Review Boards, on the basis of a comparative review of written proposals.

V. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria, derived from the programme objectives, are used for evaluation of the establishment proposal, which should be clearly evident in the establishment proposal. This list is not comprehensive.

- Novelty of the proposed area of activity, both in Germany and internationally
- Clearly defined short- and medium-term research objectives
 - Definition and concentration of the scientific problems to be addressed;
 - Coherency of the planned research work.
- Synergy – ways and means of planning cooperation
 - The plan and formation of networks within the Priority Programme;
 - Workshops, topical working groups, postgraduate summer courses, working visits, running a website.
- Coordination of the Priority Programme
 - Selection of a coordinator who has the personal skills to work together with an interdisciplinary steering committee on planning collaborations within the Priority Programme (see point II above).

- Ways of promoting young researchers
 - Integration of young researchers into the Priority Programme;
 - Workshops, summer courses and training in research methods for doctoral students.
- International involvement and prominence
 - International networking;
 - International conferences on the topic.
- Logical integration into the context of other funding activities
 - The relationship to other previous, current or planned funding activities (DFG or other).

VI. Proposal Process

1. Eligibility requirements

Establishment proposals for Priority Programmes may be submitted by any researcher who is eligible to submit proposals to the DFG.

2. Submission deadline

Establishment proposals must be received by the DFG Head Office in electronic format by 15 November of any given year.

3. Proposal format

Establishment proposals should not exceed 20 pages, including appendices, and should not include individual project outlines.

4. Funding period

The maximum funding period for a Priority Programme is six years. This period can be divided as required (for example, 3 x 2 years, 2 x 3 years, or 6 x 1 year).

5. Proposal contents

The establishment proposal should set out the scientific programme and the main reasons why the programme is worthy of funding. It should also include a one-page summary of the research topic, which can also be used as the basis for the call for proposals for the programme.

In particular, the following points should be addressed:

- work programme;
- scientific objectives;
- the state of the art of research in Germany and abroad (taking the previous work done by the initiators and participants into consideration);
- explanation of how the programme objectives and evaluation criteria described in points I. and V. are to be achieved;
- distinction from other programmes currently receiving funding, such as Collaborative Research Centres, Research Units or programmes run by funding bodies other than the DFG;

- prospective participants;
- the period being applied for and the envisaged funding periods;
- an estimation of the amount of funding required and justification thereof.

The proposal should be appended with a list of the main literature references on the state of the art, in particular on the previous work carried out by the participants and – where applicable – the work programme.

VII. Final Reports

Once the Priority Programme has been concluded two final reports must be written, one programme-specific and the other a scientific report.

The DFG Senate discusses the programme-specific final report, paying particular attention to the programme's objectives and criteria.

The scientific final report is presented at the concluding colloquium, where reviewers are also present. Additionally, it shall be made publicly available in a suitable format. Subject to prior consultation with the DFG Head Office, the scientific final report for the overall Priority Programme may be submitted instead of final reports for each of the individual projects.

B. Points to Note in Connection with Existing Priority Programmes

Once the Senate has reached a decision to establish a Priority Programme, the DFG will announce it to the German research community by way of a nationwide call for proposals.

The submission of proposals is subject to the usual guidelines applicable to project proposals, in particular those for Research Grants as given in the "Research Grants – General Information and Guidelines for Proposals" (DFG Form 1.02e), noting the following points:

I. Eligibility Requirements

Proposals may also be submitted by researchers working at non-university research institutions.

It is also possible for foreign scientists to participate provided that their project is of paramount importance to the Priority Programme as a whole. This should be explained clearly in the proposal.

II. Application Period

The call for proposals also specifies the period for which applications may be submitted and the funding period.

III. Integration of the Project into the Priority Programme

Each proposal must be accompanied by a description of how the project is integral to the Priority Programme, both in terms of subject matter and organisation. This includes a description of the cooperation with others involved in the proposal within the Priority Programme, for instance on the basis of previous collaborative work or joint publications. The envisaged realisation of the project in cooperation with other applicants may be demonstrated in particular by the joint training of young researchers, or the use of methods by multiple projects as part of a network.

IV. Funding for Coordination of the Priority Programme

Sufficient funding is available to the coordinator within a separate project to facilitate the broad range of coordinated activities ("coordinator project"). These funds may be used for the work of the coordinator, for publication of results and other reports and for general programme tasks. It is also possible for the participants in the Priority Programme to use the funds to apply for travel expenses for the purpose of cooperation meetings and the exchange of results between groups.

The funds remain available to the coordinator even after conclusion of the Priority Programme in order to enable the work resulting from the Priority Programme to be drawn to a conclusion.

V. Funding for Measures to Promote Equality

As part of the coordinator's project, funds of up to €15,000 per year may be applied for to

- increase the number of female researchers at the project management level,
- increase the career qualifications (in addition to scientific qualifications) of young female researchers working in the network
and
- create/maintain a family-friendly workplace in science and/or academia.

A detailed proposal is not required. Funds are earmarked and approved as a lump sum.

Funding can be used to enable young female researchers to participate in mentoring or coaching programmes. It can also be used to initiate networking between the participating female researchers.

The funds can also be used to cover child care costs incurred in combination with events organised by the Priority Programme. Funding can also be used to relieve female PIs with children of work-related tasks. This also applies to male project leaders who meet the requirements due to their family situation. The coordinator is responsible for examining requests.

In addition, funding can be used to implement all measures that the members of the Priority Programme deem suitable to meet the objectives listed above. Participating members can be advised by the equal opportunities officer.

VI. Funds for Colloquia and Coordination Meetings

Colloquia should take place on a regular basis throughout the duration of the Priority Programme, but at least once during each funding period. These meetings should enable the coordination of the individual research projects as part of the overall programme and the exchange of findings between the participants in the Priority Programme, and potentially also with other scientists and academics working in the same field of research, either at home or abroad. The funds needed to hold the colloquia (travel and maintenance costs for the participants) are provided by the DFG.

Additionally, the DFG also provides funding for coordination meetings (such as topical workshops or summer courses) involving individual participants or groups of participants (travel and maintenance costs for those involved). This funding may either be applied for in conjunction with the funds for the individual projects or as part of the coordinator project.

VII. Obligations of Priority Programme Participants

All of those involved in submitting a proposal for a Priority Programme are obliged to promptly provide the coordinator with all of the information necessary for drawing up the interim reports and the final report for the Priority Programme.