

Guidelines

for the Written Review



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I. What Are We Asking You to Do?

We are asking you to provide a written review to serve as basis for the funding decision regarding the attached proposal that has been submitted to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation).

- **First, please make sure that you feel you have the necessary scientific expertise.**

If you do not feel that you have the expertise required to evaluate the subject matter, please return the proposal as quickly as possible. In this case we would be grateful if you could assist us by suggesting other possible reviewers.

- **Please examine whether circumstances exist that could be interpreted as your having a conflict of interest.**

For more information on apparent conflicts of interest, see item IV.3.

- **Please treat the documentation confidentially and do not make it available to third parties.**

- **Please base your assessment of the research project on the text of the proposal you have received.**

You may also refer to the publications cited in the proposal; however, the bibliography of cited works and the manuscripts are not per se the subject of the review.

The proposal also includes two lists of publications:

- a list of the applicant's five most important publications in the curriculum vitae, and
- an overview of the applicant's most important project-specific publications.

Please consider both lists of publications as part of your review.¹

- **If you have any questions about the proposal, please contact the DFG Head Office exclusively.**
- **Please limit your review to two pages or less.**
- **Please provide a clear recommendation as to whether you believe the project should be funded.**

¹ The DFG provides clear instructions on how the lists of publications should be structured. In particular, the number of publications that can be listed is limited. This measure has two main objectives: first, to place emphasis on the content of the most important project-relevant publications, without regard to numerical indicators; second, to reduce the pressure for excessive publication.

II. What Criteria Should You Use?

1. Quality of the Project / Qualification of the Applicant

- Originality
- Expected advancement of knowledge (also in relation to the costs)
- Scientific significance (in its own field and/or across different fields)
- Soundness of the preliminary work, quality of publications and for renewal proposals also the results obtained so far
- Broader impact (in terms of science policy, social policy, commerce / technology)

2. Working Environment / Scientific Environment

- Staff, institutional, room and instrument requirements and resources

3. Objectives and Work Programme

- Clear working hypotheses
- Reasonable limitation of the topic
- Appropriateness of the methods
- Feasibility, particularly with respect to the proposed timeframe

4. Recommendation Concerning the Extent of Funding

4.1 Staff

Justification of the proposed staff needs by the work programme

4.2 Instrumentation

- Necessity and utilisation of the proposed instruments
- Qualification of proposed instrumentation as modern standard equipment
- Necessity of the proposed performance category or the proposed equipment with accessories

4.3 Small Instruments (acquisition costs up to €10,000), Consumables, Travel Expenses and Other Costs

After evaluating each item in the proposal, please make a funding recommendation (either per item or for the total amount).

4.4 Publication Costs

If requested, an allowance of generally up to €750 per year – or in exceptional, justified cases up to €5,000 per year – can be awarded for the publication of scientific project results.

5. Diversity and Equal Opportunities in German Research

Proposal reviews should not disadvantage applicants due to extra-scientific reasons, such as age, gender or disability. Consider the applicant's scientific career development rather than his/her age. You may compensate for certain extra-scientific disadvantages; unavoidable delays in the applicant's scientific career (for example childcare responsibilities causing longer periods of qualification, gaps in publications, or less time spent abroad) should be taken into consideration.

Information on diversity and equal opportunities can be found at www.dfg.de/en/research_careers/equal_opportunities. You may also contact the relevant person at the DFG Head Office for more information.

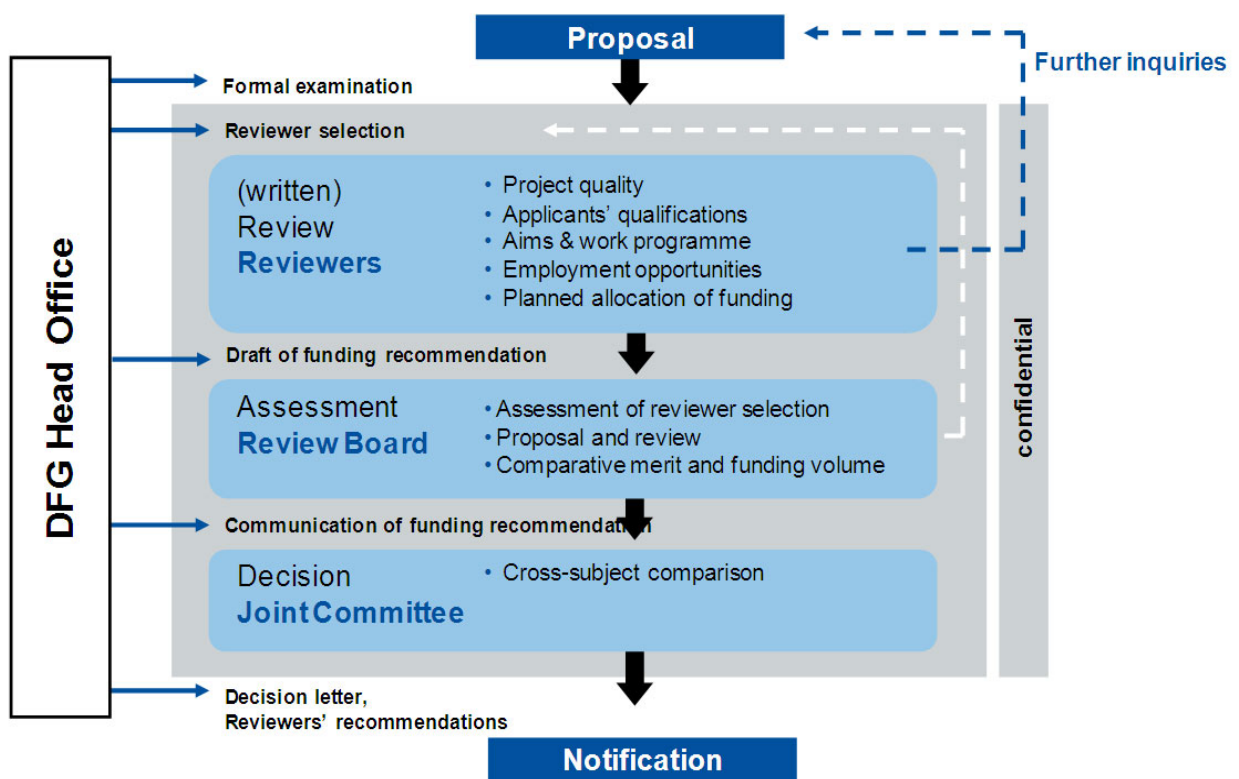
III. What Happens with Your Review?

As a rule, each proposal is evaluated independently by two reviewers. On the basis of these reviews, the DFG Head Office prepares an award recommendation for the responsible review board (several review boards will be involved if necessary).

The review boards are elected statutory bodies of the DFG, made up of experts who serve on a volunteer basis. They are responsible for the quality of the review process and, especially in the case of individual grants, for evaluating competitively all the proposals in a subject area.

The official funding decision is made by the interdisciplinary Joint Committee of the DFG, based on the recommendations by the review boards.

All reviewers participating in the process will be informed of the final decision.



IV. What Else Is Important?

1. Confidentiality

All proposals submitted to the DFG, the correspondence with reviewers, the reviews and the identity of the reviewers and review board member participating in the evaluation must be treated confidentially. We ask that you not identify yourself as a reviewer to the applicant or to any third party. This entails that the responsibilities of a reviewer may only be undertaken personally and may not be delegated to third parties, as well as that the DFG will submit the contents and arguments of the reviews in a completely anonymised and, if necessary, edited form to the applicants.

The scientific content of the proposal may not be exploited for personal and/or other scientific purposes.

2. Obligation to Follow Rules of Good Scientific Practice

The rules of good scientific practice also apply to reviewers. A violation of these rules can result in a charge of scientific misconduct. In particular, any infringement against the principle of confidentiality as per IV.1. is considered scientific misconduct.

3. Conflicts of Interest

The DFG Head Office is not able to investigate all circumstances that could be interpreted as conflict of interest. To be able early on in the written review process to ask another person to serve as reviewer if necessary, the DFG relies on your assistance.

Should circumstances exist that may be interpreted as conflicts of interest, please inform the responsible DFG division before submitting your written review. If you submit a written review to the DFG without first having contacted the DFG about a possible conflict of interest, the DFG assumes that, to the best of your knowledge, no apparent conflict of interest exists. If, after submitting a written review, or during or following a meeting, you realise that there may be – or may have been – an apparent conflict of interest, you should also contact the DFG Head Office immediately.

The DFG Guidelines for Avoiding Conflicts of Interest (DFG form 10.201e) can be found at

http://www.dfg.de/formulare/10_201e.pdf