

Guidelines

Proposals under the Major Research Instrumentation Programme as per Art. 91b GG with Proposal Preparation Instructions



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Guidelines for Proposals for Major Research Instrumentation

I Objective

In accordance with Art. 91b Grundgesetz (GG, Basic Law for Germany), the DFG funds large research equipment at higher education institutions through its Major Research Instrumentation Programme. Financing is provided in equal parts by the DFG and the university or the university's home state. The programme is based on the formal implementation agreement on academic research facilities and major research instrumentation ("Ausführungsvereinbarung Forschungsbauten an Hochschulen einschließlich Großgeräten", AV-FuG), adopted by the Joint Science Conference (GWK). Only investment plans for academic research that are of excellent quality and national relevance are eligible for funding. The instrumentation must by far predominantly serve research purposes, meaning the necessity of the instrumentation and investment costs must solely be justified by its research purpose. The instrumentation may – to a limited degree – also be used in teaching and/or patient care; note, however, that these aspects will not be considered during the review.

II Eligibility

Public universities, including universities of applied sciences, conservatories and art academies, and private, institutionally accredited higher education institutions in Germany are eligible to apply.

The gross acquisition costs must exceed €100,000 for universities of applied sciences and €200,000 for all other universities. The maximum limit for the total cost of the instrumentation is €5 million, irrespective of the actual amount that is requested from the DFG.

Proposals for major instrumentation can be submitted to the DFG at any time. The home state or university must guarantee 50 percent co-financing through state funds. Specific guidelines for submission of major research instrumentation proposals may apply on the university and/or state level.

III Scope of Funding

Funding is available for the investment costs of major research instrumentation. A separate proposal must be submitted for each independent major research instrument.

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

Kennedyallee 40 · 53175 Bonn, Germany · Postal address: 53170 Bonn, Germany
Tel.: + 49 228 885-1 · Fax: + 49 228 885-2777 · postmaster@dfg.de · www.dfg.de



A major research instrument is the sum of the components, including accessories, that form a functional unit for the intended operational purpose. The base unit (including software) should form the major part of the proposal, while its accessories can include methodological and metrological expansions or supplements that are not directly required for operation.

IV Obligations

In submitting a proposal for a research grant to the DFG, you agree to

1. adhere to the rules of **good scientific practice**¹

The general principles of good scientific practice include, among others: maintaining professional standards, documenting results, rigorously questioning all findings, and attributing honestly any contributions by partners, competitors and predecessors.

Scientific misconduct is defined as the intentional and grossly negligent statement of falsehoods in a scientific context, the violation of intellectual property rights or impeding another person's research work. The circumstances of each case will be considered on an individual basis. In cases where scientific misconduct has been established, the DFG may impose one or more of the following sanctions, depending on the nature and severity of the scientific misconduct:

- issuing a written reprimand to those involved;
- exclusion from the right to apply for DFG funds for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct;
- revoking funding decisions (complete or partial cancellation of the grant, recalling granted funds, demanding repayment of funds spent);

¹ The rules of good scientific practice are explained in detail in the white paper [Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice](#) and in the [Funding Guidelines - General Terms and Conditions of DFG Grants](#) (DFG form 2.00).

- demanding that those concerned either retract the discredited publications or correct the falsified data (in particular by publishing an erratum), or appropriately indicate the DFG's retraction of funding in the discredited publications;
- exclusion from acting as a reviewer or from membership of DFG committees for one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct;
- denying voting rights and eligibility in elections for DFG statutory bodies and committees for one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct.

By accepting funding, the recipient agrees to

2. use the grant exclusively and in a targeted manner to implement the funded project. The availability of the 50% co-financing from the university or state is a precondition for using any of the awarded funds. The use and accounting of funds must conform to the relevant regulations of the DFG, specifically the dedicated guidelines for major research instrumentation ("Besondere Verwendungsrichtlinien für Forschungsgroß-geräte nach Art. 91b GG"), which are contained in DFG form 2.18.

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_18/

3. respect that grants are vendor neutral. The vendor quotes and market research assessments included in the proposal are non-binding. The choice of the preferred vendor or model in the proposal is no justification for limiting or shortening the tendering process.
4. submit a financial report (DFG form 41.35) six months after commissioning; the report form is available in German only.

www.dfg.de/formulare/41_35/

5. use the instrument for the research described in the proposal for a period of at least five years ("Zweckbindung") following the commissioning of the instrumentation.
6. submit a report three years after commissioning. The report must describe what research projects were enabled by the instrument and provide data on its usage; results achieved through the use of the instrumentation or anticipated findings should be summarized. The report must be prepared using the appropriate template (DFG form 21.12, available

in German only) and will normally be completed by the scientist responsible for the proposal.

www.dfg.de/formulare/21_12/

The DFG expects that the findings of the projects it funds be made available to the public.

V Publication of Research Findings

The DFG expects that the research findings enabled by the use of the major research instrumentation be made available to the public.

The data necessary for processing your proposal will be stored and processed electronically by the DFG.

By submitting a proposal you agree that, if the proposal is approved, your work address and contact details (name, institution and location, phone, fax, e-mail and website) as well as information about the content of the project (e.g. topic, summary, keywords, subject area, DFG programme, funding period, international connections) will be published in the GEPRIS information system

gepris.dfg.de/en

and may be published in other, non-commercial publications and databases created in cooperation with the DFG.

You may withdraw your consent to full/partial publication at any time, without affecting the lawfulness of any processing carried out prior to your withdrawal. If you would like to withdraw your consent, please notify the responsible DFG programme contact, preferably in electronic form.

Proposal Preparation Instructions

I General Information

Proposals may be submitted in German or English.

The university appoints a person who takes the role of the applicant. The applicant prepares the proposal and proposal supplements and submits these electronically to the DFG via the elan portal. This role, also called “Leader”, is generally assumed by the head of the working group that will primarily use the instrument. The applicant also serves as the contact for all content-related queries relating to the proposal.

Following submission, a compliance form is automatically generated by the elan system. This form must be signed by the applicant and forwarded to the relevant office in the university administration, which confirms by signature that the proposal has been submitted on its behalf. Finally, the confirmation of co-financing has to be given in accordance with AV-FuG and the relevant state guidelines. The completed and signed compliance form is then sent to the DFG.

The DFG will begin to process the proposal once we have received the compliance form. An acknowledgement of receipt that will include the project reference number will be sent to the university, the relevant state ministry and the applicant. We ask that this reference number be used in all correspondence relating to the proposal.

Note:

The DFG has issued specific guidelines with regard to certain kinds of instrumentation. We ask that you review this information as it may be relevant for your proposal.

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/infrastructure/scientific_instrumentation/statements_information

Please follow the link below to find answers to frequently asked questions regarding scientific instrumentation and information technology (available in German only).

www.dfg.de/foerderung/programme/infrastruktur/wgi/wgi_faq/

Proposals for major research instrumentation are handled by the DFG’s Scientific Instrumentation and Information Technology Division.

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The current processing status can be monitored on the DFG's elan portal by the applicant. We may contact the applicant (by mail oder e-mail) in case of questions regarding formal or scientific matters that require clarification prior to the review.

After the documentation has been verified for formal correctness, it will be forwarded to expert researchers in the relevant subject area for review.

The review will consider the following criteria:

- Do the research activities and described projects by the researchers named in the proposal justify the acquisition in both a national and international context?
- Do research purposes alone justify the purchase and use of the instrumentation? Is this evidenced by outstanding research quality, also with regard to the development of new methods?
- Is the acquisition necessary considering existing instrumentation and facilities (such as core facilities)?
- Are the selected product, features and price appropriate? Have follow-up costs been calculated realistically?

www.dfg.de/formulare/10_202/

Note that you may be requested to provide additional information and/or clarification during the review.

After the review has concluded, proposals are forwarded to the responsible DFG decision-making bodies. First, the Committee on Scientific Instrumentation or the Commission on IT Infrastructure will evaluate the outcome of the review, consider any additional aspects and prepare a recommendation for the decision. This recommendation will then be presented to the DFG Joint Committee for final decision.

The DFG's decision will be sent to the university, the relevant state ministry and the applicant.

II Proposal Process and Proposal Structure

As a first step, the applicant downloads the proposal documents via the DFG website (using the link indicated), completes these according to the instructions below, then converts them to PDF.

www.dfg.de/wgi

Following registration in elan, the applicant opens a new project under Proposal Submission – New Project – Scientific Instrumentation - Information Technology, Major Research Instrumentation. The online form should be completed and the documents uploaded as prompted. Following successful submission, the elan system sends an automatic e-mail with a transaction number and a compliance form.

The compliance form must be signed by the applicant and sent to the relevant offices (university administration and/or state ministry) to be completed before it is then sent to the DFG. Once this form has been received, processing of the proposal can begin.

Documents to be uploaded via elan

1 Supplements on Research (to be uploaded to elan in one document)

For each relevant² working group that will use the equipment, a Supplement on Research (DFG form 21.101e) must be submitted with the respective working-group leader's signature. The supplements should explain the special significance and utilisation of the instrumentation for each working group.

The supplements should be compiled into one document. They can be prefaced by a tabular listing of proposed usage, including the percentages of use.

www.dfg.de/formulare/21_101/

2 Curriculum vitae/curricula vitae (to be uploaded to elan in one document)

The curricula vitae of the leaders of the working groups that contribute Supplements on Research have to be compiled into one document. Note that a maximum of ten publications is allowed in each curriculum vitae.

² An expected fraction of instrument time of 10% or more is generally considered a relevant share. Research by working groups with minor share of the instrument time (a few percent) can be integrated in the Supplement on Research of the applicant, in the Supplement on the Operating an Usage Concept (section II.2.) or all minor shares can be summarized in an additional document.

3 Supplement on the Operating and Usage Concept (to be uploaded to elan in one document)

A Supplement on the Operating and Usage Concept must be submitted. In consideration of the type of usage (operated locally or at a central facility), the individual points in DFG form 21.102 should be addressed in appropriate detail. If a central facility (e.g. core facility, data processing centre) is involved, the facility leadership must expressly endorse the plan. The university must confirm all necessary requirements for installation and that it will cover the operating costs.

www.dfg.de/formulare/21_102/

4 Supplement on Instrumentation Configuration (to be uploaded to elan in one document)

The instrumentation specifications as well as the performance class needed for the proposed projects must be justified, and the choice of vendor must be explained based on current quotes and market research assessment. The features of the desired product must be listed in tabular form (components, gross unit prices, configuration scheme if necessary) and include a comparison of competing quotes by their key-component specifications, price/performance ratio, and other criteria (quality, ergonomics, follow-up costs, manufacturer service, etc.)

www.dfg.de/formulare/21_103/

5 Current vendor quotes

The submission must include the preferred vendor quote for the desired configuration as well as alternative quotes that were taken into consideration. Quotes should be current as of the submission date, include a price breakdown by key components, and indicate the gross total amounts as well as any negotiated discounts.

Funding cannot be provided for warranty services that exceed those required by law, extensions of legal warranty periods, or operating and maintenance costs. The preferred quote and comparative quotes must be submitted in separate PDF documents.