

Proposal Preparation Instructions

Proposals to Establish or Renew Research Units



I General Instructions

Funding proposals¹ are to be submitted jointly by all researchers involved in the Research Unit. They are jointly responsible for the scientific conduct of the project. One of the applicants in the Research Unit assumes the position of spokesperson and represents the Research Unit in dealings with the DFG and other bodies.

The proposal process takes place in two stages:

1. In the first stage the participating researchers submit a draft proposal to the DFG Head Office. This approximately 10-page text should outline the Research Unit's joint work programme and related objectives and other measures in accordance with the structure and items set out below and include a summary (about 1 to 2 pages) for each of the proposed individual projects.

www.dfg.de/formulare/53_20_elan/

To illustrate and enhance your presentation you may refer to your own and others' publications. Indicate whenever you are referring to other researchers' work and explain your own preparatory work. Please list all **cited** publications in your bibliography. This reference list is not considered your list of publications. Any unpublished work must be included with the proposal. However, note that reviewers are not required to read any of the works you cite. Reviews will only be based on the text of the actual proposal.

Please note that the DFG may reject any proposals not in compliance with these rules.

Furthermore, the draft proposal must include information on the project leaders. For each project leader, submit a CV and a list of up to ten of his/her most important publications; in addition, submit **one** project-specific list of publications **per** individual project. Follow the Guidelines for Publication Lists.

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_91/

Please include a cost estimate as well.

¹ The language in which the funding proposal may be submitted should be agreed upon with the relevant DFG programme division prior to submission.

The draft proposal, which may be submitted at any time, is sent to reviewers. On the basis of their assessments, the DFG Head Office, in consultation with DFG review board members, advises the applicants of whether they should proceed to the second, full proposal stage.

2. The full proposal should particularly describe the proposed research work, relevant preliminary work and the type and nature of the cooperation between the applicants, in accordance with the structure and items set out below and in a format suitable for peer review. This proposal to establish or renew a Research Unit can only be submitted by the Research Unit's spokesperson and only electronically via elan.

<https://elan.dfg.de>

For the overall description of the Research Unit and the coordination proposal, please use the relevant template in elan, available in German or English.

www.dfg.de/formulare/53_02_elan

Individual project proposals within the Research Unit should be submitted in accordance with the instructions on submitting project proposals.

www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01

A review panel evaluates the proposal to establish or renew a Research Unit, usually at the site of the proposed unit, and develops a funding recommendation for the appropriate decision-making bodies at the DFG.

II Instructions on Preparing the Overall Description of the Research Unit and the Coordination Proposal

The following structure and items apply to the Research Unit as a whole.

1. State of the art and preliminary work

Please explain briefly and precisely the state of the art in your field in its direct relationship to your project. This description should make clear in which context you situate the work of the researchers participating in the Research Unit and in what areas the Research Unit intends to make a unique, innovative, promising contribution. This description must be concise and understandable without referring to additional literature.

What (joint) preliminary work has been done? In what way are the participating researchers/working groups qualified for the project?

1.1 For a renewal proposal: Report on the progress to date

For renewal proposals, please report on your previous work. This report should also be understandable without referring to additional literature.

1.2 Project-related publications

Please list the most significant publications that relate directly to the proposed Research Unit and document your preliminary work. Follow the Guidelines for Publication Lists.

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2. Objectives and joint work programme

2.1 Objectives of the overall project and expected benefits of collaboration within the unit, incl. a description of the group composition and their project-specific qualifications

What common objectives will be pursued by the Research Unit and to what extent does this require collaboration within the project? Is the collaboration based on an innovative and coherent concept? Can the stated objectives only be achieved through the proposed cooperation? Do you intend to involve all of the relevant disciplines necessary to work on the topic? What key results do you expect in the short to medium term? What long-term results are anticipated? If applicable, why is a working group from another European country or a commercial or industrial company involved, and how is this of particular importance to the Research Unit as a whole?

2.2 Joint work programme including proposed research methods

Describe the Research Unit's joint work programme.

2.3 Research data and knowledge management

What measures are planned to manage the research data and knowledge generated within the Research Unit? How will this be supported by the institutions participating in the project?

2.4 Potential impact on the research area and local research environment

Describe the Research Unit's potential impact on the research area and local research

environment. How will the collaboration be structured, especially in cases where Research Units are located at more than one site?

2.5 Measures to advance research careers

Detail what measures are planned to integrate and promote promising early career researchers within the Research Unit (e.g. training programmes, special measures, etc.). Does the department offer doctoral programmes? What measures are planned to support gender equality and to help researchers combine career and family?

2.6 National and international cooperation and networking

What national and/or international collaborations are relevant? For Research Units located at multiple sites, how will communication be handled and ensured?

2.7 Collaboration with international cooperation partners

Are international cooperation partners involved in the Research Unit?

2.8 Description of the spokesperson's qualifications

Please explain why you would like to assume the role of spokesperson, also with respect to your academic qualifications and personal skills. What experience do you have in managing third-party funded projects?

3. Coordination

3.1 Description of how joint objectives and the joint work programme will be implemented in the coordination project

Describe the coordination project's joint work programme and how the joint objectives will be achieved and implemented.

3.2 Requested modules

The template provided in elan contains a list of funding modules available to facilitate coordination within the Research Unit. Please provide **detailed** justification for each module requested in the online form.

III Obligations

In submitting a draft or full proposal to the DFG, you agree to:

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1. adhere **to the rules of good scientific practice**.²

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);
- 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 in DFG committees for a period of 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 a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct.

² The rules of good scientific practice are presented in detail in the white paper entitled "[Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice](#)" and in the [Funding Guidelines - General Terms and Conditions of DFG Grants](#) (DFG form 2.00).

By accepting funding, the recipients agree to:

2. use the grant exclusively and in a targeted manner to realise the funded project. The use and accounting of funds must conform to the relevant regulations of the DFG.
3. submit progress reports on the research according to the dates specified in the award letter and to present financial accounts to the DFG detailing the use of funds.

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