

Guidelines

for Reviewing Proposals Under the Major Research Instrumentation Programme
as per Art. 91b GG



I. What Are We Asking You to Do?

We are asking you to provide a written review that will serve as a basis for the funding decision regarding the attached proposal that has been submitted under the Major Research Instrumentation Programme as per Art. 91b GG.

- **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 would assist us by suggesting other possible reviewers.
- **Please treat the documentation confidentially and do not make it available to third parties.**
For more information on confidentiality, see section IV.1.
- **Please examine whether circumstances exist that could indicate a conflict of interest on your part.**
For more information on apparent conflicts of interest, see section IV.3.
- **Please base your assessment on the proposal documents you have received.**
You may additionally 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 10 most important publications from the CVs attached as part of the proposal and
- the most important publications from the past five years relating to the proposal

Please consider both lists of publications in your assessment.

- **If you have any questions about the proposal, please contact the DFG Head Office only.**
- **Please limit your review to two pages or less.**
- **Please provide a clear recommendation as to whether you believe the project should be funded by grading it in terms of funding priority. Your recommendation will be used in a comparative review.**

II. What Criteria Should You Use?

1. Qualifications of the Applicants

Do the researchers' scientific activities and proposed projects justify the acquisition?

- Applicants' scientific credentials
- Soundness of the preliminary work
- Quality of publications and the results obtained to date in both a national and international context

2. Scientific Justification

Do research purposes alone justify the purchase and use of the instrumentation? Is this evidenced by outstanding scientific quality?

- Originality of the proposed project
- Expected advancement of knowledge (or development of new methods where applicable)
- Scientific significance

3. Use of the Proposed Instrumentation

Is the acquisition necessary considering existing equipment and operational and usage concepts (i.e. core facilities) at the location?

- Opportunities for using existing equipment
- Adequacy of the number of people and working groups who will be using the instrumentation
- Are the operational and usage concepts (for example within the context of core facilities) convincing?
- Should the instrumentation also be made available to other individuals and/or working groups?

4. Operational Expertise and Infrastructure Requirements

Are the technical requirements in place at the installation site to allow for successful usage?

Are adequately experienced and skilled staff available to ensure the operation?

- Is there sufficient experience with this class of instrumentation?
- Is the presence of adequately trained personnel ensured – also in the long term?
- Is the existing accompanying infrastructure adequate (e.g. for sample preparation, data analysis and data management)?
- Are special requirements for the site of operation sufficiently described (e.g. clean room or climatisation)?

5. Choice of Vendor and Instrumentation, Features and Costs

Are the selected product, features and price appropriate? Have follow-up costs been calculated realistically?

- Necessity of the proposed features and performance class
- Necessity of the proposed accessories
- Sufficient market research
- Calculation of operating and other follow-up costs (e.g. repairs, personnel)

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.

The documentation is then sent to members of the Committee on Scientific Instrumentation and Information Technology, a decision-making body elected by the DFG Joint Committee. It is responsible for the quality of the review process and for preparing the funding recommendation for the Joint Committee.

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

The DFG will anonymise reviewer comments and share them with the applicants. These anonymised comments will also be made available to the other reviewers taking part in the review process. Please note that the DFG Head Office may shorten reviews as necessary.

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 other participating committee members 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.

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

2. Obligation to Observe the Principles of Good Scientific Practice

The [principles of good scientific practice](#) must also be observed during the review process. A violation of these principles 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. In cases of suspected scientific misconduct the DFG's [Rules of Procedure for Dealing with Scientific Misconduct](#) (Verfahrensordnung zum Umgang mit wissenschaftlichem Fehlverhalten –VerfOwF) are applied.

3. Conflicts of Interest

The DFG Head Office is not able to investigate all circumstances that could be interpreted as a conflict of interest. Therefore, the DFG relies on your assistance so that, if necessary, another reviewer may be found at an early stage to participate in the written review process.

Should circumstances exist that may be interpreted as a conflict 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 10.201) can be found at

www.dfg.de/formulare/10_201