

# Guidelines

## for the Review of Research Grants

### I Programme Information

Research grants enable individuals who have completed their academic training to conduct, at any time, research projects with clearly defined topics and durations, regardless of the subject (see Guidelines for the Research Grant Programme – DFG form 50.01).

[www.dfg.de/formulare/50\\_01](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/50_01)

#### **Please note:**

General guidelines for reviews (DFG form 10.20) are available at:

[www.dfg.de/formulare/10\\_20](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/10_20)

The review should not exceed two pages in length.

## II Structure of the Review

1. How would you assess the **quality of the project**, especially with regard to originality and the anticipated contribution to knowledge?
2. To what extent do the **objectives and work programme** convincingly reflect clear working hypotheses and an appropriately distinct topic? Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the planned investigations, the suitability of the methods and the appropriateness of the schedule.
3. How would you evaluate the soundness of the preliminary work, the quality of publications (please refer to the Guidelines for Publication Lists) and the **qualifications of the applicant** – both in general and in terms of the proposed project? Is the applicant qualified to independently lead the proposed project?
4. How would you assess the **work and research environment** at the institution where the project is to be carried out?
5. Please provide a **clear recommendation** as to whether the proposal should be approved. If so, comment on whether the requested funds are justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project, making recommendations for adjustments to the budget as necessary.
6. Other aspects
  - If this is a first-time proposal, please note the following:
    - The DFG would like to encourage a greater number of highly qualified individuals to take up a research career. It therefore specifically aims to encourage first-time applicants to apply for DFG funding. First-time applicants have the option, once only, of marking a proposal as a first-time DFG proposal. During the review process, less emphasis should be given to the applicants' project-specific experience and more to their potential and the quality and originality of the proposed project.
    - For this reason, we also ask you to comment specifically on the following items:

- What has the applicant achieved in his/her academic career to date and in research topics handled so far, in relation to his/her current career stage?
- In your overall assessment, please also bear in mind that previous work specific to the project, documented for instance by project-specific publications, is not mandatory for first-time applicants to the DFG.
- If the proposal relates to collaboration with developing countries, please note the following:
  - In the funding measure “Cooperation with Developing Countries”, researchers who are eligible to submit proposals to the DFG can propose a transnational research project designed jointly with researchers from developing countries. The goal is to promote cooperation between researchers in Germany and developing countries within the context of ambitious projects. If approved, the grant is awarded solely to the researchers based in Germany, who are formally considered to be the applicants. They then transfer the funds allocated for the international component of the proposal to the international project partners.
  - Collaborations with developing countries are subject to the DFG’s standard quality criteria. Project components in developing countries can be funded directly if the contribution of the cooperation partner in the developing country is essential to the research project. Work should be planned and carried out as far as possible with equal participation by the German and foreign project members. This participation should provide recognisable added value for all those involved. In addition, the research capacity and scientific performance of the participating researchers in the relevant countries should be enhanced. Please state explicitly whether you believe these objectives can be achieved with the proposal.
- If the proposal is part of a lead agency process, please note the following:
  - In this process, which the DFG conducts with selected foreign partner organisations, transnational projects with research components in the different participating countries are reviewed by one lead funding organisation only. In the event of approval, each national component of a project is funded separately by the responsible funding organisation. Reviews solicited by the DFG as the lead agency and

the opinion of the DFG review board are made available to the participating partner organisations abroad as a basis for their final funding decision.

- In your review, you should therefore comment on all national components of the proposal (including requested funds), the international joint proposal as a whole, and the coordination of the various components.
- As we will share your review with the participating foreign partner organisation as part of the decision-making process, we request that you write your review in English.
- Additional information on the lead agency process (Weave, D-A-CH, D-Lux and D-Süd) can be found in the relevant guidelines on our website. Please note that the guidelines can be accessed under “Internationale Fördermaßnahmen” at the link below and that not all information is currently available in English.  
[www.dfg.de/foerderung/formulare\\_merkblaetter](http://www.dfg.de/foerderung/formulare_merkblaetter)
- If the requested funding measure is a Middle East collaboration, please note the following:
  - The “Middle East Collaboration” funding measure enables researchers who are eligible to submit proposals to the DFG to propose a transnational research project designed jointly with researchers from Israel (bilateral project), or Israel and Palestine or the following neighbouring countries of Israel: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria (trilateral project). The goal is to promote cooperation between these researchers within the context of ambitious research projects. If approved, the grant is awarded solely to the researchers based in Germany, who are formally considered to be the applicants. They then transfer the funds allocated for the international component of the proposal to the international project partners.
  - Funding decisions on scientific cooperation in the framework of a Middle East collaboration are subject to the DFG’s standard quality criteria.
  - Work should be planned and carried out as far as possible with equal participation by the German, Israeli and, if applicable, Palestinian or Arab project members. The participation should provide recognisable added value for all those involved, which

for the Palestinian/Arab partners may also consist of expanding research capacity. Please state explicitly whether you believe these objectives can be achieved with the proposal.

- If the proposal is for a part-time temporary position for a principal investigator, please note the following:

In accordance with regulations on the promotion of equal opportunity and diversity in research, it is possible for an individual to take up a part-time (at least 50%) temporary PI position for family reasons (childcare, relatives in need of care) or in cases of disability or chronic illness. Such proposals will be treated as full-time proposals by the DFG with the goal of equal assessment of project proposals involving a temporary PI position.

- If the proposal involves requests for specialised literature, please note the following:

Funds for purchasing specialised scientific publications may be granted in exceptional cases where the publications in question must either be permanently available to the project but are not purchased by the institution, or when they are not available through interlibrary loan. With this in mind, please state explicitly whether you believe the funds for procuring the specialised literature listed in the proposal should be approved.