

Guidelines

for Proposals under the Programme Major Research Instrumentation as per Art. 91b GG
with

Proposal Preparation Instructions



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Guidelines

for proposals under the programme

Major Research Instrumentation as per Art. 91b GG

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, major research instrumentation and national high-performance computing ("Ausführungsvereinbarung Forschungsbauten, Großgeräte und Nationales Hochleistungsrechnen", AV-FGH), adopted by the Joint Science Conference (GWK). Only investment plans for academic research that are of particular quality and cross-regional 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 regarding the necessity for the procurement of the instrumentation.

II. Eligibility

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

The gross acquisition costs must at least be €100,000 for universities of applied sciences and at least €200,000 for all other universities.

As long as the total costs of the instrumentation is below €7,500,000 proposals for major instrumentation can be submitted to the DFG at any time. Specific guidelines for submission of major research instrumentation proposals may apply on the university and/or state level.

Instrumentation with total cost of €7,500,000 or more may belong to the Major Research Instrumentation Programme, if envisaged for a usage comparable with instrumentation below that threshold, i.e. typically with several applications. If the instrumentation serves a dedicated

research concept, as research buildings funded according to the AV-FGH do, it belongs to the Research Building (“Forschungsbauten”) Programme conducted by the Wissenschaftsrat. DFG and Wissenschaftsrat will determine how to categorize the intended instrumentation appropriately (either Major Research Instrumentation Programme or Research Building Programme). Please note that a proposal submission is only eligible after that determination.

The home state or university have to declare the co-financing according §10 AV-FGH at the stage of proposal submission.

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.

A major research instrument is the sum of the components, including accessories, that form a functional unit for the intended operational purpose. There should be an appropriate relation between the main instrument (including software) and accessory equipment or supplements. Accessory equipment and supplements are not necessarily required to be directly relevant for the main instruments operatability . Building measures are not considered part of the equipment.

IV. Obligations

In submitting a proposal to the DFG, you

1. agree to adhere to the **principles of good scientific practice**.¹

The principles of good scientific practice include, among others: maintaining professional standards, maintaining strict honesty with regard to one’s own contributions and those of third parties, documenting results and rigorously questioning all findings.

2. recognise the DFG’s **Rules of Procedure for Dealing with Scientific Misconduct** (Verfahrensordnung zum Umgang mit wissenschaftlichem Fehlverhalten - VerfOwF)² as

¹ The principles of good scientific practice can be found in detail in the DFG [Code of Conduct - Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice](#) and in the ["Besondere Verwendungsrichtlinien für Forschungsgroßgeräte nach Art. 91b Abs. 1 S. 1 GG"](#) (DFG form 2.18).

² DFG Rules of Procedure for Dealing with Scientific Misconduct, [DFG form 80.01](#)

legally binding.

Scientific misconduct is defined as the intentional and completely 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 in accordance with its Rules of Procedure, 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 (full or partial termination of the grant contract, 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 serving as a reviewer for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct;
- exclusion from membership in DFG bodies and 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 bodies and committees for a period of one to eight years, depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct.

By accepting funding, the recipient agrees to

3. 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 Forschungsgroßgeräte nach Art. 91b GG”), which are contained in DFG form 2.18.

www.dfg.de/formulare/2_18/

4. 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.
5. 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/

6. 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.
7. 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 research findings enabled by the use of the major research instrumentation be made available to the public.

V. Data Protection

Please note the DFG’s data protection notice on research funding, which can be viewed and downloaded at www.dfg.de/privacy_policy. If necessary, please also forward this information to those individuals whose data will be processed by the DFG due to their involvement in your project.

www.dfg.de/privacy_policy

Proposal Preparation Instructions

I. General Information

Proposals may be submitted in German or English.

The university appoints a person as the responsible spokesperson. The responsible spokesperson prepares the proposal and submits it electronically to the DFG via the elan portal. This role, is in most cases assumed by the head of the working group that will primarily use the instrument. The responsible spokesperson 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 responsible spokesperson 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-FGH and the relevant state guidelines. The completed and signed original 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 statements and informations with regard to certain kinds of instrumentation and technologies. We ask that you review this information as it may be relevant for your proposal (some documents may only be available in German).

www.dfg.de/wgi/notes_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/.../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 responsible spokesperson. We may contact the responsible spokesperson (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 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 equipment and usage concepts (i.e. core facilities) at the location?
- Are the technical prerequisites for a successful usage met at the site of installation? Is adequately experienced and skilled staff present to ensure the operation?
- 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 and Information Technology will evaluate the outcome of the review, considers any additional aspects and prepares 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

The proposal documents may be downloaded via the DFG website.

www.dfg.de/wgi

Information to have prepared for entry within the elan-portal:
The summary of the proposal and its science related goals (maximum of 3000 characters, no special characters) in German and English

Documents to be uploaded via elan in PDF format

1 Project Description (as one document in elan)

The project description has to be done using the template Project Description – for Major Research Instrumentation as per Art 91b GG (DFG form 21.10).

www.dfg.de/formulare/21_10

The information provided within the templates has to be adhered to.

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

The curricula vitae of all scientists that contribute a chapter Use in research and other persons of relevance to the proposal have to be submitted compiled into one document. Note that a maximum of ten publications is allowed in each curriculum vitae. The Guidelines for Publication Lists (DFG form 1.91) have to be adhered to.

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_91

3 Current quotes or corresponding supplier information (in elan as two documents)

Necessary at the time of submission is to enclose a recent quote or corresponding supplier information for an exemplary/favoured configuration as well as alternative quotes that were taken into consideration. Quotes should include a price breakdown by key components, and indicate the gross total amounts as well as any negotiated discounts. The quotes for the exemplary/favoured configuration and the collection of all alternative quotes should be enclosed as two PDF documents. If there is a large number of quotes or the quotes are extensive considering the creation of an index or overview.

Please note, funding cannot be used for warranty services that exceed those required by law, extensions of legal warranty periods, or operating and maintenance costs.

4 Additional attachments (optional)

It might be reasonable to submit additional documents with the proposal (e.g. cooperation agreements, usage rules, central concepts for IT-infrastructures, research data management, or the requested technology, and unpublished scientific manuscripts). The supplements should have a clear connection to the proposal and be of relevance to the review. The project description should make references to the supplements. Essential aspects to the proposal are to be addressed in a self-explanatory manner within the project description.