

# Guidelines

## Priority Programme



Disclaimer: The English translation of this document is provided for informational purposes. In the event of a discrepancy between the English and the German versions, the German text takes precedence.

**Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft**

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## **A Establishing a Priority Programme**

### **I Programme Information**

#### **1 Objective**

The Priority Programme is a form of strategic research funding involving an open call for proposals. The aim of the programme is to promote work on topics that can be expected to have a formative impact on a field of science or the humanities. This impact can be achieved both by discovering new areas of research and also by rethinking known areas, working on them from a new perspective or based on a new approach, and providing momentum for this to happen. Interdisciplinary proposals offer particular potential here. Under the Priority Programme, individual research projects are funded that contribute to the network as a whole achieving the objectives formulated in the establishment proposal with regard to knowledge gain.

Another particular feature of the Priority Programme is that it promotes collaboration between researchers across different locations. Measures tailored specifically to the Priority Programme are pursued in order to promote researchers in early career phases and also equity and diversity.

Priority Programmes are not subject to any specific requirements in terms of the number of individual projects, geographical distribution or the funds required for this purpose.

#### **2 Proposals**

##### **2.1 Eligibility**

All researchers who work in Germany or at a German research institution abroad and have completed their training, usually with a doctorate, are eligible to participate in the preparation of an establishment proposal.

From the group of participants, a – typically interdisciplinary – programme committee is formed (maximum five individuals). Committee membership should reflect the relevant subject areas.

The programme committee determines which member will be responsible for coordinating the preparation of the establishment proposal and, if applicable, the Priority Programme during the funding periods (cf. A 4).

## 2.2 Format and deadline

For the description of your project, please use the appropriate template in German or English provided in elan (Proposal to Establish a Priority Programme, DFG form 53.11).

[www.dfg.de/formulare/53\\_11\\_elan](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/53_11_elan)

The description may comprise up to 25 pages. Proposals can only be submitted by the coordinator via elan:

[elan.dfg.de](http://elan.dfg.de)

The CVs and publication lists of the programme committee members must be attached as one PDF file. The template provided (DFG form 53.200) must be used for each CV.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/53\\_200\\_elan](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/53_200_elan)

Both the publication lists that accompany the academic CVs and the project- and subject-related list of publications of the committee members (part of the project description) are subject to the Guidelines for Preparing Publication Lists (DFG form 1.91).

[www.dfg.de/formulare/1\\_91](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/1_91)

If, in preparing your proposal, you used artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of generative models for text and image creation, please disclose this fact in a scientifically appropriate manner in your proposal. For more information, see the “[Research Integrity](#)” portal.

Proposals must be received by the DFG Head Office no later than **15 October** of any given year.

The DFG Senate decides on the establishment of new Priority Programmes once each year on the basis of recommendations prepared by the members of the review boards at a meeting.

## 2.3 Preparation of the proposal

In preparing the establishment proposal, the coordinator is strongly recommended to invite the researchers who might be considered for cooperation in the Priority Programme to take part in a round-table discussion. This can be funded by the DFG on

request. By way of an exception, additional round-table discussions can be financed during the preparation phase if necessary. The round-table discussions serve to describe the framework topic and allow researchers to express interest in submitting proposals for individual projects within the Priority Programme. By contrast, working meetings aimed at preparing an establishment proposal for a Priority Programme cannot be funded by the DFG.

For more information, contact the relevant programme office at the DFG Head Office.

### **3 Duration**

The maximum funding duration is six years, divided into two funding periods of three years each.

### **4 Coordination**

The coordinator may be asked to briefly present their own proposal in the assessment group on establishment proposals.

Following the Senate's decision to establish a Priority Programme, the coordinator takes on a guiding role for the programme as a whole to ensure that the programme's objectives will be met. During the review of individual project proposals, the coordinator is the responsible contact person for the members of the review panel.

During the funding phase, the coordinator supports the individual project leaders in an advisory capacity.

The coordinator submits a progress report on the overall development of the Priority Programme at the project renewal review and is also responsible for submitting the final report. The coordinator is authorised to obtain the information required for this purpose from the project leaders.

Funding for coordination tasks can be requested by submitting special modules (cf. B II).

## **B Individual Projects within Existing Priority Programmes**

### **I Programme Information**

#### **1 Objective**

As a topic-oriented funding programme with an open call for proposals, Priority Programmes provide the opportunity for interdisciplinary networking and nationwide coordination of research projects in fields of current research interest.

Once the DFG Senate has reached a decision to establish a Priority Programme and provided an appropriate budget for this, the DFG will announce it to the German research community by way of a nationwide call for proposals.

#### **2 Proposals**

##### **2.1 Eligibility**

Researchers in Germany, or those working at a German research institution abroad, who have completed their academic training (a doctorate as a rule) are eligible to apply.

Proposals may also be submitted by researchers working at a non-university research institution without being subject to a cooperation requirement regarding the individual proposal.

Furthermore, project proposals may be submitted by researchers based at foreign research institutions if their project offers added value to the Priority Programme as a whole. This must be explained in the proposal. In addition, participation of researchers at research institutions abroad is possible subject to the conditions described under Special Provisions (B III 1).

## 2.2 Format and deadline

The coordination proposal and project proposals can only be submitted via elan:

[elan.dfg.de](http://elan.dfg.de)

The coordination proposal can only be submitted by the coordinator.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/53\\_17\\_elan](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/53_17_elan)

If the coordination is planned to be transferred to another person during the total funding duration of the Priority Programme, this person may be included as co-investigator for the coordination project by way of exception. It is not possible for this person to apply for funds on their own within the coordination project or for the coordinator to request funds within the coordination project for this person to fulfil coordination tasks. If applicable, please provide a short justification of the planned transfer in the coordination proposal. As the co-investigator cannot be assigned in elan, this will be done by the DFG Head Office after proposal submission.

Accordingly, for the coordinator, note the information in section A I 2.2 of these guidelines relating to attachments, publication lists and the use of AI in proposals when preparing the coordination proposal.

The individual project proposals are submitted by the respective project leaders. Proposals should be submitted according to the instructions for project proposals.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_01](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01)

The submission deadline is stated in the call for proposals.

## 2.3 Preparation of the proposal

In preparation for submitting a proposal in an established Priority Programme, it is recommended that another round-table discussion be held at which all potential applicants are informed about the set-up of the Priority Programme. The round-table discussion can be funded by the DFG at the request of the coordinator. For more information, contact the relevant programme office at the DFG Head Office.

### **3 Duration**

The length of the funding period is also stated in the call for proposals.

## **II Proposal Modules**

As part of your research project proposal under a Priority Programme, you may submit one or more of the modules listed below. For details, please see the module descriptions.

### **1 Basic Module**

Use the basic module to request funding for direct project costs, project-specific staff, and instrumentation necessary to carry out the project.

### **2 Temporary Positions for Principal Investigators**

If you would like to propose a position for yourself as the leader of this project, use this module to request funding for your temporary position as principal investigator.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_02](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_02)

**The following modules can be submitted by the project leaders for the individual projects in conjunction with the modules above, or by the coordinator for the entire Priority Programme within the coordination proposal:**

### **3 Replacements**

If your project or the coordination project requires that you be released from teaching or administrative duties, you can use this module to request funding for a replacement to take over these responsibilities.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_03](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_03)

### **4 Temporary Substitutes for Clinicians**

If this project requires that clinicians conduct research, you can use this module to request funding for temporary substitutes to take over their patient-care responsibilities.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_04](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_04)

## 5 Project-Specific Workshops

If you would like to conduct workshops for your projects or for the entire Priority Programme, you may request funding to help you do so.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_06](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_06)

Please use this module to request funding for all workshops and colloquia that you will conduct within the funding period or for a concluding colloquium. In general, it is not possible to submit a request for colloquium funds at a later date.

## 6 Mercator Fellows

This module enables you to pursue an intensive and long-term exchange with researchers in Germany and abroad. Fellows will partially be on site but will remain in contact with the Priority Programme even after their stay.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_05](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_05)

## 7 Public Relations

To enable you to present your work to the general lay public, you can request funding for public relations.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_07](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_07)

**The following modules can only be submitted by the coordinator on behalf of the entire Priority Programme within the coordination proposal:**

## 8 Coordination

This module enables the coordinator to

- apply for the funds needed to coordinate the various projects and work within the network (coordination funding), and, irrespective of that, to
  - apply for gender inclusion funding for individual and subject and/or project-related activities serving to facilitate the coordinator's new role in conjunction with being in an underrepresented gender at the project management level in the relevant field or discipline.
- This module generally addresses spokespersons, except in the case of Priority Programmes, in which the role of coordinator is used.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_12](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_12)



## **9 Network Funds**

Use this module to request funds for the entire network.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_13](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_13)

## **10 Start-Up Funding**

Through this module, research networks can receive funds to help promising researchers in early career phases pursue independent projects.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_11](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_11)

## **11 Standard Allowance for Equity and Diversity**

This module can be used to request funds for targeted and project-specific or, in this case, network-specific measures to promote gender equality for researchers and diversity in research and to make jobs in science and academia more family friendly (including care).

[www.dfg.de/formulare/52\\_14](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/52_14)

Up to €15,000 per funding year may be requested as a lump sum for this purpose.

### **III Special Provisions**

#### **1 Projects abroad**

It is possible to collaborate with researchers abroad within an established Priority Programme. Direct project funds from the basic module (travel funds and funds for guests) can be used for this purpose, for example, as can the Mercator Fellows module.

It is possible to involve projects from researchers in Luxembourg, South Tyrol and Switzerland due to special agreements being in place. As a general rule, these projects must be funded by the respective partner organisations involved.

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_015](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_015)

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_017](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_017)

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_018](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_018)

Projects in other countries can be funded by the DFG if they promise to offer added value for the projects being pursued under the Priority Programme in Germany and if they make an important additional contribution to achieving the objectives of the Priority Programme.

It is also possible to integrate researchers based abroad in projects being pursued in Germany in the context of collaboration with developing countries or with countries of the Middle East:

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_013](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_013)

[www.dfg.de/formulare/54\\_016](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/54_016)

#### **2 Association of Emmy Noether Groups**

Priority Programmes may associate Emmy Noether Groups that investigate related topics. In this case, the Priority Programme proposal and the Emmy Noether proposal should refer to each other. Decisions on both proposals will be made independently of each other. If both the Priority Programme and the Emmy Noether Group are established, the Emmy Noether Group Leader will participate in the Priority Programme's shared events. The association can also be established afterwards at the coordinator's discretion.

## C Obligations and Data Protection Notice

### I Obligations

In submitting a proposal to the DFG, you

1. agree to adhere to the **principles of good research practice**.<sup>1</sup>

The principles of good research 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)<sup>2</sup> as legally binding.

When preparing the establishment proposal, the coordinator obtains signed Declarations of Obligation of Compliance from the members of the programme committee:

[www.dfg.de/formulare/80\\_02](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/80_02)

and keeps these on file for ten years following submission of the establishment proposal. Should allegations of scientific misconduct arise, upon request the coordinator will forward the relevant declaration to the DFG Head Office.

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<sup>1</sup> The principles of good research practice can be found in detail in the DFG [Code of Conduct - Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice](#) and in the [Funding Guidelines: General Terms and Conditions of DFG Grants](#) (DFG form 2.00).

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

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 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 realise the funded project. The use and accounting of funds must conform to the relevant regulations of the DFG.
4. 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.

## **II 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](http://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](http://www.dfg.de/privacy_policy)