

## Clusters of Excellence Funding Line

### Instructions and Template for Full Proposals

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#### A General Instructions

The following information and documents must be submitted to the DFG Head Office electronically **via the DFG elan portal** by the cut-off deadline of **noon on 21 February 2018**:

- General data
- Proposal including appendix (in elan: "Project Description")
- Accompanying letter(s) from the head(s) of the applicant university/universities
- Endorsement by the research authority/authorities at the state level responsible for the applicant university/universities
- Tentative bylaws of the Cluster of Excellence (to be submitted in German; information on designing the bylaws is available at

[www.dfg.de/formulare/exstra140](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/exstra140))

A total of 20 **printed copies** of the proposal (including the appendix) must be sent to the DFG Head Office immediately following the online submission of the document; please mark the package with "ExStra".

Proposals including appendices must be written in English; the remaining documents can be submitted in German or English. Please use this form as a template. In justified cases, proposals may additionally be submitted in German upon prior arrangement with the DFG Head Office.

Proposals – to be submitted on A4 paper, 11pt Arial font with line spacing of 1.5 (note that the format also applies to the appendix, with the exception of the CVs in item 5) – must not exceed 120 pages (excluding cover page, list of abbreviations, table of contents and appendix). An interactive table of contents may also be created for the PDF document. A different font or line spacing may be used in tables, figures, illustrations, footnotes and the bibliography, provided that it is easy to read. The proposal tem-

plate provides a mandatory structure and a number of tables, which must be completed. You may also include more detailed subsections and additional tables and figures as necessary. As a general rule, requested funding amounts should not include programme allowances for indirect project costs. Do not add links to websites containing additional information specific to the proposal. Note, however, that links to general university websites or to individual publications may be cited in the proposal. Only works that have been published or accepted for publication may be cited. In the latter case, submit the manuscript along with the publisher's acknowledgement of acceptance electronically. If the manuscript is available online, please include the link or relevant identification number. All sections of text in grey are intended to provide guidance for completing the proposal.

## General data

Please enter the following data in the elan portal.

<https://elan.dfg.de>

The information provided here must match the corresponding information given in the proposal.

- **Title in German and English**  
maximum 300 characters each, including spaces, no special characters
- **Summary of the proposal in German and English**  
maximum 3,000 characters each, including spaces; if the proposal is approved, this text will be made available online via the DFG's GEPRIS information system
- **Name(s) of the primary review board and, if applicable, other review boards**  
which reflect the subject orientation of the planned Cluster of Excellence  
Please refer to the DFG's subject classification system:  
[www.dfg.de/en/dfg\\_profile/statutory\\_bodies/review\\_boards/subject\\_areas](http://www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/statutory_bodies/review_boards/subject_areas)
- **Name(s) of applicant university/universities**
- **Name(s) of spokesperson(s)**  
up to three persons
- **Principal investigators**  
maximum of 25 persons (with elan account)
- **Name(s) of other participating institution(s) in Germany**  
e.g. universities, non-university institutions, museums, etc. that are to receive funds from the budget of the Cluster of Excellence
- **Total project funding requested by year**  
not including the programme allowance for indirect project costs
- **University allowance**

## B Proposal Template

The proposal must comply with the formal guidelines on length, font, required general structure and tables described above. Beyond these requirements, the template is designed to be flexible. For example, you can insert additional subsections, tables and figures to explain your plans more clearly. Please justify the amount of funding required to implement the proposed plans of the Cluster of Excellence. The budget tables provided can be supplemented by additional information where necessary.

Describe any changes to the main idea or basic concept of the Cluster of Excellence which may have occurred since submission of the draft proposal in the relevant area(s).

When completing sections 3, 4 and 5, please address the strengths, weaknesses and development potential of the applicant university/universities and other participating institutions.

### 1 General Information

- **Title in German and English**  
Maximum 300 characters each, including spaces, no special characters
- **Summary of the proposal in German and English**  
Maximum 3,000 characters each, including spaces
- **Name(s) of applicant university/universities in alphabetical order.**  
Please indicate the university that will manage the funds in the event of an award with\*.

Applicant university/universities	Location

- **Name(s) of spokesperson(s)**  
Up to three persons – please list first the spokesperson authorised to represent the Cluster to the DFG.
- **Principal investigators**  
Please list the principal investigators in the planned Cluster of Excellence in separate tables by gender, in alphabetical order. The maximum combined number is 25. Under function, please state the individual's current position at the institution (e.g. W3, W2 or W1 professorship, independent junior research group leader, core facility leader) and whether the position is permanent or temporary.

Principal investigators (women)	Function/Contract type	Location/Institution

Principal investigators (men)	Function/Contract type	Location/Institution

- **Name(s) of other participating institution(s) in Germany**  
E.g. universities, non-university institutions, museums, etc. that are to receive funds from the budget of the Cluster of Excellence

Other participating institutions in Germany	Location

- **Name(s) of cooperation partner(s)**  
If applicable, please list institutions or individuals within or outside Germany who are to make significant contributions as cooperation partners.

Institutions as cooperation partners	Location
Individuals as cooperation partners	Location/Institution

## 2 Objectives of the Cluster of Excellence

Please list what you consider to be the up to ten most important research and structural objectives which you intend to achieve with the Cluster of Excellence and by which the success should be measured.

## 3 Research Programme

### 3.1 Research objectives, research approach and positioning within the research area

Please describe the research objectives of the Cluster of Excellence. Outline the fundamental approaches, methodologies and measures with which you will pursue your objectives. What particular challenges will the Cluster of Excellence address? In what areas will the research

conducted in the Cluster of Excellence decisively advance the current state of knowledge? What effects will the Cluster of Excellence have on the long-term development of the research area and/or the establishment of new research areas? What makes this Cluster unique in international comparison? How is the proposed Cluster positioned in terms of its research profile in relation to existing groups and institutions within or outside Germany? On what important preliminary work, carried out for example by currently or previously funded local or regional research groups, is the Cluster of Excellence based?

### **3.2 Structure of the research programme**

Outline the chosen structure of the research programme, for example with reference to overarching topics or research areas and the essential links between them. To allow for the varying needs of different subject areas, there are no specific guidelines as to the structure of the research programme. It can be split into research areas or structured in another way. A detailed description of the content of the individual units of the research programme (hereinafter referred to as research units) should be provided in section 3.4.

### **3.3 Staff and institutional composition of the Cluster of Excellence**

Outline the research profiles of the principal investigators. Explain what other individuals and institutions are involved or will be involved in the future and how they will contribute to achieving the Cluster's research objectives.

### **3.4 Detailed description of the research programme**

Describe the research programme in detail, following the structure outlined in 3.2. For each research unit, please list the principal investigators and other key researchers and address the following points:

- specific research objectives of the research unit and its contribution to the overall objectives of the Cluster of Excellence
- current state of research
- individual or joint preliminary work
- work programme (approaches, methods, risks and opportunities, alternative strategies)
- internal and external collaborations
- if applicable, use of existing or planned research and/or information infrastructures

Please attach a summary of requested staff positions and funds for each research unit.

**Table 3.4.x: Proposed Staff in Research Unit A**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Staff category</b>	<b>Number of persons</b>						
Professors							
Independent junior research group leaders							
Postdoctoral researchers							
Doctoral researchers							
Other staff							

**Table 3.4.x: Funding Request for Research Unit A**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Funding category</b>	<b>Totals per year in €K</b>						
Staff (Total 3.4.x)							
Direct project costs (excl. staff)							
Total instrumentation < €150,000							
Instrumentation I >€150,000							
Instrumentation II >€150,000							
...							

### 3.5 Bibliography

Please list all publications cited in the proposal and indicate those by researchers participating in the Cluster of Excellence. Bibliographic information should include the title of the work and the authors' names. Publications with multiple authors may be cited as follows: first author, second author, et int, last author.

## 4 Supporting Structures in the Cluster of Excellence

### 4.1 Support of early career researchers

Explain what strategies and measures will be used by the Cluster to support early career researchers at their various qualification levels. If applicable, describe the integration into existing or planned early career support structures, such as graduate schools, etc. Refer to the current situation regarding early career researchers and existing strategies for early career support and staff development at the applicant university/universities and within the participating departments and/or faculties. What aims have the participating departments and/or faculties set themselves in this area? How do the objectives and activities of the Cluster of Excellence fit into or complement these?

Please complete the following table to show the amount of funding requested for the proposed measures (not including the staff funding requested as part of the research programme under 3.4.).

**Table 4.1: Funding Request for Early Career Support**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Funding category</b>	<b>Total per year in €K</b>						
Staff							
Direct project costs (excl. staff)							
Instrumentation							

## 4.2 Support of equal opportunity

Please describe the aims of the Cluster of Excellence in relation to supporting equal opportunity for women and men and enabling work-life balance. With reference to the DFG's Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality, please explain what measures will be used to achieve these goals and, if applicable, how the topic of diversity in research will be addressed. Refer to the present situation regarding equal opportunity at the applicant university/universities and within the participating departments and/or faculties. How will the Cluster's activities be incorporated into the relevant equal opportunity strategies at the university/department/faculty levels?

Please complete the following table to show the amount of funding requested for the proposed measures (not including the staff funding requested as part of the research programme under 3.4.).

**Table 4.2: Funding Request for Equal Opportunity Support**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Funding category</b>	<b>Total per year in €K</b>						
Staff							
Direct project costs (excl. staff)							
Instrumentation							

## 4.3 Management, quality assurance, public engagement

Describe the internal organisation and management structure of the Cluster of Excellence. Detail the internal decision-making criteria and structures for central aspects such as internal allocation of funds and staff selection. Describe the Cluster's strategies for quality assurance and



data management. What strategies or techniques will the Cluster use to communicate its research objectives, approaches and findings to specific target audiences or the lay public?

Explain how the Cluster of Excellence is institutionally integrated into the applicant university/universities and, if applicable, outline collaboration with other participating institutions.

Please complete the following table to show the amount of funding requested for the proposed structures and measures.

**Table 4.3: Funding Request for Management, Quality Assurance and Public Engagement**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Funding category</b>	<b>Total per year in €K</b>						
Staff							
Direct project costs (excl. staff)							
Instrumentation							

## 5 Environment of the Cluster of Excellence

### 5.1 Development planning at the university/universities

Please describe the importance of the Cluster of Excellence within the envisaged structural development of the applicant university/universities. Comment on the suitability of the Cluster's proposed location(s).

If a joint proposal is planned, previous cooperation between the applicant universities and the research and structural productivity resulting from this cooperation must be clearly evident for each of the applicant universities.

### 5.2 Basic framework

Please explain what contribution each applicant university and participating institution is currently providing and will provide in the future in terms of staff, funding and infrastructure to support the Cluster of Excellence. Describe how this contribution is embedded in the strategic planning of the university/universities, for example in relation to existing and/or planned core research facilities (such as platforms and research data infrastructures). Where necessary and appropriate, reference should also be made to strategies and access policies for key technologies and IT.

### 5.3 Collaboration, teaching, knowledge transfer

Please outline existing and planned collaborations between the Cluster of Excellence and other institutions within and outside Germany. Describe – if applicable – plans for research-oriented teaching and knowledge transfer, if relevant in cooperation with the applicant university/universities and other participating institutions. Please complete the following table to show the amount of funding requested for the proposed measures.

**Table 5.3: Funding Request for Collaboration, Teaching, Knowledge Transfer**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Funding category</b>	<b>Total per year in €K</b>						
Staff							
Direct project costs (excl. staff)							
Instrumentation							

### 5.4 Links with projects currently funded through the Excellence Initiative

Please list – if applicable – any Cluster(s) of Excellence or Graduate School(s) currently funded through the Excellence Initiative (ExIn) at the applicant university/universities that relate to the subject matter of the proposed Cluster of Excellence; include their title, DFG project reference number, applicant university/universities and funding duration. Clearly indicate whether the Cluster will build on the existing project(s) and if the resulting findings can be considered preliminary work for the Cluster or if the Cluster will work on entirely new content. This self-assessment will be considered during the review. For this purpose, please attach the summaries of the relevant ExIn projects in the appendix. The decision of whether the existing ExIn project is eligible for completion funding from January through October 2019 – or whether completion funding would not apply due to approval of the Cluster of Excellence – will be based on this assessment.

## 6 Funding Request

In this section the funding requested in sections 3, 4 and 5 above are summarised according to various aspects.

Please complete the following table to show the amount of funding requested for the proposed research units (see section 3).

**Table 6.1: Total Funding Requested for the Research Programme**

Research units, platforms, working groups, etc.	Funding category	Total in €K 2019 – 2025
Research unit A	Staff	
	Direct project costs (excl. staff)	
	Instrumentation	
Research unit B	Staff	
	Direct project costs (excl. staff)	
	Instrumentation	
<b>Total</b>		

Summarise the amount of funding required to implement the Cluster’s structural measures (from sections 4 and 5) in the following table. The measures listed are examples and can be modified, added to or omitted as necessary.

**Table 6.2: Total Funding Requested for Structural Measures**

Structural measures	Amount in €K 2019 – 2025
Early career researchers	
Equal opportunity	
Management and quality assurance	
Research data	
Public engagement	
Collaboration	
Research-oriented teaching	
Knowledge transfer	
...	
<b>Total</b>	

Please list all staff positions requested for the Cluster of Excellence.

**Table 6.3: Total Staff Requested**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Staff category</b>	<b>Number of persons</b>						
Professors							
Independent junior research group leaders							
Postdoctoral researchers							
Doctoral researchers							
Other staff							

Please list the total amounts of funding requested for the Cluster of Excellence overall – not including the programme allowance for indirect project costs and the university allowance – broken down by funding category and year. You can base the calculation of staff costs on the DFG staff funding rates for 2017 (see DFG form 60.12).

**Table 6.4: Total Funding Requested**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total €K
<b>Funding category</b>	<b>Totals in €K</b>							
Staff								
Direct project costs (excl. staff)								
Instrumentation								
<b>Total project funding</b>								

## **Appendix**

Please attach only the following information to the proposal; do not include or submit additional materials beyond those listed. The appendix does not count as part of the maximum 120 pages of the proposal.

### **1 Summary of the overall concept of the Cluster of Excellence**

In a maximum of five pages, please provide a concise, plain-language summary of the overall concept of the Cluster of Excellence. This will be used primarily by members of the interdisciplinary Excellence Commission in the decision process.

### **2 The 25 most important publications for the Cluster of Excellence**

Please list up to 25 publications which, in your opinion, are the most important by the principal investigators in the Cluster of Excellence; you may briefly note the relevance of each publication to the Cluster as well.

### **3 The 25 most important additional qualification indicators**

Please list up to 25 additional important indicators (not including publications) which, in your view, highlight the qualifications of the principal investigators (research awards, patents, etc.); you may briefly note the relevance of each indicator to the Cluster as well.

### **4 Third-party funding**

Please list up to 15 funding measures financed by the DFG and other third-party funding providers at the applicant university/universities and participating institutions as of 2012 which, in your view, are the most important and which concern the thematic area of the Cluster of Excellence; please note that such measures must have received funding in 2012 or later but the measures themselves may have started earlier.

### **5 Curricula vitae and lists of publications**

Please provide an academic CV (up to one page on A4 paper, 11pt Arial font and single spacing) and, in addition, a list of the ten most important publications for each principal investigator (up to 25 persons), in alphabetical order. Patents may be included in addition to the publications.

For appropriate assessment of the researchers' achievements, we recommend that CVs specify circumstances that may have impaired research work. Examples include childcare, long-term illnesses or disabilities.

## **6 Summary of projects currently funded through the Excellence Initiative**

Clusters of Excellence that topically relate to one or more of the Clusters of Excellence or Graduate Schools currently funded through the Excellence Initiative must include a five-page summary from the relevant ExIn proposals (Appendix 4.1) for the 2012-2017 funding period.

## **7 Proposal for a university allowance**

If the applicant university is proposing only one Cluster of Excellence, section 7.1 and section 7.2 can be combined.

### **7.1 Overall concept of the university/universities on their strategic orientation and the university allowance**

If your university is proposing or jointly proposing more than one Cluster of Excellence with a university allowance, please indicate the Clusters here and state the overall strategic aim of the proposals.

In no more than two pages, outline how the university intends to develop with the help of each university allowance and how governance at the university is to be strengthened. This description should be identical for all proposals submitted by a given university. In terms of content, the reasons given should also be compatible with any subsequent proposal for funding as a University of Excellence.

In the case of proposals from university consortia, please attach an explanation for each applicant university.

### **7.2 Envisaged use of the university allowance**

In no more than four pages, please explain what strategic objectives are to be pursued at your university or jointly by the applicant universities with the aid of the university allowance if the proposed Cluster of Excellence is approved. What measures are envisaged by the applicant university/universities? A detailed breakdown of the planned usage of the university allowance must be submitted following approval.

## **C Submission of Proposals via the DFG's elan Portal**

The documents listed under section A must be submitted as PDF files via the DFG's elan portal. In addition, the general data (in grey under section A) must also be entered online in the elan portal. The online form can be accessed via the following link:

<https://elan.dfg.de>

The proposal must be submitted by the spokesperson authorised to represent the Cluster to the DFG on behalf of the applicant university/universities. This requires a personal elan account. If the spokesperson does not yet have an elan account, please factor this into your planning and allow at least three working days prior to submission. If more than one spokesperson is envisaged, please note that their elan account names must also be entered into the system.

The proposal including the appendix (in elan: "Project Description") must be submitted as a PDF file (no larger than 10 MB) without password protection and without access restrictions for reading, copying or printing.

After sending the files specified under section A, the spokesperson authorised to represent the Cluster to the DFG will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt by e-mail with a compliance form as a PDF file. The compliance form must be signed by the authorised spokesperson and the head(s) of the applicant university/universities and returned to the DFG by post.

## **D Further Information**

[www.dfg.de/excellence\\_strategy](http://www.dfg.de/excellence_strategy)

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