Instructions and Template
for Consortia Proposals
National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI)

A   General Instructions

NFDI proposals must be submitted to the DFG Head Office in PDF format via elan, the DFG's electronic proposal processing system, by **6 August 2025**.

Proposals should be submitted as two PDF documents (one for sections 1-8 and the bibliography/list of references, and the other for appendices 2, 3 and 4). Please upload appendix 5 (data sheet) as a separate document. Note that PDF documents must not be larger than 10 MB or include password protection or access restrictions for reading, copying or printing. **Please create a clickable table of contents for any PDF document you submit.** Upon submission, a compliance form (Quittungsdokument) is automatically generated by the elan system. This document must be printed, signed by the spokesperson and the applicant institution and sent to the DFG Head Office by 30 August 2025.

The co-spokespersons and the co-applicant institutions are required to download the NFDI General Compliance Form (DFG form nfdi130) from the DFG website and print and sign it (one form per co-applicant institution). This form should not be sent to the DFG. The compliance forms may be kept on file locally at the relevant institutions. In cases of alleged research misconduct, the DFG will contact the spokesperson's institution. This institution is then responsible for providing the DFG with the relevant compliance forms, which are to be kept either centrally at the applicant institution or locally at the co-applicant institutions.

Proposals must be written in A4 format, font Arial 11 point with line spacing of 1.5. The length of the proposal (Sections 1-8) may vary depending on the size of the consortium but must not exceed 120 pages (excluding cover page, list of abbreviations, table of contents and appendix). A different font or line spacing may be used in tables, figures, footnotes and the bibliography/list of references, provided the text is easy to read. Make sure to use the proposal template contained in part B-1 and B-2 of this form.

The proposal template provides a mandatory structure and a number of tables to be completed. Text in grey provides information on how to use the template and should be deleted before submission. The requested funding amounts should not include programme allowances for indirect project costs. Please note that the current agreement between Germany's federal and state governments concerning the establishment and funding of a National Research Data Infrastructure (Bund-Länder-Vereinbarung zu Aufbau und Förderung einer Nationalen Forschungsdateninfrastruktur (NFDI)) only covers the period from 2019 to 2028. This means you will need to apply for funding in a differentiated manner as detailed in section B-2.

In order to take differences between the consortia into account, in particular in terms of their maturity and target group, thereby enabling a differentiated assessment, a data sheet (DFG form nfdi1000) must be submitted as a supplement to each NFDI proposal. Please refer to the information in the data sheet in your proposal as appropriate, or use the optional appendix 4 "Additional comments on data sheet" for further clarification.

If you have used artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of generative models for text or image creation when preparing your proposal, please disclose this in the proposal in a scientifically appropriate manner. See the Portal for Research Integrity for details.

Proposals and appendices must be written in English.

B-1   Proposal Template Part 1

1   General Information

- Name of the consortium in English and German

  up to 300 characters each, including spaces, no special characters

- Summary of the proposal in English and German

  up to 3,000 characters each, including spaces

- Applicant institution

Applicant institution	Location

- Spokesperson

Spokesperson	Institution, location

- Co-applicant institutions

Co-applicant institutions	Location

- Co-spokespersons

Co-spokespersons	Institution, location	Task area(s)

- Participants

  Please list the participants of the consortium in one of the two tables below, differentiating between participation as an institution or as an individual[1]. Please summarise each participant's specific contribution to the consortium in this section (below the respective table) and explain the involvement in more detail in the work programme.

Participating institutions	Location
Institution 1	City 1

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[1] Please note that a participating institution must be a legally independent entity, whether an entity under public law or a non-profit organisation.

Institution 2	City 2
…	

Add lines as required. Delete this table if you have no participating institutions.

Contribution of [institution 1]:

Summarise the contribution.

Contribution of [institution 2]:

Summarise the contribution.

…

Participating individuals	Institution, location
Person 1	Affiliation of person 1
Person 2	Affiliation of person 2
…	

Add lines as required. Delete this table if you have no participating individuals.

Contribution of [person 1]:

Summarise the contribution.

Contribution of [person 2]:

Summarise the contribution.

…

- Names and numbers of the DFG review boards (*DFG-Fachkollegien*) that reflect the subject orientation of the proposed consortium

  Please refer to the DFG's subject classification system under

  www.dfg.de/subject-classification

2   Scope and Objectives

2.1   Research domains or research methods addressed by the consortium, specific aim(s)

NFDI consortia define their scope by the research domains or research methods they address. Please describe which research domains or research methods your consortium has addressed and will address in the future and explain any possible changes. What impact has the consortium had on the relevant research landscape since funding started? What is the specific aim of your

consortium over the next five years in terms of the relevant research domains or research methods and with a view to the overall goal of the NFDI?

2.2   Objectives and measuring success

List what you consider to be the most important objectives of your consortium (up to ten) in the second funding period and describe how they will contribute to attaining the specific aim(s) described above and the overall aims of the NFDI (cf. section III.2 of the guidelines for consortia (DFG form nfdi100)). Specifically, refer to those tasks that will potentially require long-term funding beyond the period of project funding.

Explain how you will measure success in achieving your objectives. You can elaborate on measures of success in this section and/or in the work programme as appropriate.

3   Consortium

The following subheadings correspond closely to the funding criteria on "Readiness and Relevance of the Consortium" and "Consortium Structure and Viability". Consult the Guidance Notes on Funding Criteria (DFG form nfdi120) for more information on the specific subheadings, see the NFDI Guidelines (DFG form nfdi100) for general information on the consortia, and refer to the "Key points for the second funding period of the NFDI consortia" for further details.

If one or more individual members of your consortium are participating in other NFDI consortia, please list these multiple participations here, e.g.:

Member 1   is also participating in   consortium X and Y
Member 2   is also participating in   consortium Z
…

3.1   Composition of the consortium and its embedding in the community of interest

Please describe the composition of the consortium, including details of the experience and qualifications of the consortium members in research data management. Describe and explain changes to the consortium with respect to the partners (e.g. new partners, partners that have left or will leave the consortium) both for (co-)applicants and participating institutions and persons. How do these developments affect the work of the consortium?

By which procedures have communities of interest been given an active role in the consortium and how do you intend to ensure continuous and consistent interaction with these communities in the future? How are the needs of the communities identified? How has the consortium responded to changing needs in the past and what is the consortium's strategy for dealing with

changing needs in the future? Please describe how the consortium has implemented specific training programmes (e.g. for researchers in early career phases) and how these are integrated in curricula at the (co)applicant and participating institutions; elaborate on the consortium's planned activities in this field. Please describe qualitatively, and wherever possible also by means of quantitative indicators (e.g. by referring to your data sheet (appendix 5)), what benefits the consortium has generated for the communities that it addresses as well as for other disciplines and the research system as a whole. In this section, please also refer to the "Key points for the second funding period of the NFDI consortia" (especially tasks a), b), c) and e)).

3.2   The consortium within the NFDI and the national academic research system

How is the consortium contributing to the building of the NFDI as a whole? How is the consortium collaborating with other (related) NFDI-consortia? Which further collaborations are planned for the future and why? In which way does the consortium specifically contribute to cross-cutting topics? How does the consortium interact with Base4NFDI and which basic services is the consortium already participating in or planning to participate in in the future? Do you see a need for improvement regarding both cross-cutting topics and basic services, and how do you plan to address these issues (in collaboration with other consortia or other bodies of the NFDI)? How have you participated in and contributed to the governance structure of the NFDI?

Please describe how the consortium contributes to knowledge transfer within and beyond the NFDI. How does the consortium interact with other national stakeholders in the field of research data management infrastructures?

In this section, please also refer to the "Key points for the second funding period of the NFDI consortia" (especially tasks c) and h)).

3.3   International networking

How have you implemented your strategy for embedding your activities in the international context (e.g. the European Open Science Cloud), and how will you develop this further going forward? What forms of international cooperation does the consortium pursue? How do you perceive the services you have established with regard to international activities and services? In this section, please also refer to the "Key points for the second funding period of the NFDI consortia" (especially task h)).

3.4   Organisational structure and viability

Please describe the consortium's organisational structure. Have you implemented the governance structure as foreseen in your original proposal, or have you adapted and/or modified the internal structure? To what extent has the spending of funds deviated from the original

financial plans set out in the previous proposal, especially with respect to the distribution among partners? What is the consortium's strategy for consolidating services and structures in the future? What measures does the consortium take to ensure demand-oriented further development of sustainable services and structures? In this section, please also refer to the "Key points for the second funding period of the NFDI consortia" (especially task f)).

3.5   Operating model

Please describe the operating model the consortium is aiming to establish with a view to both users and providers. Has your mode of operation and your finance model worked well for both providers and users in the past? How is the finance or cost model structured? Do you charge user fees, or do you plan to do so in the future? How does the operating model ensure the continued operation of services relevant to the target groups and of NFDI-wide activities in the long term? Describe the consortium members' own contribution to the required resources here. For further details you may refer to Section B-2.8.

4   Research Data Management Strategy

This section describes the research data management strategy addressed by your work programme. The following subheadings correspond closely to the funding criteria set out in the Research Data Management Strategy. Consult the Guidance Notes on Funding Criteria (DFG form nfdi120) for more information on the specific subheadings, see the NFDI Guidelines (DFG form nfdi100) for general information, and refer to the "Key points for the second funding period of the NFDI consortia" for further details. If you refer to existing information infrastructures, data repositories or reusable software, explain how they will be integrated. List the sources that you use to describe the status quo in the appendix under Bibliography and List of References.

4.1   Scientific relevance and quality of the measures

How successful has the implementation of the planned measures been (with respect to the description in the original proposal)? Have you achieved the set aims for your task areas? What deviations or reorganisation were necessary with respect to the work programme, possibly also due to contributions to the NFDI as a whole? How do the consortium's implemented and future planned measures contribute to the further development or professionalisation of the target communities in research data management? How, i.e. based on what criteria, would you measure

the relevance and quality of your RDM strategy? What are the consortium's plans for further advancing research data management according to the needs of the communities addressed?

4.2 Metadata standards

Which national or international standards does the consortium apply? To which metadata standards or other RDM standards has your consortium contributed in the past? What is the consortium's strategy for increasing the interoperability and (re)use of data and metadata in the future? What is the consortium's contribution to building a common architecture for the NFDI?

4.3 Implementation of the FAIR principles and data quality assurance

How does the consortium define FAIRness in light of the needs of the relevant community? Which of the FAIR principles are particularly relevant to the communities addressed? To what degree and in what way have you achieved implementation of the FAIR principles[2]? Which quality criteria beyond the FAIR principles are relevant to the consortium? What approaches does the consortium aim to take in the future to assess or measure data quality? Describe your current and planned procedures and regulations for access to and use of data. How are you implementing protection of personal data?

4.4 Services provided by the consortium

In describing the consortium's current and future services, distinguish clearly between services that consortium members provide as part of their institutional mission (Grundaufgaben) based on existing funding, and new services that have been and will be established within the NFDI framework. What measures is the consortium taking to ensure and increase the use of its services? How is the use of the services tracked and measured? What plans are there to enable expansion or scaling of the services offered? Please describe the consortium's strategy to ensure sustainable operation of the services as well as your strategies for terminating a service or transferring a service to another operator. In this section, please also refer to the "Key points for the second funding period of the NFDI consortia" (especially tasks d) and g)).

4.5 Impact of changes of external conditions / constraints

How have developments in the research and infrastructure landscape impacted your work in the past? What developments or changes were (most) relevant? How did you respond to these? Please only refer to aspects you have not already described above.

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[2] If possible, refer to the FAIR Data Maturity Model of the RDA: https://dio.org/10.15497/rda00050

5   Work Programme

This section describes the structure of your work programme as it relates to the specific aims and objectives of the proposed consortium, particularly to your research data management strategy. Major achievements to be attained during the course of the work programme, such as community-wide standards, can be defined as milestones. Tangible results, such as defined services, can be categorised as deliverables.

The work programme of a consortium is divided into task areas, which may consist of different measures. Please provide tabular overviews of the envisaged task areas, the proposed measures per task area, and the individual(s) responsible for a given task area (co-spokespersons).

Mark task areas that are relevant to other NFDI consortia, that will be applied for within other consortia accordingly, or that contribute to NFDI-wide cross-cutting activities and explain the relation (e.g. by using footnotes or text below the table).

Table 5.0: Overview of task areas

Task Area	Measures	Responsible Co-spokesperson(s)
…		
…		
…		

In the following sections (5.1, 5.2, etc.), please provide a detailed description of the task areas using the template provided below and repeat this format in accordance with the number of task areas in your work programme. Name the task area in the heading and add additional items as required. The coordination and administrative tasks for the consortium as a whole must be included in a separate task area – usually the concluding one.

5.1   [Task Area 1]

Provide a detailed description of the measures to be addressed in the task area and explain how they relate to your specific objectives. It may be helpful to work with or develop use cases to illustrate your approach. Which aspects of your research data management strategy will be addressed by this task area? Explain the contribution of the consortium members and/or participants who will be involved in the individual measures. How will this task area cooperate with other task areas (include cross-area dependencies where applicable)? Address possible risks of implementation.

6   Additional Aspects

6.1   Equity and diversity

Equity and diversity are of general concern in research and not limited to the individual criteria listed above. Please explain your measures and achievements either in the preceding sections, e.g. composition of the consortium, integration of user communities, governance, quality assurance etc., and refer here to the respective paragraphs, or address the topic in full in this section.

6.2   Further comments

This is an optional section is for comments or observations relevant to the review and decision-making process that do not fit elsewhere. You can delete this section if it is not needed.

*** Please continue with Part B2 of your proposal on a new page. ***

B-2 Proposal Template Part 2 (Funding)

Preliminary remark (please delete before submission): The period from 2029 onwards is currently not covered by an agreement between Germany's federal and state governments. Consortia that plan to apply for a second five-year funding period are therefore asked to base their calculations for 2029 and beyond on the assumption that the total funds available per year for all consortia in the NFDI will be at a similar level as in the years 2019 to 2028. As a first step, the Joint Science Conference (GWK) will only make a funding decision for renewal proposals for the period that is covered by the current agreement between federal and state governments. The funds applied for by the consortia for 2029 onwards will be subject to further evaluation as soon as it has been established how much funding is actually available.

7   Funding Request for Individual Task Areas

In the following sections (7.1 for task area 1, 7.2 for task area 2, etc.), please refer to the individual task areas listed in Table 5.0. For each individual task area, provide overviews in tabular form listing the amount of funding requested for this task area. The funding request should be broken down by institution (Table 7.1.1 for task area 1, Table 7.2.1 for task area 2, etc.), and funding category (Table 7.1.2/Table 7.2.2, etc.). Please note that applicants may request funds to coordinate activities or work with other consortia.

The figures listed in the proposal only refer to the direct project costs.

Justify the requested funds in relation to the planned measures in the relevant task area.

7.1   [Task Area 1]

Table 7.1.1: Funding request for [Task Area 1] by institution
List the name of each institution, adding additional lines if necessary.

	2026 Oct-Dec	2027	2028	2029(*)	2030(*)	2031(*) Jan-Sep	Total in €
Institution	Totals in €						
Applicant institution							
Co-applicant institution 1							
Co-applicant institution 2							
Co-applicant institution 3							
…							
Total project funds							

DFG

(*) these years are not covered by the current agreement between Germany's federal and state governments and will be subject to further evaluation as soon as it has been established how much funding is actually available

Table 7.1.2: Funding request for [Task Area 1] by funding category

Please refer to the DFG staff funding rates (see DFG form 60.12) when calculating the staff costs. Any requested funding for instrumentation must be explained separately below the table.

Funding category	2026 Oct-Dec	2027	2028	2029(*)	2030(*)	2031(*) Jan-Sep	Total
Staff by category	Number of persons (full-time equivalents)						
Individuals with a doctoral degree (**)							
Individuals with a bachelor's or master's degree (***)							
Other staff							
	Totals in €						
Direct project costs							
Instrumentation							
Total project funds							

(*) these years are not covered by the current agreement between Germany's federal and state governments and will be subject to further evaluation, as soon as it has been established how much funding is actually available

(**) this corresponds to the DFG staff category "Postdoctoral researchers and comparable"

(***) this corresponds to the DFG staff category "Doctoral researchers and comparable"

8   Overall Funding Request

This section provides a combined summary of funding requests for the individual task areas. Please complete the following tables to show the overall funding amounts requested for the proposed consortium. The funding requests should be broken down by task area (Table 8.1), institution (Table 8.2), and funding category (Table 8.3). Add additional explanations as required.

Table 8.1: Overall funding request by Task Area

List the individual task areas, adding additional lines as necessary.

	2026 Oct-Dec	2027	2028	2029(*)	2030(*)	2031(*) Jan-Sep	Total in €
	Totals in €						
Task Area							
Task area 1							
Task area 2							
Task area 3							
…							
Total project funds							

(*) these years are not covered by the current agreement between Germany's federal and state governments and will be subject to further evaluation, as soon it has been established how much funding is actually available

Table 8.2: Overall funding request by institution

List the name of each institution, adding additional lines if necessary.

	2026 Oct-Dec	2027	2028	2029(*)	2030(*)	2031(*) Jan-Sep	Total in €
Institution	Totals in €						
Applicant institution							
Co-applicant institution 1							
Co-applicant institution 2							
Co-applicant institution 3							
…							
Total project funds							

(*) these years are not covered by the current agreement between Germany's federal and state governments and will be subject to further evaluation, as soon as it has been established how much funding is actually available

Table 8.3: Overall funding request by funding category

Please refer to the DFG staff funding rates (see DFG form 60.12) when calculating the staff costs.

Funding category	2026 Oct-Dec	2027	2028	2029(*)	2030(*)	2031(*) Jan-Sep	Total
Staff by category	**Number of persons (full-time equivalents)**						
Individuals with a doctoral degree (**)							
Individuals with a bachelor's or master's degree (***)							
Other staff							
	Totals in €						
Direct project costs							
Instrumentation							
Total project funds							

(*) these years are not covered by the current agreement between Germany's federal and state governments and will be subject to further evaluation, as soon as it has been established how much funding is actually available

(**) this corresponds to the DFG staff category "Postdoctoral researchers and comparable"

(***) this corresponds to the DFG staff category "Doctoral researchers and comparable"

Description and Summary of Contributions by (Co-) Applicants

Research data management is an intrinsic part of the research process, and research communities rely on the professional management of such. (Co-) Applicant institutions are therefore expected to make appropriate financial and in-kind contributions to this area. Please describe the contributions to be made by the applicant and co-applicant institutions. While you may explain your own contributions throughout the proposal, please make sure to summarise them here. In addition, your listing may include contributions towards services provided by institutions as part of their institutional mission (Grundaufgaben – see 4.4.) that can be used by the consortium, but make sure to distinguish them from your own contributions towards realising the work programme.

Appendix

The appendix may only include the following information and documents:

1   Bibliography and List of References

Please list all sources and data repositories, information infrastructures and software that you have used to describe the status quo in your proposal. Indicate which sources were written or developed by members of the consortium (for example, by highlighting the source in bold).

2   Curricula Vitae and Lists of Publications

Please provide the spokesperson's and all co-spokespersons' CVs, sorted in alphabetical order by last name of the spokesperson/co-spokesperson. Please use the mandatory DFG CV template (DFG form 53.200) and please add a clickable table of contents.

3   Letters of Commitment by the Participants

Please only attach a letter of commitment from each of the participants (person and/or institution) listed under the category "Participants" in Section B-1.1. Please provide a clickable table of contents adhering to the following order:

- Participating institutions

- Participating individuals

4   Additional Comments on Data Sheet

You can include an optional appendix (not exceeding three pages) with additional comments on your entries in the data sheet (appendix 5).

5   Data Sheet

It is mandatory to fill out the *Supplementary data sheet for consortia of the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI)* (DFG form nfdi1000). Please upload a PDF copy of the completed data sheet via elan as a separate document and additionally send the original document (Excel file) via e-mail to nfdi@dfg.de.

C   Further Information

www.dfg.de/nfdi/en

For information and advice concerning individual consortia, please contact us at +49 228 885-3500 or send us your inquiry via e-mail to nfdi@dfg.de.

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