

Funding initiative to secure endangered data repositories and promote data resilience

1. Objective of the Funding Initiative

The aim of this initiative is to preserve datasets and research results stored in repositories abroad which are of particular importance to German research and are at risk of no longer being available for research now or in the future, and ideally to make them accessible to the research community. To this end, the initiative supports a broad range of measures demonstrably contributing to the preservation of scientific data and research results. This may include the acquisition of storage capacity, the provision of personnel resources for the indexing, curation or disciplinary aggregation of data, legal assessment processes, and the integration of data into cross-regional or European structures. Funding may also be provided for the development of frameworks and technologies that enable the inclusion of relevant repositories in cross-regional or European networks or cloud environments. Three illustrative cases of potential support mechanisms are outlined below to provide initial orientation:

a) Reimbursement of expenditure already incurred: Research institutions or individual researchers who have already used DFG funding or institutional resources in recent months to preserve at-risk data holdings may apply for reimbursement of the amounts spent. It should be noted that retrospective funding can only be granted if additional expenditure was incurred specifically for the purpose of data preservation, and if the data in question would otherwise risk being lost again without the requested reimbursement. Such expenditure may include material or personnel costs incurred at short notice for data preservation and curation, or the cost of investment in equipment such as storage media purchased for the temporary safeguarding of data. Reimbursement may be granted for expenditure incurred as of 1 August 2025, and only for the year 2025.

b) Future expenditure: The assumption is that numerous datasets have not yet been secured. Funds will therefore be made available to enable the prompt preservation of collections, datasets and research results, their aggregation from a disciplinary perspective and their renewed availability for research. In planning the requested funds, it should be assumed that, in addition to storage capacity, qualified personnel such as data curators with specific expertise in data (infra)structures will be required. Accordingly, it is possible to obtain funding to cover the cost of personnel, material and equipment required for the future preservation of data.

c) Integration in the European Research Area In the context of current efforts to establish a European infrastructure for research data and results – such as the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) – or within existing European consortia and research infrastructures, it is possible to obtain funding for projects aimed at building resilient infrastructures. Resilience depends fundamentally on the redundant storage of data, ideally implemented at the European level. Accordingly, initiatives may be funded that contribute to the accessibility of data preserved in Germany through thematically aligned European data infrastructures, as well as projects that are dedicated to establishing distributed and networked storage or data infrastructures.

2. Deadlines

The funding initiative is limited to the years 2025, 2026 and 2027. Proposals for initiatives to preserve data may be submitted at any time up until 30 September 2027. Since reimbursement can only be granted for 2025, proposals for such funding should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than 10 November 2025. All other proposals for which expenditure is to be incurred during 2025 must likewise be received by 10 November 2025. In the event of approval, funds must be drawn down by 9 December 2025 and normally expended by 31 January 2026. Due to the annual budgetary binding of funds, projects may be funded up until no later than 31 December 2027; this date also marks the end of the project term.

3. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Please consult the attached proposal preparation instructions for further details on the funding initiative, the framework conditions for proposals, the proposal structure and eligible costs.

4. Contact

In case of questions concerning the funding initiative or the framework conditions for proposal submission, please contact:

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