A framework programme for the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences

Research for tomorrow’s society
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Foreword

The humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences help us to understand and shape the world. They provide a wealth of knowledge about cultural, economic and social trends. They deliver fundamental data for decisions on current issues, they offer guidance and they mediate between cultures. They therefore make a vital contribution to our understanding of who we are, to our cultural memory and towards shaping the future.

Today, the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences work on an equal footing with engineering and the natural sciences to find solutions to current challenges facing society. With this framework programme, we aim to promote the internationalisation of the humanities and open up opportunities for the current and future generation of researchers. The framework programme determines the structure of funding provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) through to 2017. Current priorities of funding, including the Käte Hamburger Centers, will be continued, as will research at museums and infrastructure development and expansion.

Alongside these priorities, the framework programme sets out new areas of emphasis. For example, we have explicitly included research on social and economic trends in the framework programme. With regard to infrastructure expansion, in religious studies and area studies we propose establishing centres to pool knowledge and ensure the long-term availability of expertise. Via the framework programme, we also want to give the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences a more international orientation to further enhance Germany’s role in the global research community and foster innovation in German research.

This publication presents the framework programme with its objectives and priorities. It shows just how much the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences are now in demand in all of the BMBF specialised programmes. The fourth section of this publication contains examples from other BMBF funding priorities, highlighting the broad range of fields in which the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences can be applied.

Prof. Dr. Johanna Wanka
Federal Minister of Education and Research
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A framework programme for the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences
Germany is traditionally strong on research in the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences, setting international standards. Various efforts are being made at federal and state level in Germany to support and encourage this research, and to prepare for future challenges – not least those arising from global social change.

For the first time, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has developed a framework programme specifically for funding the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences. Following the successful ‘Freedom for Research in the Humanities’ funding initiative (2007-2012), the programme was given the green light in December 2012 and will guide the BMBF funding activities over the next five years.

In the framework programme, the BMBF sets out its funding objectives and priorities in the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences for the next five years. The fundamental purpose of the framework programme is to provide substantial and sustained support for the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences so that they can contribute to our understanding of contemporary society in Europe and around the world, play a part in preserving cultural heritage and making it accessible, and help us to value and achieve diversity and cohesion.

The new framework programme takes account of changes in the science and research system concerning the humanities and social sciences. Research conditions in these disciplines have become more complex: applications for external funding are now part of everyday life in these subjects too, career paths are rarely amenable to long-term planning and expectations of the subjects are high. The framework programme offers a response to the resulting needs of the academic community – for greater freedom for research, modern and sustainable research infrastructure, support for young researchers seeking to gain qualifications and also ways of making Germany even more attractive as a research location for international researchers.

The framework programme therefore has three key goals:

- Internationalise the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences
- Develop structures
- Foster young research talent

This funding for the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences is embedded in a series of the BMBF measures, which are also aiming at other subjects or broad academic fields. To help address current social challenges, BMBF seeks the involvement and expertise of a wide range of disciplines, including the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences. It does this by offering funding programmes, e.g. BMBF programmes for security research, sustainable development and education research. A number of these programmes from various BMBF departments are presented on pages 40 to 51 of this publication. They highlight the contribution that the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences can and do make to solving pressing problems.

By offering such funding programmes, the BMBF is also forging a link with Horizon 2020, the new European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Within this programme, which was launched in 2014, the programme section ‘Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies’ is particularly aiming at the humanities and social sciences. Furthermore, research questions in social sciences, economics and the humanities are explicitly enshrined in all three pillars of Horizon 2020 (on this point, see also pp. 36-38).
Encouraging new research while continuing established initiatives – prospects through research

The framework programme contains six funding priorities. By setting these priorities, the BMBF is establishing new thematic priorities in funding for the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences, while at the same time building on structures and results achieved in years past. The successful ‘Freedom for Research in the Humanities’ funding initiative (2007-2012) is a key point of departure. Through this initiative, the BMBF took up the recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat) and rolled out new funding models for the humanities, such as the Käte Hamburger Centers. Measures to develop infrastructure in the social sciences, economics and humanities, together with European and international cooperative programmes, constitute another point of departure. Existing lines of funding in these areas are systematically continued under the new framework programme. Furthermore, by combining institutional funding with project funding, the BMBF will improve the sustainability of funding while enhancing the overall quality of research. The six priorities of funding are:

1. Freedom for research in the science and research system – new locations for research in Germany and other countries

The framework programme aims to create freedom for top-level research. It encourages research in new and unusual contexts – in Germany and in key locations around the world. To achieve this, the BMBF is funding ten Käte Hamburger Centers and the four Humanities Research Centres in Berlin and Leipzig. These institutions facilitate world-class research in the humanities and are highly attractive to outstanding researchers. In addition, there is a new funding model, the International Centres for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences. These are being established in countries outside Germany. Another new element is the funding for national and international centres and partnerships in the field of collections, libraries and archives.

→ For more details, see pages 6–11 in this publication.

2. Area studies – ‘research with’ instead of ‘research on’

With its focus on ‘strengthening and developing area studies’, the BMBF is funding research on countries and regions of the world in the humanities and social sciences at German universities and research institutions. The aim is to pool, develop and test existing area studies expertise in Germany through new forms of collaboration. As part of this, research will be carried out on subject-specific, interdisciplinary and transnational questions. Research collaborations and university competence centres will be funded to this end.

→ For more details, see pages 12-15 in this publication.

3. New forms of access and new fields of research – information infrastructures in the humanities and social sciences

The BMBF is supporting the development and expansion of innovative information infrastructures. It is helping to fund national and international partnerships and networks that enable worldwide access to inventories, data and findings in a format that meets the needs of research. The BMBF is also funding projects in the eHumanities, which aim to open up the opportunity of working with digitised sources to all branches of the humanities. In addition, the BMBF is helping academic institutions to develop infrastructure expertise. In the quantitative social sciences, BMBF funding aims to consolidate best practice established in pilot phases and model projects, for example with regard to privileged access by the research community to official statistics and process-produced data.

→ For more details, see pages 16-19 in this publication.
4. Investing in talent – young researchers

One key goal of the BMBF framework programme is to promote young research talent. Almost all of the funding measures offered under the framework programme are therefore also open to young researchers. Junior research groups are a special format. The existing groups of funding priorities ‘Europe from the outside’ and ‘Religious studies’ are complemented by groups in the eHumanities and in visual and media studies. A further goal is to support well-qualified young researchers in the humanities and social sciences in careers outside the science and research system. Hence a supplementary programme is being developed for doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences, which aims to establish links at an early stage between academia and potential fields of work in industry and in the service sector.

→ For more details, see pages 20-23 in this publication.

5. Cultural heritage – from research to education

The goal of funding in this area is to make the diverse cultural heritage that exists in archives, collections, museums and libraries accessible through research, raise public awareness of it, and keep it in the public eye. To this end, the BMBF is providing important stimulus in the form of long-term institutional funding for the eight research museums in the Leibniz Association as well as targeted project funding. Funding for partnerships between museums, non-university institutions and university collections is being stepped up. To give German researchers greater opportunity for Europe-wide collaboration, the BMBF also directly supports participation in bilateral and multilateral collaborative research projects.

→ For more details, see pages 24-29 in this publication.

6. Cultural diversity and civil society – potentials for social cohesion and participation

Everyday life in our modern society is shaped by cultural and social diversity, the result of geographic mobility, discontinuous employment histories, the pluralisation of cultural and religious practices and changes in family structures. Science and research offer ways of meeting the resultant challenges. By funding centres for Islamic theology at German universities and the Berlin-Brandenburg Centre for Jewish Studies, the BMBF encourages academic debate on different religions. Another issue of highly topical significance for social development in Germany and Europe is addressed in the theme of ‘Financial System and Society’. Further themes shall be developed and prepared for funding measures according to a broad-based agenda process.

→ For more details, see pages 30-35 in this publication.

More information is available at:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/4630.php

The full text of the framework programme for the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences is available at:
→ www.bmbf.de/pubRD/framework_programme_humanities_culture_science.pdf

For the latest calls for proposals from BMBF:
→ www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/677.php
1. Freedom for research in the science and research system – new locations for research in Germany and other countries

A key goal of the framework programme is to facilitate top-level research in the humanities and social sciences in new and unusual contexts. This applies both to locations in key regions around the world and to locations in Germany, whose global profile and attractiveness as centres of cutting-edge research will be significantly enhanced by establishing new partnerships and cooperative initiatives.

The BMBF’s Käte Hamburger Centers are an innovative format for implementing this goal. Through these international research centres, the BMBF funds world-class humanities research and provides outstanding researchers in the humanities with space to think. A total of ten centres have been set up at universities across Germany since 2007. They conduct research on topics such as religion, media philosophy, theatre cultures, labour, legal cultures, political cultures of the global society, the environment and eastern Europe. The centres make a significant contribution to the continued development and interlinking of international structures for research in the humanities and social sciences. In particular, they intensify Germany’s important relations with research centres, universities and academies in Europe and worldwide.

The Käte Hamburger Centers have very quickly become established in their subject areas as highly attractive locations for independent research that have considerable appeal for the international research community. BMBF funding for the centres runs for six years and can be extended subject to a positive evaluation.

The BMBF also promotes excellent research with international visibility via the Humanities Research Centres in Berlin and Leipzig. At the four centres, mainly young researchers are concerned with language (at the Centre for General Linguistics – ZAS), cultural and literary studies (at the Center for Literary and Cultural Research – ZfL), eastern European cultures and history (at the Centre for the History and Culture of
II. PRIORITIES OF THE NEW FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

East Central Europe – GWZO) and Islamic societies (at the Zentrum Moderner Orient – ZMO). The centres are jointly funded by the German federal government and the state in which they are located. Federal funding was extended following a positive evaluation (2012/13).

With its International Centres for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the BMBF is pursuing a new scheme to promote the internationalisation of the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences outside Germany. In regions and partner countries with scientific and research policy relevance in Asia, Central and South America and Africa, centres will be set up where joint research can be carried out on humanities and social science topics. These international centres will be established in partnership with German scientific institutions.

“Facilitating top-class research in new and unusual contexts.”

For more information about BMBF funding in the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/21517.php

Website for the Käte Hamburger Centers:
→ www.kaete-hamburger-kollegs.de

Websites of the Humanities Research Centres:
→ www.gwz-berlin.de
→ www.uni-leipzig.de/gwzo

Call for proposals for International Centres for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences:
→ www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/22719.php
National and international networking strengthens research

The BMBF encourages partnerships at national and international level to enhance the capabilities of the German research sector and increase its visibility. One way it does this is through the creation of research-oriented centres and networks at suitable locations in Germany. Their aim is to pool distributed expertise and make it accessible to the international research community. One example of this funding model is the joint project between the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, the Klassik Stiftung Weimar and the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel. Project funding over several years aims to strengthen collaboration between the three institutions with lasting effect, so that this grouping becomes permanently established as a central location for preserving, maintaining, providing access to and carrying out research on German literary and intellectual traditions from the end of the Middle Ages to the present.

The BMBF also encourages structural networking between research locations in Germany and other countries. University and non-university partners from four European countries are collaborating in the international project ‘Bilderfahrzeuge: Warburg’s Legacy and the Future of Iconology’, each putting forward the perspective of the country they are based in: Warburg-Haus Hamburg, Warburg Institute of the University of London, the German Forum for Art History in Paris (Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte Paris), Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte (IKB) der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut.

Bilderfahrzeuge: Warburg’s Legacy and the Future of Iconology

German project partner: Max Weber Stiftung – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland/Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte – Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin – Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften e.V. – Universität Hamburg

Duration: 1 October 2013 – 30 June 2018

→ www.bilderfahrzeuge.org

Transformations of cultural heritage

Project partners: Deutsche Schiller-gesellschaft e.V./Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach – Klassik Stiftung Weimar – Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel

Duration: 1 September 2013 – 31 August 2018

→ www.mww-forschung.de

Institutional frameworks for research

In the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences there exists a strong framework of professorships, faculties and university institutes as well as research institutions in the Leibniz Association and Max Planck Society, which is institutionally funded by the German federal and state governments. These also include the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, the Academies of Sciences and Humanities, and the Max Weber Foundation – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland. This institutional network guarantees that researchers can work with permanent structures and ensures the long-term preservation of research results.
II. PRIoRItIes oF tHe new FRAMeWooRK PRoGRAMMe

The Max Weber Foundation – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland has subsidiaries in nine countries, providing a special anchor for research in the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences. The foundation comprises the six overseas German Historical Institutes, the Orient-Institut Beirut and Orient-Institut Istanbul, the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo and the German Forum for Art History (Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte) in Paris. It has excellent links with the respective host countries. The foundation is able to address global issues in the host countries and in bilateral or multilateral association with German universities. To strategically develop its international activities, the foundation has adopted a concept for establishing transnational research groups. The first research group is a collaboration between the German Historical Institute London and university partners in the UK, Germany and India. It will conduct research on poverty reduction and education policy in India since the 19th century.


The Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin is an institute for advanced study that offers scholars or scientists the opportunity to pursue or complete a research project of their choice for one academic year, free from teaching obligations and in dialogue with other researchers.

The Academies of Sciences and Humanities are traditionally an important point of contact for funding research in the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences in Germany. The eight German Academies of Sciences and Humanities in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Göttingen, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Mainz and Munich are joined together in the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities. The Academies’ Programme, which supports long-term research projects, particularly in the humanities, and is jointly funded by the German federal and state governments, has operated from there since 1979/80. It focuses on scholarly dictionaries, encyclopaedias and critical editions of the complete works of significant philosophers and composers. The Academies’ Programme serves to make our cultural heritage accessible and relevant to the present and preserve it for the future. The programme currently comprises 153 projects with 209 working groups and receives funding of almost 63 million euros annually (2015). The academies jointly foster academic dialogue, excellence in research and the next generation of researchers.

Max Weber Foundation – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland
→ www.maxweburstiftung.de/en

Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin
→ www.wiko-berlin.de/en

Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities
→ www.akademienunion.de/index.php?id=112
The Centre for Global Cooperation Research at the University of Duisburg-Essen examines the political cultures of world society. Over a period of six years – with possible extension subject to positive evaluation – ten to fifteen guest researchers each year investigate issues in global cooperation at the centre. The fellows are largely free of other obligations during their time at the centre.

At the Duisburg Inner Harbour, where the centre is based, guests from Africa, Asia and Latin America, from north and south, east and west, engage in intensive dialogue on ideas and methods. The guiding research questions here come from the field of political science. To assist in their quest for answers and relevant models, researchers and experts from a wide range of anthropological disciplines as well as cultural, economic and socio-political fields of activity are invited to contribute. These ‘practitioner experts’ participate on an equal basis in dialogue and in research. Moreover, they form a desirable link with practice areas in international cooperation, which come into play as reference fields for the models and knowledge processes developed at the centre and should benefit from these results.

Public debate – the key term being ‘civil society’ – is important to the centre. Its regular ‘Käte Hamburger lectures’ generate widespread interest. International conferences, master classes, workshops and dialogue events raise its public profile and at the same time serve as focal points for print and online publications. The centre is committed to an open access policy.

Profile: The Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for Global Cooperation Research in Duisburg-Essen

Duration: 1 February 2012 – 31 January 2018

→ www.gcr21.org
Profile: Centre for the History and Culture of East Central Europe

Founded in 1996, the Centre for the History and Culture of East Central Europe (GWZO), has been an affiliated institute of Leipzig University since 2003. East Central Europe was chosen as a theme on the basis that this region had been largely disregarded after World War II, given the division of Europe into two blocks and the dominance of the Soviet Union on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain. The integration into the European Union of those countries that regained or gained independence anew after 1989 resulted in a shift of political power in Europe.

Research projects at GWZO therefore cover all eras – from the early Middle Ages when the three core countries Bohemia, Poland and Hungary emerged, to the early modern period with the dominance of the neighbouring great powers (the Russian, Ottoman, Habsburg and German empires) and the present.

History has left all kinds of traces and cultural impacts. For this reason, the centre organises its research activities in the form of interdisciplinary project groups with a total of around 50 researchers, a large number of whom come from the region. They represent represent history with all its special fields archaeology, art history, literary studies and more. Recently, the transnational characteristics of the region were presented to a wider public by means of an exhibition (see photo), Europa Jagellonica 1386-1572 – Art and Culture in Central Europe under the Jagiellonian Dynasty (Kutna Hora/ Czech Republic, Warsaw, Potsdam 2012/13).
2. Area studies – ‘research with’ instead of ‘research on’

Area studies analyses structures and lines of development in other societies from a current and historical perspective. It investigates global interdependencies and processes of exchange, whether cultural, political, economic, social or legal in nature. Demand for such knowledge is constantly growing, not least in politics and business, since solutions to many problems currently facing society will need to be found at international level in the future, owing to their global scale.

Under such conditions, research and funding practice are changing for the humanities and social sciences. Today, the discipline ‘Area studies’ has a highly international orientation. It no longer engages purely in a historical and philological context, but with relevance to the present, in a multidisciplinary approach. BMBF funding for area studies focuses on strengthening the links between different disciplines. In 2008, two lines of funding were established to develop competence networks between universities and non-university institutions and to set up centres within universities. Seven research collaborations and three university centres have been launched since 2009. They exemplify new networking opportunities within universities and access by foreign participants to the German science and research system. Following a second call for proposals, six further university centres were added in 2013. All projects have a duration of four years. Subject to a positive scientific evaluation, they can be extended by an additional period of up to two years.

With regard to promoting and raising the profile of transregional research, the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin cooperates with the Max Weber Foundation. Their collaborative activities have been funded since April 2013. Joint conferences, summer academies, winter schools and workshops are held to explore new forward-looking subject areas for transregional research and internationalise research perspectives for the humanities and social sciences.
Solutions to many problems currently facing society will need to be found at international level in the future.

Through this project, the Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien will develop into a nationwide network.

Supporting partnerships like this is an important part of the BMBF’s funding strategy. Temporary project funding is aimed at developing new themes and forms of collaboration, which if successful can be continued by the partners involved and established in a regular process. This in turn requires reliable medium-term strategies from funding providers and medium-term research and development strategies from the collaborating partners.

More information about the area studies funding priority:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/21528.php

About the Forum Transregionale Studien:
→ www.forum-transregionale-studien.de/en
**Profile: Centre for Area Studies**

The Centre for Area Studies (CAS) at Leipzig University is an interdisciplinary research institute that emphasises academic collaboration between area studies and other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, particularly between transregional and global approaches. Founded in 2009, the centre pools the collaboration of researchers from 21 university and non-university institutes.

CAS investigates de- and reterritorialisation processes within the context of globalisation, based on approaches from political science, economics and law, sociology, geography, philosophy, ethnology and history, cultural and religious studies, linguistics and literary studies. The current research programme ‘Cultural Encounters and Political Orders in a Global Age’ examines the response of societies in different regions of the world to increasing economic, cultural and political entanglements, both in the past and today, while seeking to assert their sovereignty and independence.

CAS translates its research results into numerous course offerings for masters and doctoral students, which are also highly attractive to international students. The recently established Global and Area Studies Graduate School at the Research Academy Leipzig provides a framework that links this research profile to qualifications for young researchers. As a member of global research networks and transnational teaching associations, CAS organises numerous international conferences and courses offered abroad by Leipzig University. It is therefore an important element in the university’s internationalisation strategy.

The second research phase (2014–2016) is concerned with systematically summarising recently obtained individual research results and identifying classification categories in historically informed globalisation research. The main objective is a multiple-volume area studies manual, which will be produced in international collaboration.

**Centre for Area Studies**
Leipzig University
**Duration:** 1 October 2009 – 31 May 2016
➡️ [www.uni-leipzig.de/cas](http://www.uni-leipzig.de/cas)
Profile: Crossroads Asia competence network

Seven institutes in Bonn, Berlin, Cologne, Munich and Tübingen are working together in the Crossroads Asia competence network. This multidisciplinary collaborative research project pursues an innovative area studies approach. It investigates themes such as conflict, migration and development from the unifying perspective of mobility in a selected region. The project’s geographical investigation area extends from eastern Iran to western China and from the Aral Sea to northern India – the veritable ‘crossroads of Asia’.

Mobility in the region is a multifaceted sphere of activity constituted by interactions between its inhabitants across geographical, cultural and social boundaries. The goal of the competence network is therefore not to construct a new ‘region’, but instead the project examines thematically defined causal and functional relationships – figurations – that are located in ‘Crossroads Asia’ but whose extent may not reach as far, or alternatively may reach much farther than, the geographical region.

This new area studies perspective facilitates orientation in a space constituted by the experience, imagination and actions of people in specific thematically defined contexts.

The competence network produces individual research studies that are largely encompassed within the unifying approach of the crossroads studies. The guiding principle of the competence network is that any individual change within a figuration affects the whole ensemble. If the crossroads studies approach proves successful for Crossroads Asia, it will serve as a model for future studies in post-area studies competence networks.

Crossroads Asia

Project coordination: University of Bonn, Center for Development Research

Duration: 1 January 2011 – 31 December 2016

→ http://crossroads-asia.de/en/research.html
3. New forms of access and new fields of research – information infrastructures in the humanities and social sciences

Information infrastructures form the backbone of modern research work. They are instrumental in providing humanities and social science researchers with much better answers to existing research questions and, in some cases, are essential for asking new ones. Funding such infrastructures is therefore a key priority for the BMBF, giving rise to various funding measures over a number of years that will continue to be pursued in future.

The emphasis in past years was on funding infrastructures in the social sciences. In particular, schemes were devised to provide the research community with better access to data. The access accorded to the empirical social and economic sciences to official, welfare and scientific data held in research data centres for the most important data-generators – such as statistical offices, the German Federal Employment Agency and the Pension Insurance Scheme, as well as large surveys conducted by the research community – is now considered best practice in the European context. Consolidation of the models that were developed in pilot phases and method projects, and their adoption by data-generators, is proceeding apace.

The BMBF has implemented a highly successful forum for the continued strategic development of this data infrastructure: the German Data Forum (RatSWD), which commenced its work in 2004. RatSWD issues recommendations to support scientists and policymakers in all matters of social science data production, use and storage. The German Council of Science and Humanities acknowledged the forum’s work as a successful example of self-organisation by the subject disciplines, which is necessary to create appropriate infrastructure facilitating top-level research.
The BMBF creates further fixed reference points for research by funding social science infrastructure facilities. GESIS – the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences – offers support to researchers throughout the research cycle, from devising a survey to archiving and retrieving results. The German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) has become a key research data source for the economic and social sciences since its launch in 1984. This is clearly demonstrated by user figures and structures in Germany and abroad. In the German Council’s research rating for sociology, the panel has shown itself to be one of the best-performing German institutes. Experiences gained and methods developed by the panel serve as a reference for establishing new large panels.

**Increased funding for the humanities**

To compensate for the structural delay in the humanities in setting up and expanding innovative research infrastructures, the BMBF is stepping up its funding in this field. The aim is to offer all researchers the opportunity to work with digitised sources or materials in modern forms of collaboration and to support initiatives that are successful in establishing centres to ensure lasting infrastructure creation.

At the present time, the most advanced developments in the humanities relate to text-based research. In national research alliances such as TextGrid, in which universities, libraries and non-university research institutes cooperate, researchers have tested and consolidated new types of digital access and forms of research work. Opportunities for enhancement and consolidation of the successful pilot applications have been explored. Here institutional partners such as the Institut für Deutsche Sprache in Mannheim are brought in at an early stage.

Via the new eHumanities funding priority (‘enhanced humanities’ in the sense of extended research opportunities in the humanities), the BMBF is providing substantial support for the introduction of quantitative methods into the humanities. The intention is that eHumanities will offer a stable addition to traditional research methods. Twenty-four collaborative research projects were launched in 2012 and 2013.
In these projects, humanities researchers work side by side with computer scientists. The funding also aims to improve conditions for networking in virtual research environments and significantly extend access to and the availability of digital sources. In 2015, new projects are started to support local centres and groups of young researchers.

**Research infrastructures are becoming internationalised**

Digital capabilities are changing the way researchers do their work. They are also making research increasingly internationalised. Hence there is a need to coordinate national strategies with international developments when it comes to expanding research infrastructures. By funding national and international partnerships and networks, the BMBF is working to ensure that researchers around the world have access to inventories, data and findings in a format that meets the needs of research. For the same reason, it supports long-term infrastructure projects at European level as part of the ESFRI process.

The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI, see also p. 38) was initiated in 2002 on behalf of the European Commission. It develops a European strategy for research infrastructures and strengthens European cooperation in the development of research infrastructures. The social sciences and humanities became involved at an early stage in the ESFRI process with projects on relevant social challenges and by building international structures and networks. The projects are now being implemented in quasi-institutional forms with long-term perspectives.

In the social sciences, the BMBF is funding the German sub-projects of three European collaborative research projects:

- Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), a comparative analysis in Europe and around the world
- European Social Survey (ESS), a multinational survey that regularly generates data on social trends in Europe

In the humanities, two ESFRI projects, each with a high level of German involvement, are being supported:

- Common Languages Resources and Technology Infrastructure (CLARIN), which is establishing a network of service centres in linguistics
- Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (DARIAH), setting up a European research infrastructure for the humanities

For more information about the focus on research infrastructures in the humanities and social sciences:


Detailed information about the funding focus is contained in the BMBF publication ‘Research Infrastructures for the Humanities and Social Sciences’:

- [www.bmbf.de/pub/infrastructures_for_humanities_social_sciences.pdf](http://www.bmbf.de/pub/infrastructures_for_humanities_social_sciences.pdf)

Further information on the ESFRI forum:


More information about ESFRI projects with German involvement:

Profile: VisArgue – What factors make political negotiations successful?

Why and when do arguments win? The VisArgue project at the University of Konstanz explores this question with the aid of modern digital methods. Researchers from the fields of political science, linguistics and computer science jointly investigate strategies of persuasion in political discourse.

The background is provided by an examination of discursive strategies in large-scale public projects, e.g. the debate over the upgrading of Stuttgart’s railway station (‘Stuttgart 21’). The theory of deliberative democracy (according to Habermas) suggests that such conflicts can be resolved through mediation processes, discussions and dialogue with citizens, and that parties to the debate can be won over by a rational exchange of arguments.

To analyse how this deliberative communication works, VisArgue is developing an automated text analysis visualisation technique. This allows large volumes of text to be investigated in terms of structures of argumentation, with the aid of linguistic insights and computer linguistic methods. One set of data used is the transcript of the mediation proceedings for ‘Stuttgart 21’. The new technique produces a visual representation of patterns in the conduct of negotiations; in this way, they become generally accessible.

The overriding project goal is to help bring about more effective communication between the citizenry and political decision-making bodies. The methods developed in the project are available for future applications via software infrastructure platforms such as CLARIN and DARIAH – not only in the field of political discourse.

VisArgue. Why and when do arguments win? – An analysis and visualisation of political negotiations
University of Konstanz
Duration: 1 September 2012 – 31 August 2015
→ www.visargue.uni-konstanz.de/index.php?lang=en
4. Investing in talent – young researchers

Fostering young research talent is a key goal of the new framework programme. Almost all of the funding formats under the framework programme are therefore open to young researchers. However, the BMBF also offers funding models aimed specifically at young researchers.

Junior research groups are a key instrument of BMBF support for the next generation of researchers. In these groups, several doctoral and sometimes also postdoctoral researchers work on closely related research questions under the guidance of a postdoctoral researcher. Funding is provided so that independent research activity can be linked with the acquisition of further personal qualifications and so that, with the support of experienced mentors, work can be carried out largely independently in organisational terms at a university or research facility. Applicants are outstanding young researchers in the phase following conferral of their doctorate, prior to taking up an appointment as professor. This funding model is currently operating successfully in area studies and in religious studies: the BMBF is funding seven junior research groups on the theme of ‘Europe from the outside’ in area studies, as well as Islamic theology and interdisciplinary junior research groups at the four centres for Islamic theology (for more information about the theology/religion funding priorities, see pages 32 ff).
Over the coming years, the BMBF will set up other independent junior research groups in newly emerging research fields. A number of junior research groups in the eHumanities has started work in 2014. Funding is provided to give young researchers the opportunity to work on new research tasks in eHumanities in dedicated working groups, to increase their scientific knowledge and improve the future career prospects of junior research group members in academia and in business. The close integration of the junior research groups in universities and non-university research institutes also promotes academic exchange between these institutions. At the same time, it increases the acceptance of interdisciplinary research approaches and of eHumanities increases at universities and non-university research institutes.

There is high demand for well-qualified young researchers in the humanities and social sciences, both inside and outside the science and research system. So that young researchers leave university with better skill sets, they will receive training for managerial roles while still completing their doctoral studies. Universities and employers will be brought closer together to achieve this.

In international partnerships, the BMBF also prioritises funding for young researchers. For example, the Franco-German network ‘Seizing Europe’ offers scholarships for young researchers in the humanities and social sciences. The Max Weber Foundation offers (travel) scholarships as well as specific postdoctoral...
schemes for its overseas humanities institutes. Leopoldina – the German National Academy of Sciences – is expanding its postdoctoral scholarship programme.

More information about funding for young researchers in the humanities and social sciences:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/21587.php

Profile: Franco-German network offers diverse development opportunities for young researchers

The ‘Seizing Europe’ network connects seven German and French research institutions with the shared goal of rethinking Europe from a transdisciplinary and international perspective – not as something that is taken for granted, but as a challenge to politics, society and the social sciences. The network is implementing three sub-projects on core themes of major political and social relevance: firstly on the history of the European welfare states and their current upheavals; secondly on the problem of sustainability; and thirdly on the phenomenon of inner-city violence, which is increasingly affecting urban life in Europe.

One of the research network’s key goals is to jointly support young researchers. Twenty-one research posts were created in the sub-projects for postdoctoral and doctoral students. Regular workshops involving the young researchers in Germany and France promote interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue and research collaboration. Here the researchers benefit from an exchange programme between the participating institutions.

‘Seizing Europe’ project network
Project partners: Centre interdisciplinaire d’études et de recherches sur l’Allemagne (CIERA), Paris – German Historical Institute, Paris – Fondation maison des sciences de l’homme (FMSH), Paris – Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin – Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin – Goethe University Frankfurt am Main – Institut français d’histoire en Allemagne (IFHA), Frankfurt am Main
Duration: 1 October 2012 – 31 December 2017
→ www.saisirleurope.eu/en

Summer academy 2012 at the Center for Literary and Cultural Research Berlin
II. PRIORITIES OF THE NEW FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Profile: Junior research group in Mainz investigates protestant missionaries’ images of Europe

How did Europeans outside Europe view Europe? What images of Europe, what explicit or implicit ‘European’ values did they take with them when they left the continent and how did these ideas change over decades of living outside Europe? An interdisciplinary junior research group investigated these questions at the Leibniz Institute of European History in Mainz, within the funding priority of ‘Europe Seen from the Outside’.

Their research concentrated on missionaries, for whom, up until the mid-20th century, it was not uncommon to stay for decades in non-European countries. As a result, they would experience various assimilation and separation processes. Many missionaries had a critical attitude towards Europe at the time they left. Others, particularly from the second half of the 19th century onwards, wanted to spread ‘European civilisation’ to foreign lands. Of particular interest are cases where European and non-European cultural ideas influenced each other, where missionaries adopted views that were prevalent in African or Asian countries, for example, or where, through contact with the ‘other’, they became more aware of their own idiosyncrasies.

The junior research group approached the topic by means of three interlinked projects, which ran for the full project duration, supplemented by the work of international fellows in residence. They each spent one year in Mainz and enriched the group’s research with their specific perspectives. Workshops served to develop the research subject. The project involved the international community via two large interdisciplinary conferences and transferred its knowledge and findings to the interested public.

Junior research group ‘Transfer and Transformation of Missionaries’ Images of Europe in Contact with the Other, 1700–1970’
Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz
Duration: 1 July 2010 – 31 October 2014
→ www.ieg-mainz.de/europabilder
5. Cultural heritage – from research to education

Germany has a rich cultural heritage, a significant part of which resides in archives, collections, museums and libraries. To raise public awareness of these unique holdings and keep them in the public eye research should be carried out to ensure that they are more accessible and presented in ways that can be easily understood. To achieve this goal, the BMBF generates incentives via project funding as well as long-term institutional funding for the eight Leibniz research museums.

Project funding for research at and with museums has been a firm fixture of BMBF funding programmes for a number of years. This funding priority was initiated in 2007 for the Year of the Humanities, with the ‘Freedom for Research in the Humanities’ funding initiative. The first collaborative research projects exploring ‘interaction between natural sciences and the humanities’ were launched in 2008. These three-year projects placed the focus in the humanities alternately on archaeology, linguistics and literary studies, while integrating methods from the natural sciences into their work.

From 2009 to 2012, a further twenty research collaborations involving around sixty partners received funding, under the focus of the ‘translation function of the humanities’. The collaborative research projects covered a very wide range of ‘translation functions’ of the humanities. The themes were similarly diverse – from the Roman architect Vitruvius, to diplomacy and dance, to how to deal with doping. The funding measure was also aimed directly at museums, which ‘translate’ research into educational offerings on a daily basis. The aim was to enhance their research in collaboration with universities and other research institutes.

The current BMBF funding priority ‘The Language of Objects. Material Culture in the Context of Societal Developments’ follows on from the successful ‘Freedom for Research in the Humanities’.
II. PRIORITIES OF THE NEW FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

for Research’ initiative. After the first call for proposals in 2012, most of the twelve interdisciplinary collaborative research projects have now commenced their work on objects with relevance to material culture, the history of science and technology, ethnic history or archaeology. The research goal over three years is to reinterpret these artefacts with their intended and unintended ascriptions of meaning, in dialogue between the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences. More projects will begin in 2015 with successful project applications resulting from the following call for proposals.

"Making cultural heritage accessible and more comprehensible through research."

Pooling expertise and supporting institutions

The decision by the BMBF to focus on funding museums and collections was confirmed by the ‘Recommendations on Scientific Collections as Research Infrastructures’ of the German Council of Science and Humanities in 2011. Here, for the first time, the German Council acknowledged the importance of collections at universities as research infrastructure. It also suggested that a coordination office should be set up to assist the self-organisation of the university collections.

The BMBF has funded the Coordination Centre for Scientific University Collections at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin since 2012. The centre promotes the development of cooperation structures, joint standards and methods. The BMBF will provide further
support for collections at universities with an ‘alliance for university collections’. This will help them make their extensive resources more accessible to research, incorporate them into interdisciplinary research projects and network with researchers at museums in the Leibniz Association and other research institutes.

The eight research museums in the Leibniz Association will contribute their knowledge and expertise to this process. They are equipped to look after collections and carry out top-class scientific research and they attract wide public interest through their exhibitions. To prepare the research museums for their future role, the BMBF together with the research museums and the federal states produced a white paper on research museums in the Leibniz Association, which was adopted at the Joint Science Conference (GWK) in June 2012.

Another pillar in terms of making our cultural heritage more accessible, preserving it and giving it present-day relevance is the Academies’ Programme, one of the largest humanities research programmes in Germany. It is coordinated by the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities (see p. 9) and funded in equal parts by the German federal and state governments.

All these efforts aim at making the often unique resources of museums, libraries, archives and collections in Germany more accessible as scientific capital and available for research. This includes new forms of cooperation that intelligently combine the expertise of various disciplines and institutes. The aim in each case is to facilitate new perspectives on known or as yet still unknown material heritage.

**Museums as showcases for research**

Since object-based research is highly visual, it is well-suited to bridge-building between research and education. Museums are unique in the way they transform research findings into educational experiences. This makes them excellent places for out-of-school learning. The BMBF will continue to support this specific potential of museums. Already active partners in national Science Years, the Leibniz research museums are to become showcases for research.

Communication of research findings is also a prominent aspect in BMBF project funding. Many projects in which museums are involved present their research in an exhibition setting, sometimes attracting enormous public attention – such as the Joseph Beuys retrospective (Düsseldorf, K20, 2010/11), the Pergamon exhibition (Berlin, Pergamon Museum, 2011/12), the Karl Friedrich Schinkel exhibition (Berlin and elsewhere, 2012/13), or the exhibitions ‘Culture of Sensuality’ (Weimar, Schiller Museum, 2012) and ‘De l’Allemagne – 1800-1939’ (Paris, Louvre, 2013). Staging exhibitions is part of museums’ historically established educational role. For this reason, the ‘Language of Objects’ funding priority provides funding not only for transfer activities such as conferences, publications and websites, but also for exhibitions as a museum-specific way of communicating research.
II. PRIORITIES OF THE NEW FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Zoological teaching collection at Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

More information about the BMBF ‘Cultural Heritage’ funding priority:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/21592.php

Two publications are available for downloading there:
‘Neue Blicke auf alte Kulturen’ (2012)
‘Museen – Forschung, die sich sehen lässt’ (2012)

About the research museums in the Leibniz Association:
→ www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/en/institute-museen/forschungsmuseen

Coordination Centre for Scientific University Collections at the Hermann von Helmholtz-Zentrum für Kulturtechnik, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin:
→ http://wissenschaftliche-sammlungen.de/en
→ www.kulturtechnik.hu-berlin.de

Academies’ Programme of the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities:
→ www.akademienunion.de/index.php?id=147
Profile: ‘Silk Road Fashion’ project decodes the language of clothes

What did people wear between 1000 BC and 300 AD in eastern central Asia? How was it made, and from what materials? And what does this tell us about geoclimatic conditions and trade routes at that time? The ‘Silk Road Fashion’ project investigates these questions. The interdisciplinary cooperation project comprising five German and two Chinese partners analyses archaeological findings from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwestern China.

This is the first time that a research team has examined the societies of eastern central Asia as reflected in their clothes. They reveal dynamic changes within the first millennium BC. Scientists are researching whether different population groups and cultural influences can be seen in the clothing finds and whether it is possible to identify these groups’ fashions and body techniques. Wide-ranging comparative studies are being conducted and neighbouring regions included in the analysis, such as the Pazyryk culture in the Altai Mountains, graves of the Xiongnu nomads in Mongolia, Chinese textiles and clothes patterns and Greco-Roman depictions of clothing and accessories.

To produce scientifically correct reconstructions of the twenty or so selected complete sets of apparel, experts from various fields are working together on the project. Archaeologists analyse the context of the find, biologists, chemists and physicists determine its age and the types of fibres, leathers and dyes used, while fashion designers identify weaving and tailoring techniques, as well as pattern developments. An international fashion show in 2017 will provide a unique finale, where the audience will be able to see the reconstructed clothes worn by catwalk models.

Silk Road Fashion: Clothes as a means of communication in the 1st millennium BC, Eastern Central Asia

Project partners: German Archaeological Institute – Freie Universität Berlin – Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg – Saxony-Anhalt State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology, State Museum of Prehistory – Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities

Duration: 1 August 2013 – 31 July 2016

→ www.dainst.org/de/pressrelease/silk-road-fashion?ft=all

Profile: The travel diaries of Alexander von Humboldt

Travel diaries are some of the most important scientific and personal documents of the 19th century; Alexander von Humboldt was one of the most significant writers of travel diaries. He undertook expeditions to Latin America, the United States and central Asia. His travel accounts are a unique cultural artefact and have a high scientific value. To make them accessible to research, the BMBF joined a consortium to acquire his travel diaries from the years 1799 to 1804.
In the summer of 2013, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation signed an agreement to purchase Alexander von Humboldt’s famous South America diaries. A broad-based consortium of public and private donors paid a total of twelve million euros. The BMBF contributed three million euros. A joint research project by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and the University of Potsdam will work on making the content and materials of the diaries accessible to the research community.

The goal of this funded project is to study Alexander von Humboldt’s travel diaries in relationship to his legacy as a whole and adopt new research approaches to establish the diaries in the context of the culture, politics, society and particularly research of the 19th century.

The project also aims to present Alexander von Humboldt’s unique scientific achievements in the overall context of his legacy, making these visible to a wide audience. The research will also include the results from the preparation and digitisation of Humboldt’s personal and scientific legacy, which has been held for many years at Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage.

Alexander von Humboldt’s American travel diaries
Project partners: Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage – University of Potsdam, Institut für Romanistik
Duration: 15 August 2013 – 31 August 2016
(01UO1302A), 1 February 2014 – 31 January 2017
(01UO1302B)
→ www.uni-potsdam.de/humboldtart
6. Cultural diversity and civil society – potentials for social cohesion and participation

Everyday life in our modern society is shaped by cultural and social diversity. This is seen in the individualisation of life paths and situations, discontinuous employment histories, the pluralisation of cultural and religious practices, and changes in family structures and traditions. Research in the humanities and social sciences helps to manage the resulting challenges for society. It provides important guidance and decision-making knowledge for social, economic, cultural and political players.

This funding priority is directed at questions of how the legitimacy of social, political and economic orders can be established in ethnically, linguistically, socioeconomically and culturally heterogeneous societies, and how societies can successfully maintain their future viability. Previously, the BMBF supported research in this thematic focus primarily by funding research institutions. With the new framework programme it is both establishing and extending its project funding.

The first call for proposals under this funding priority came about as a direct response to the European financial and economic crisis. It is aimed at researching the causes and consequences from a social science perspective. The 'Financial System and Society' call for proposals, which was published in 2013, starts with the observation that the significance and function of the financial sector for business, politics and society changed fundamentally in the decades leading up to the financial crisis. Many acts of deregulation, which are regarded today as having triggered the crisis, were originally intended to solve economic and social problems. Now, through new research approaches, there is a desire for a better understanding of the interdependencies between the financial system and society in an increasingly complex economic and social environment. This will enable the development of measures that will help to stabilise the development of the financial sector in the future and reduce society’s susceptibility to crises induced by the financial system.
II. PRIORITIES OF THE NEW FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

From January 2014, in a German-Greek partnership, the BMBF is also funding three bilateral research projects in the humanities and social sciences that are concerned with the socioeconomic impacts of the financial and economic crisis in both countries. The projects are working on German-Greek comparative studies with case examples from local government and civil society, while also considering the role of the media. Through this funding measure, the BMBF is strengthening research collaboration with Greece as part of its internationalisation strategy.

The BMBF will publish further calls for proposals in 2015 and beyond. To detail the themes of these calls for proposals within the funding priority, the BMBF is implementing an agenda process that involves researchers in the social sciences, humanities and economics as well as practitioners e.g. from non-governmental organisations.

About the ‘Finance System and Society’ call for proposals:
→ www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/22718.php

“Promoting research to address the challenges facing society.”
Institutions that receive institutional or longer-term funding from the BMBF for fundamental research in the social sciences and humanities provide a stable foundation for such research. The Berlin Social Science Research Center (WZB) conducts research into trends, problems and innovation opportunities in modern societies. For 25 years, the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) has provided data for a wide range of social science studies on topics such as income, employment, education and health. The ALLBUS survey conducted by GESIS – the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences – supplies data on topics such as religious orientations and attitudes to social inequality, deviant behaviour and political participation. Data on social and political attitudes among the populations of more than 20 European countries is provided by the European Social Survey (see p. 18), which is an ESFRI project. This range is complemented by the two reports on socioeconomic development (soeb) in Germany. As a result of better access to microdata from official statistics and social security institutions, these reports are able to pinpoint highly topical social trends (see p. 34).

Historical research forms another pillar of this funding priority. In particular, contemporary historical studies of Germany’s recent past and comparative European history are highly relevant in terms of making sense of the present. The Institut für Zeitgeschichte München-Berlin (IfZ), the Potsdam Centre for Contemporary History (ZZF) and the Leipzig Institute of European History (IEG) in Mainz provide valuable expertise with support from the BMBF.

Under this funding priority, the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) also receives institutional funding. PRIF’s work is directed particularly towards conflicts arising through injustice and understanding how peace and justice can both be achieved.

Over the years ahead, the BMBF aims to enhance the networking of existing resources in the institutionally funded research institutes. Data produced by the research infrastructures will be pooled under the common theme of diversity and cohesion. In addition, new forms of cooperation with other university and non-university research institutes will be initiated.

Theology and religion

The increasing plurality of religious affiliation in Germany and the growing need for academic expertise on religion create new requirements for the organisation and output of the disciplines that deal with such themes. In its ‘Recommendations on the Advancement of Theologies and Sciences concerned with Religions at German Universities’, published in 2010, the German Council of Science and Humanities therefore recommended that the field of theology and religious
studies should be developed in the German science and research system. The BMBF has implemented key recommendations in recent years.

The BMBF is supporting four centres for Islamic theology, each for a period of five years, located in Tübingen, Münster/Osnabrück, Frankfurt am Main/Giessen and Erlangen-Nuremberg. An independent and permanent financial commitment by the universities and the states in which they are based, an established range of disciplines in the locality, a sustainable concept for the advisory board and a willingness to engage in cooperation between localities are elementary prerequisites for funding.

At the Berlin-Brandenburg Centre for Jewish Studies, the BMBF is funding a collaborative research project with seven partners for an initial period of five years from April 2012. It is therefore following another of the German Council’s recommendations, which suggested that geographical proximity and complementary subject areas should be put to better use. The network will help to improve integration between existing research and teaching opportunities in Jewish studies, establish Jewish studies more firmly in the region, support young researchers and promote internationalisation in this field.

Further information on the funding priority:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/21618.php

Selected links:
→ www.wzb.eu/en
→ www.diw.de/en/soep
→ www.gesis.org/en
soeb is a collaborative research project that paints a detailed picture of the German economic and social model from a long-term observation perspective. The project combines a wealth of quantity and quality-based data from the social sciences and economics, and presents these findings as a report. So far, two reports have been produced: 'Work and ways of life' (2005) and 'Participation in transformation' (2012). Work on the third report began in the autumn of 2013.

soeb represents broad-based socioeconomic reporting that complements existing specialised reporting systems. As a yardstick for measuring social development, soeb considers people's welfare in the sense of their participation in society's various domains and resources. Participation findings are produced not only individually, but also socially. soeb therefore asks how the organic diversity of ways of working and ways of life offers new participation opportunities for the individual, and to what extent inequality and exclusion.

The third report will offer advanced observation concepts and new thematic focuses, including sustainable consumption and poverty consumption, financial market structures and the impact of corporate strategies and welfare state intervention on life courses and employment histories. The research network, which comprises a large number of research institutes, is currently undergoing reorganisation. Participants are working in a virtual research environment that supports the more effective collaborative use of existing research data infrastructure.

soeb – Reporting on socioeconomic development in Germany
Project coordination: Soziologisches Forschungsinstitut Göttingen (SOFI) e.V., Georg-August-Universität
Duration: 1 September 2013 – 31 August 2016 (soeb 3)
→ www.soeb.de/en
Profile: ReDi is developing recommendations for successful interreligious dialogue

The future viability of our society critically depends on people from different cultures and religions being tolerant and respectful towards one another. This includes seeing differences as an enrichment, not as a threat. In an interdisciplinary and internationally comparative research project, the Academy of World Religions at Hamburg University is examining in depth the topic of ‘Religion and dialogue in modern societies’. An interreligious composed team of researchers is looking into the interdependencies between religions, as well as exploring existing dialogue guidance and dialogue potentials worth developing.

Comprising theologians, social scientists and educational scientists, the team is investigating the possibilities and limitations of interreligious dialogue on two levels: the first level aims to employ hermeneutic methods to identify dialogue potentials and limitations in the theologies of various religions and, on that basis, to develop an interreligiously open, dialogical theology. On the second level, empirical social research methods are to be used to shed light on the practice of interreligious dialogue. Here the project looks at religious communities and secular institutions (e.g. in cultural life or municipal government). The researchers also scrutinise the educational sector for opportunities and limitations with regard to promoting interreligious understanding.

Research is being carried out in Germany in the Hamburg and Rhine-Ruhr regions, plus the metropolitan regions of London, Oslo and Stockholm. The goal is to gain insight into the potential scope of interreligious dialogue to assist in social processes of integration and peace-building, and to develop specific practical guidelines for shaping interreligious dialogue.

Religion and dialogue in modern societies (ReDi)
Hamburg University, Academy of World Religions
Duration: 1 February 2013 – 31 January 2018

→ www.awr.uni-hamburg.de/de/forschung/redi-projekt.html
International collaboration in the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences

One of the key goals of the BMBF framework programme is to internationalise the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences. As an integral part of the German federal government’s strategy to internationalise science and research (see also p. 51), it aims to:

- Increase knowledge about and understanding of regions of the world
- Promote research collaborations across national borders
- Support young researchers’ professional development
- Address social challenges in the international context

By funding Käte Hamburger Centers, setting up international research schools, supporting the Max Weber Foundation and promoting area studies, the BMBF encourages internationalisation in the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences in a variety of ways. Alongside national and increasingly also international efforts to foster excellent researchers and excellence in research, the BMBF at the same time is becoming ever more closely involved at European level. Thus, with BMBF support, German researchers in the humanities, social sciences and economics successfully participated in the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme, making a
significant contribution to the internationalisation of their subjects. Horizon 2020 is the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Launched in 2014, it is the world’s largest transnational funding programme for research projects. Here too, the BMBF is taking appropriate steps to ensure that German researchers are well-equipped to participate.

The publication of Horizon 2020 made it clear that the themes within the BMBF funding priority 'Cultural diversity and civil society' will likewise be given a strong weighting in European research funding. There are close similarities in content with the Horizon 2020 programme section 'Societal challenges', particularly the funding line for 'Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies'. This addresses questions of global justice and human rights, social participation, the prerequisites and conditions for open and creative societies, and new approaches to sustainably shaping geographical environments. Underpinning these European funding activities with corresponding national programmes is extremely important and contributes to a higher success rate of German humanities and social science researchers in Horizon 2020.

To alert researchers in the humanities and social sciences to European research funding opportunities, in 2012 the BMBF issued a brochure called 'Successful in Europe' containing examples of humanities and social science projects. A brochure showcasing successful German applicants for coveted European Research Council grants was published in 2013.

International networking will play an ever greater role, not only for researchers but also for research funders. For this reason, from the autumn of 2013, the BMBF is participating in two new international networks with India and the transatlantic region to strengthen links with ministries and other funding institutions. These platforms will deliver extensive support, particularly for networking in the humanities and social sciences and the development of new research themes.
Coordinated infrastructures across Europe – the ESFRI forum

To strengthen European collaboration on research infrastructures and thereby enhance the international competitiveness of European research, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) was formed in 2002 at the behest of the European Commission. The forum comprises representatives of the member countries and a representative of the Commission, who work together to develop a joint vision and a common strategy for the future of research infrastructures, identify new research infrastructures of pan-European interest and implement these through transnational projects. ESFRI produces ‘roadmaps’ for its most important plans, which are updated on an ongoing basis as they are implemented. ESFRI has set up a number of working groups, one of which deals exclusively with research infrastructures in the humanities and social sciences.

In the humanities and social sciences, Germany is currently involved in five ESFRI projects (see also p. 18). Supporting research infrastructures is also a priority in Horizon 2020, the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

Further information on the ESFRI forum:
→ http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index_en.cfm?pg=esfri

BMBF brochure ‘Roadmap for Research Infrastructures’:
→ www.bmbf.de/pub/roadmap_forschungsinfrastrukturen.pdf

BMBF brochure ‘Research Infrastructures for the Humanities and Social Sciences’:
→ www.bmbf.de/pub/forschungsinfrastrukturen_geistes_und_sozialwissenschaften.pdf

Further information on the funding priority ‘Research infrastructures in the humanities and social sciences’:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/21568.php

European collaboration in the HERA network

The goal of the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) network is to provide space for international research partnerships in the humanities and firmly establish them at European level. HERA is a partnership that includes the BMBF and 21 other European research funding institutions as well as the European Science Foundation (ESF). With financial
support from participating countries and the European Commission, HERA has published two calls for proposals to date: the 2009 Joint Research Programme – ‘Cultural Dynamics: Inheritance and Identity’ and ‘Humanities as a Source of Creativity and Innovation’; and the other in 2012 on the theme of ‘Cultural Encounters’. Each collaborative project requires cooperation between researchers from at least three of the participating HERA countries. Funding is provided for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research projects with a humanities focus. There were 18 successful project applications under the Cultural Encounters programme, of which eleven involve German partners. The projects started in the autumn of 2013. The BMBF is supporting the participation of the German researchers.

Further information on HERA:
→ http://heranet.info
→ www.bmbf.de/en/21592.php

Profile: HERA project ‘Marrying Cultures’ investigates European cultural transfer in the early modern period

In Europe between 1500 and 1800, whenever a monarch took a foreign bride she usually brought another language, religion and culture with her, as well as her entourage. What happened in this cultural encounter? What frictions did it cause? What innovations can be traced back to it? And how are these encounters reflected in the respective national cultural memories to this day? These questions are investigated in the Marrying Cultures project, an interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers from Germany, the UK, Poland and Sweden. Their research covers topics ranging from the establishment of porcelain factories in Sicily, to importing tea-drinking to England, to enlightenment ideas in Sweden.

The German part of the HERA project is based at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel and concentrates on book collections. The history of the royal libraries of Europe has largely been written from the perspective of their collections, which were accumulated in one place through primogeniture. However, significant movements of books and hence cultural transfer took place as a result of the widespread practice of intermarriage between royal dynasties in Europe. Based on case studies of German princesses in the early modern period, the project investigates the books that a princess brought with her on her marriage, the composition of her book collection at her new home and the inheritance practice that meant that female collections were rarely kept intact. The project results will be presented at conferences and in publications. In addition, a concert, exhibition and learning modules for schools and museums will ensure wide public dissemination of the findings.

Marrying Cultures: Queens Consort and European Identities 1500-1800
German sub-project: Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel
Duration: 30 September 2013 – 29 September 2016
Humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences respond to current issues

In addition to the framework programme for the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences, the BMBF offers a range of other framework programmes aimed at the research community. They are dedicated to key themes and current challenges for our society, such as the transformation of Germany’s energy supply system, demographic change, health, civil security and sustainable development. Humanities and social science research also plays an important role in these programmes.

The involvement of the humanities and social sciences has long been essential in research on the Energiewende – the transformation of Germany’s energy supply system – for instance to investigate people’s acceptance of different forms of energy or to research cultural change with regard to energy usage. Many topics and research areas cannot be comprehensively covered without humanities and social science researchers being included on an equal basis. The following pages highlight funding measures from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in which the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences are involved as partners with the natural sciences and engineering, for example, in solving these current challenges. The descriptions emphasise the specific contribution of the humanities and social sciences, as illustrated in selected examples from current BMBF funding. This offers an impression, both of the variety of interdisciplinary fields open to humanities and social science researchers and of the breadth of applications for their research.
How can we provide for everyone’s health and nutrition needs?

‘Life sciences’ focus

The life sciences will play a crucial role in mastering the challenges of the 21st century. They are fundamental to our understanding of processes in living organisms and complex ecological systems. The research landscape ranges from research into diseases, to prevention and nutrition research and the agricultural and biosciences that focus on the food supply for a growing world population, to bioeconomy, which seeks alternatives to fossil raw materials.

The BMBF is active in all key areas of this focus. The ‘Health research’ framework programme, which was adopted in 2010, aims to make research breakthroughs available to patients even more quickly and increase the pace of innovation within the German health industry. Focuses include common diseases, prevention and nutrition research, health care research and individualised medicine. Innovative concepts for food security are supported through the National Research Strategy BioEconomy 2030. Bioethics, meanwhile, is concerned with research on embryonic stem cells, genetic diagnostics and genetically modified organisms.

The social sciences and humanities play an important role in all of these areas. Under the ‘Ethical, Legal and Social Aspects of Modern Life Sciences and Biotechnology’ (ELSA) funding priority, for example, humanities and social science researchers cooperate closely with stakeholders in the biosciences and medicine, as well as public interest representatives. They investigate discussion processes concerning ELSA questions in our society, for example, from which they derive proposals for dealing with these issues.

Project example: ‘ELSA knowledge transfer’ – communication changes the quality of information

Whether and in what ways medical research findings benefit society depends on the attitudes of the stakeholders concerned in science and research, politics and society at large. Mutual understanding and regular dialogue are prerequisites for opinion formation. The collaborative research project ‘Changing the quality of information in the communication cascade from specialist publication to the reception of medical reporting by doctors and laypeople’ under the ELSA funding priority (see above) is investigating how the flow of information operates, from medical researchers to the public. The project analyses how new findings reach their recipients and what happens at the various stops along the way. The goal is to reduce losses of quality in the information flow.

Experts in communication science, specialist journalism, medicine, philosophy of science and health care research are collaborating closely on the project. Among other things, the humanities and social sciences in the project are tasked with surveying existing knowledge and attitudes, and developing communication strategies.

To find out more, visit:

→ www.bmbf.de/de/1237.php
→ www.bmbf.de/en/1056.php
→ www.bmbf.de/en/healthresearch.php
How can we create a successful and fair education system?

‘Empirical educational research’ focus

Education has a decisive influence on opportunities for social participation and the development of individual potentials. To make a lasting improvement in educational conditions for all, stakeholders in the education system – from teaching staff to policy-makers – require in-depth knowledge on which to base their decisions and actions.

Research into education processes can make a valuable contribution in this regard. Through its framework programme to promote empirical educational research, the BMBF supports research projects that deliver scientifically based and empirically proven findings on the state of the education system and on causal relationships within this system. Research focuses include linguistic assessment/language support, educational equality and the professionalisation of teaching staff.

The research projects are predominantly interdisciplinary, with the humanities and social sciences playing a key role. For example, in the field of linguistic assessment/language support, researchers in linguistics, psychology and educational science are investigating the best way to support children’s linguistic development.

Project example: ‘Language support competence among educational professionals’ (SprachKoPF)

To compensate for educational disadvantage among children, the German educational policy is to invest considerable resources in language support measures. Yet until now there has been very little scientific evidence concerning the effectiveness of these measures in terms of children’s language skills.

The ‘SprachKoPF’ project at the University of Mannheim is investigating the influence of the language support of primary school teachers on children’s linguistic development and the teachers’ level of language support competence.

In an initial project phase, a computer-based test called ‘SprachKoPF v06’ was developed to measure the language support competence of teaching staff. The results of the study show that language support competence is primarily determined by the educators’ school and professional qualifications. Extra training, professional experience and attitudes have almost no impact. This finding shows that a greater degree of professionalisation is necessary in early childhood education. In the second project phase, the relationships between language support competence and children’s linguistic development will be investigated by means of videos, interviews and tests. These findings may help to achieve more effective and efficient language support for children.

To find out more, visit:

→ www.empirische-bildungsforschung-bmbf.de
→ www.bmbf.de/en/6880.php
→ www.fiss-bmbf.uni-hamburg.de/projekte/sprachkopf-2-tracy.html
How can we ensure prosperity and a liveable future?

‘Research for sustainable development’ framework programme

Climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss and raw material shortages are just some of the global changes to which societies in industrialised and emerging countries will have to adapt. Securing prosperity and facilitating growth while reducing natural resource usage and harmful emissions requires scientific decision-making bases and action strategies.

The BMBF is addressing these challenges with its ‘Research for sustainable development’ (FONA) framework programme. More than two billion euros are being earmarked until 2015 for research questions in key action areas, including social trends, global responsibility and international networking, Earth-system research and geotechnologies, and climate, energy and sustainable economy. Close collaboration between researchers in the natural, social and economic sciences and practitioners is essential to achieve the programme goals. The social sciences, humanities and economics are particularly prominent in the ‘social-ecological research’ funding priority, which deals with topics such as climate protection, biodiversity, sustainable management of supply and disposal systems and sustainable business. Humanities and social science researchers are working to increase our understanding of the social causes of climate change, for example, or are assisting in the transformation of the energy system together with engineers and natural scientists. Other focuses that involve the humanities and social sciences include global change, megacities, climate economics and land management.

Project example: ‘Prosumer households’ – private households as key players in the energy system

For a long time, private households only featured on the demand side of the energy market. Now many households produce energy themselves: they are turning into ‘prosumer households’. This is where the project ‘Private households as key players in transformation of the energy system’ comes in. The project team is working on a set of recommendations to help shape the conditions for a social-ecological transformation of the energy system. Here the role, function and potential of prosumer households are key.

As part of the project, humanities and social science researchers are investigating behavioural tendencies, motives, attitudes and needs of businesses, households and the public sector that influence energy consumption. They are analysing sociocultural patterns, investigating the path dependency of household decisions and evaluating various energy-relevant courses of action and investment options available to households. Burdens and opportunities associated with the involvement of various population groups are also being analysed.

To find out more, visit:
- www.bmbf.de/en/17810.php
- www.prosumer-haushalte.de
How can we prepare for an ageing society?

‘Human-machine interaction for demographic change’ funding area

Average life expectancy in Germany is higher than ever before, while the population is declining because of a consistently low birth rate. This is causing a significant change in the age structure. In response, the German federal government adopted a comprehensive demographic strategy in April 2012. A key element of this strategy is the federal government’s research agenda for demographic change, ‘The New Future of Old Age’.

The goal of the agenda is to promote, through research, the development of solutions, products and services that improve quality of life and social participation for older people.

All focus areas within the agenda call for contributions by humanities and social science researchers. When developing and implementing technological solutions for the needs of a society experiencing demographic change, ethical, legal and social questions also need to be taken into consideration, e.g. autonomy and privacy. An integrated treatment of these questions is therefore an essential requirement of the projects, as too is the early involvement of users. The research area ‘Social inclusion: staying mobile and in touch’ looks at technological innovations together with social innovations. For people with restricted mobility, for example, contact and communication with other people is as important as access to health and care facilities.

**Project example 'Europäische Metropolregion Nürnberg macht mobil' (EMN-MOVES)**

Under the BMBF funding priority ‘Mobile until old age. Seamless mobility chains for the removal, avoidance and overcoming of barriers’, the EMN-MOVES project is a prime example of the successful involvement of the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences.

The project aims to provide seamless mobility chains with the aid of technical support systems and volunteers. In various residential districts in the region, needs-based concepts are being developed for assisting mobility in old age and in people with health problems. The project relies on neighbourly involvement and individual assistance, as well as state-of-the-art communication technology and equipment. A key role in this collaboration between businesses, the housing sector and universities is occupied by the Institute of Psychogerontology (IPG) at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. It examines the psychological, cognitive and health bases, conditions and potentials of individual ageing. Only through interdisciplinary collaboration in a network has it become possible to develop made-to-measure innovations for a society of advancing years.

To find out more, visit:

→ www.das-alter-hat-zukunft.de/en
→ www.bmbf.de/en/4657.php
→ www.mtidw.de
→ www.emn-moves.de
How do we respond to changes in our working environment?

‘Labour research’ focus

The ability to innovate is seen as a key resource that enables people and businesses to successfully engage with far-reaching changes in the modern working world. Strong innovative ability in the working environment is therefore a basis for economic success and balance between humans and machines.

This implies that innovation processes should take human resources development, organisational development and skills development equally into account, along with technological factors. Only through the interplay of all these factors do working and learning combine to become a process, helping to maintain employability and the ability to work. Supporting these processes is the aim of the BMBF funding programme ‘Working – learning – developing skills. Innovation in a modern working world’. Under the funding programme, together with businesses, skills development is stimulated as a source of new ideas, successful products and employment, opening up new networks, market opportunities and employment prospects. The current funding priorities ‘Flexibility and sustainability in a changing working environment’, ‘Innovative capacity in a context of demographic change’ and ‘Operational skills management in a context of demographic change’ promote the development of practical concepts and models in important areas of the working world.

Humanities and social science researchers are studying and monitoring the psychological, sociological and vocational-level educational aspects of the change processes that have been initiated.

Project example: Young and old in one team – joining forces for success

Targeted training measures demonstrably boost performance and innovation among younger and older employees in mixed-age teams. But what is the optimal team composition for a development project in industry? With funding from the BMBF and the European Social Fund, the collaborative research project ‘Demography-proof innovation for research and development teams’ (Demografierobuste Innovation für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsteams, Derobino) tackles this question. Together with businesses such as the Torgelow iron foundry, the project is developing methods and tools to discover the optimal make-up of such mixed-age innovation teams.

The project’s findings will help businesses to put conditions in place at an early stage for an optimum mix of specialists on the team. This will reduce personnel costs, shorten innovation times and make better use of the potentials of older and younger employees. Humanities and social science researchers are investigating the human resources (HR) and operational conditions for successful innovation. They will put forward HR development measures that enable the participating enterprises to improve the composition of their research departments and project teams, taking the demographic structure into account.

To find out more, visit:
→ www.bmbf.de/de/7771.php
→ http://pt-ad.pt-dlr.de/de/94.php
→ www.derobino.de
What trends will enhance our lives?

‘Innovation and technology studies’ and ‘BMBF foresight’ focuses

New technologies and social processes are developing at a rapid pace. These trends can significantly enhance our quality of life when they lead to innovative products and services, such as new medical treatments, safe and secure energy generation, or faster communication.

The BMBF funds innovation and technology studies to shine light on the potential inherent in social and technological trends, and also the associated risks.

The role of the social sciences and humanities here is to evaluate complex sociotechnical systems, and derive recommendations for how they should be structured. With the involvement of humanities and social science researchers, interdisciplinary projects are researching the medical consequences and economic potential of nanotechnology, for example, or the opportunities and risks associated with biotechnology and information technology.

Example: BMBF foresight – be prepared for future trends

‘BMBF foresight’ is a strategic process that tries to anticipate future trends over a long time horizon, i.e. well over ten years. The goal of the foresight process is to develop scenarios that provide early-stage guidance for structuring and directing research and innovation policy. The 2007-2009 foresight cycle produced the ‘Human-machine interaction’ future field, for example. The current foresight process (2012-2014) focuses on identifying future social challenges in the period to 2030. These will serve as a basis for evaluating solutions offered by research and technology.

To find out more, visit:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/18378.php
→ www.bmbf.de/de/12673.php
How can we make our society as safe and secure as possible?

‘Research for civil security’ focus

Civil security means citizens can move around safely in their everyday lives – by bus and train, at airports, in their neighbourhoods and at foot­ball games. In addition, people expect rapid assistance in an emergency.

Threats to civil security are becoming ever more diverse. Natural disasters, organised crime and international terrorism are major challenges. Long-term disruptions to transportation routes or the internet also have a critical impact. In its programme, ‘Research for civil security 2012–217’, the BMBF is promoting innovative security solutions to deal with these challenges.

Perspectives from the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences are required so that new technologies and organisational concepts can become integrated security solutions. The project groups within the security research programme therefore are adopting an interdisciplinary approach: researchers in the natural sciences, engineering and social sciences carry out research together with businesses and end users such as security forces and emergency services. Humanities, cultural science and social science researchers are also looking at cross-project topics, such as the phenomenon that people have very different perceptions of security. Based on realistic scenarios – such as a fire in a football stadium – they investigate questions like ‘When do people feel safe?’ and ‘How do crowds behave at large events?’

Project example: ‘New emergency food supply strategies’

Food is not in short supply in Germany, so citizens keep very little in reserve. But what happens in a crisis, such as a flood, animal epidemic or widespread power outage? This calls for an innovative, integrated concept that involves not only the government but also citizens and businesses. The goal of the ‘New emergency food supply strategies’ project is to draw up a suitable concept.

Together with industry, local government and aid organisations, social science, nutritional science and communication science researchers are investigating the food supply in a disaster scenario. The key question: how can we guarantee there is enough food in a crisis? Social and communication science researchers are examining risk awareness and stockpiling responses among the population, alongside crisis communication by government agencies and organisations charged with public safety. They aim to find new avenues for cooperation and communication between the government, private sector and population at large.

To find out more, visit:
→ www.bmbf.de/en/6293.php
What makes our universities excellent?

‘Research on higher education and the scientific system’ focus

Society’s expectations of the science and research system, and particularly of universities, have risen in recent years. As a result, the demand for scientific knowledge as a basis for decisions by science policy-makers, universities and research institutes has also increased.

In response, since 2008, the BMBF has supported research on higher education institutions and the scientific system through thematic lines of funding and individual projects. Funding is provided for projects examining topics such as the professionalisation of university teaching, governance structures in scientific research, how to manage and optimise investment processes in higher education and performance assessment in science. The ‘Competence Centre for Bibliometrics’ is extremely important in this funding priority. Its task is to set up and operate a central database for national bibliometric research, as well as for bibliometric studies and evaluations of the national science and research system as a whole and of selected sub-sections.

Within the BMBF lines of funding, the projects are mostly empirical and are being carried out mainly by researchers in the social sciences. These can be regarded as a key supporting discipline in research on higher education and the scientific system as a whole, which is not a discipline in itself but a research field.

Project example: ‘Academic writing skills among students for teaching degrees’

An important line of funding in this BMBF funding priority is ‘Modeling and Measuring Competencies in Higher Education’ (KoKoHs). It serves as a basis for the collaborative research project ‘AkaTex’, which gauges the writing skills of students for teaching degrees. These academic writing skills relate partly to the writing requirements of the degree course, and partly to the future profession, i.e. teaching.

Everyone involved in the AkaTex project comes from the humanities and social sciences, primarily linguistics and media studies. The researchers from the humanities and empirical sciences collaborate closely on competence modelling and recording. All team members in projects under this funding priority describe their regular dialogue with colleagues in teacher training and educational science as being extremely productive.

To find out more, visit:
→ www.hochschulforschung-bmbf.de/1256.php
How can the German science and research system implement equal opportunities?

‘Women at the top’ funding area

One of the German federal government’s key policy goals is to improve equal opportunities within education and research. Through its ‘Women at the top’ funding line, the BMBF aims to increase the proportion of women in education and research at all levels including top positions and make the science and research system more family-friendly. Projects within this funding priority help ensure that excellent research gives appropriate consideration to gender issues.

The integration of gender aspects boosts the innovative potential of research, particularly in the natural sciences, engineering, medicine and economics.

The BMBF is therefore funding research projects that deliver new insights on gender-specific career choices and paths in science and business. The projects are developing and testing innovative concepts for improving equal opportunities, and presenting new strategies for integrating gender issues into the various areas of research. A total of 116 projects are being supported in the period from 2007 to 2015. Researchers representing a wide range of disciplines, with a majority from the humanities and social sciences, are contributing both quantity and quality-based methods to interdisciplinary discourse in these collaborative projects. They have successfully devised recommendations for greater equality of opportunity that are tailored to the specific subject cultures while integrating gender-related issues into research.

Project example: ‘KarMed’ – careers in medicine

Back in 2004, nearly 50 percent of doctorates in human medicine/health care were awarded to women. In 2011, this figure was 57.5 percent. Despite this, substantially fewer women than men (2011: 22.3 percent) qualify as a professor and most top positions in science and medicine are held by men. The KarMed project is investigating the factors that obstruct women doctors’ career or lead to career breaks. Based on its findings, the project will produce recommendations for achieving equal opportunities in specialist medical training. Researchers in the social sciences and psychology work together closely with doctors in this collaborative research project.

To find out more, visit:
→ www.dlr.de/pt/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-5787/9401_read-18114
→ http://spowi.uni-leipzig.de/~Karmed
How can we use opportunities for internationalisation?

‘European and international cooperation’ focus

The ‘Humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences’ framework programme is a further step towards implementing the German federal government’s internationalisation strategy. This aims to strengthen Germany’s role in the global knowledge society and help address global challenges.

Through its positioning in Horizon 2020, the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, the German federal government is influential in shaping the European research agenda, where it can implement its policy goals including strengthening the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences.

To strengthen international cooperation in science and technology, the BMBF supports a wide range of dialogue processes as well as targeted exploratory and networking initiatives with research partners around the world on selected themes, including in the humanities and social sciences. This enables projects that are based on German interests while also taking into account the specific features and interests of the partner countries. For example, the BMBF is involved in the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) framework. COST aims to promote the exchange of knowledge between researchers in the 36 European member countries and beyond, by forming thematic networks. COST also promoted topics from the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences. Germany is currently involved in all the 41 activities in this focal area that receive funding.

Project example: ‘Sustainable regional integration in West Africa and Europe’

Cross-border political and economic regions offer Africa great opportunities, but also present a great challenge. Political science research findings on European integration can help to analyse regional integration processes and support their continued development.

Since 2012, for this reason, the BMBF has funded a research partnership on regional integration between the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) and the West Africa Institute (WAI) in Cape Verde. This pan-regional partnership covers the countries in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The project enhances local and regional capacities for scientific policy advice and facilitates the local development and implementation of solutions to the region’s social and economic problems.

To find out more, visit:
> [www.cost.eu/domains_actions/isch/in_detail](http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/isch/in_detail)
Internationalisation is a prerequisite for good science policy

Around 160 researchers from Germany and other countries work at the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB). With large numbers of European and international contacts, thematic and project-based partnerships and long-term institutional relationships with selected research institutes and universities around the world, WZB is extremely well positioned internationally. In this interview, Prof. Jutta Allmendinger, President of WZB, talks about the challenges of internationalisation in the humanities and social sciences.

Professor Allmendinger, ‘internationalisation’ is a word that’s frequently heard in discussions about the future of our science and research system. What does it mean to you?

Curiosity and greater knowledge. Links of this kind enable us to meet other researchers, find a common language, explore areas of interest, weigh up different approaches and arrive at new ideas and solutions. But internationalisation always takes time. Meaningless scientific tourism and half-hearted partnership agreements are no help to anyone. For me, internationalisation is a prerequisite for good science policy that is conscious of its global responsibility.

In your opinion, what research fields are international groups of researchers absolutely crucial to and where is a comparative approach unnecessary?

Internationalisation and comparative approaches, in my view, are two entirely different fields that only sometimes coincide. I can discuss theoretical problems with colleagues overseas that don’t require ‘national’ empirical knowledge. Comparative approaches are essential when we want to describe social phenomena and gain a better understanding of their causes. The same goes for answers to big social questions. So to understand how Japan is dealing with its demographic trends, for example, direct dialogue is often more helpful than any book. And when it comes to transferring approaches to other countries, I need a great deal of information about the major challenges are culturally and socially embedded. I firmly believe that all of today’s burning issues could be dealt with more effectively by taking a transnational and transregional approach: the social divide in our society, financial market capitalism, demographics, the future of work, the impact of global social movements.

Everyone is talking about the benefits of internationalisation. What difficulties and challenges are associated with it?

Let’s agree on the word ‘challenges’, since most restrictive conditions can be shaped. Internationalisation needs time spent together. Transparent processes and sufficient resources need to be available for everyone involved for the numerous steps that are necessary before we can get down to work. This begins with immigration and visas, continues with finding a place to live, schools for the children and jobs for the partners, and includes help with learning the language. I always put myself in our new researchers’ position and ask myself what kind of help I would need and how much help I’ve been given in the past. And it’s about developing intercultural competence. Germany still has a lot to learn from other countries here. When it comes to longer-term stays, of course structural
approaches are necessary as well. Europe is taking the first steps here with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. We support this European initiative at WZB.

Why are the leading western countries, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom and perhaps also France, still the most common destinations for researchers? Why do we so seldom look in any other direction?

We don’t like jumping in at the deep end. We go to countries where we can speak the language and where we understand the culture and political systems. We often rationalise that by pretending that the real experts can be found in these countries. To a certain extent, this behaviour is an expression of our scientific system’s insistence on speed. Who is going to take the time to learn an Asian language? You’d miss out on so many articles in peer-reviewed journals. And that’s the currency that counts. I am delighted that WZB is about to sign a cooperation agreement with Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore, which will lead to regular exchanges. We can learn a lot in the areas of education, training and migration – despite different political regimes.

Apart from project funding, endowed professorships and postdoctoral fellowships, do you see any other formats that could be used to strengthen the humanities and social sciences, including internationally?

We need formats that provide scope for interdisciplinarity, including internationally, and which bring the different sectors of society closer to one another. Postdoc phases could include an internationally organised economics programme or involvement with government and politics. Since we need to work on the organisation of the postdoc phase in any case, these would be very welcome highlights. WZB has some ideas here too. We have just developed a new practical programme that opens doors for our young researchers, not only to top universities but also to government and large companies. It would be great to make this international.

How would you assess the relationship between national and European funding?

The answer to that is very different for the individual member countries. In Germany, the national research funding situation is still good, partly because of the strong support for non-university research institutes. We are less dependent on European resources than researchers in other countries whose national funding structures have broken down or which are deliberately scaling down funding for the humanities and social sciences. Above all, ERC grants are very attractive to us. But otherwise the level of bureaucracy needs to be significantly reduced. There should be greater transparency. And there should be incentives to ensure that the best researchers from the member countries get involved in this new European area. Such changes will be an important encouragement for us to actively participate in Horizon 2020.

Sociologist Jutta Allmendinger has been President of the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) and Professor of Educational Sociology and Labour Market Research at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin since 2007. Previously, she was Professor of Sociology at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and Director of the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) in Nuremberg. Her main fields of interest are educational and labour market research.
Contact details

Contacts for the framework programme

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research has appointed a project management agency to implement the research framework programme for the humanities, cultural sciences and social sciences. The Project Management Agency part the German Aerospace Center (PT-DLR), ‘Humanities and Social Sciences’ department, is involved in structuring funding priority and measures, advises applicants, prepares projects for approval and provides technical and administrative support during their implementation as well as reviewing completed projects.

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Funding guidelines for new funding priorities are published:

On the German Federal Gazette publication platform:  
→ http://publikations-plattform.de

On the BMBF website:  
→ www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/677.php

On the website of the Project Management Agency at the German Aerospace Center:  
→ http://pt-dlr-gsk.de

Contact for EU funding in the humanities and social sciences

To strengthen social sciences, economics and humanities in the context of EU funding and create synergies with national funding, on behalf of the BMBF, the National Contact Point for the Humanities and Socioeconomic Sciences and Humanities (Nationale Kontaktsstelle Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Geisteswissenschaften, NKS SWG) provides information and advice to researchers in these subjects about European funding programmes and application procedures. NKS SWG also coordinates NET4SOCIETY, the EU-funded network of National Contact Points.

National Contact Point for the Socioeconomic Sciences and Humanities  
→ www.nks-swg.de
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