

Federal Ministry of Education and Research
Call for Proposals under the Federal Government's Strategy
for the Internationalization of Science and Research
Regulations governing the funding programme "International Cooperation in Education and Research – The Central, Eastern and South Eastern European Region"
8 July 2016

1 Funding purpose and legal basis

1.1 Funding purpose

Cooperation in education and research with Central and Eastern European and with South Eastern European countries is marked by the expansion of the European Education and Research Area, the Innovation Union and the extension and integration of the European Union (EU).

Against this background, the target countries of this call for proposals are

- the EU Member States Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia,
- the official EU accession candidates Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, and
- the potential EU accession candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Kosovo.

The current formats of cooperation are intended to strengthen the international and European focus of German institutions in the field of education and research and to improve their competitiveness. By focussing on key topics of mutual interest – particularly in subject areas that are addressed in the Federal Government's High-Tech Strategy (www.hightech-strategie.de) and in the priority areas of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020 – cooperation at European level is to be expanded. In this context, the BMBF¹ Programme "International Cooperation in Education and Research – Central, Eastern and South Eastern European Region" is making an important contribution to reaching the aims of the Federal Government's Strategy for the Internationalization of Science and Research (<http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/Internationalisierungsstrategie.pdf>) as well as the aims of the Federal Government's Strategy for the European Research Area (ERA, https://www.bmbf.de/pub/Strategy_of_the_Federal_Government_on_the_European_Research_Area.pdf).

¹ Federal Ministry of Education and Research

This BMBF programme provides financial resources for projects to prepare proposals and applications for funding under the thematic priorities of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020 and other research-relevant EU programmes. This includes projects which support the partner countries in making use of EU structural funds for research purposes and to thereby enable them to cooperate and compete in both the European and international research area. International links are to be created along the entire value-added chain in order to support technology transfer and innovation. Participation by companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)², in the R&D³ consortia is therefore expressly desired.

1.2 Legal basis

Project grants will be awarded in accordance with these funding regulations, the BMBF's standard terms and conditions for grants on expenditure or cost basis and the administrative regulations under sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO). There is no legal entitlement to a grant. The funding provider will take a decision after due assessment of the circumstances and within the framework of the budget funds available.

Where such grants represent aid within the meaning of Article 107 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, these constitute "de minimis" aid. The awarding of such aid is governed by the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid (OJ L 352 of 24 December 2013, p. 1) as amended.

De minimis aid must not exceed €200,000 (or €100,000 in road freight transport) over any period of three fiscal years. Cumulation of aid with other state aid to cover the same costs eligible for aid is only permissible to an amount which does not exceed the relevant ceilings for aid intensity or the aid amount that have been set for individual cases in a block exemption regulation or decision of the Commission.

The de minimis statement included with the grant award document must be kept for ten years,

² According to the EU's definition of SMEs: The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises consists of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 people and which have either an annual turnover not exceeding €50 million, or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding €43 million. Within this category, the following definitions apply: Small enterprises are defined as enterprises which employ fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed €10 million. Micro enterprises are defined as enterprises which employ fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed €2 million. In general, most SMEs are autonomous since they are either completely independent or have one or more minority partnerships (each less than 25%) with other enterprises. If that holding rises to no more than 50%, the relationship is deemed to be between partner enterprises. Above that ceiling, the enterprises are linked.

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/sme_user_guide_de.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index_en.htm

³ Research and Development

- produced at the request of the European Commission, a federal or *Land* authority or the funding authority within one week or a longer period specified in the request. Should the statement not be produced within this period, the award can be revoked and the funds reclaimed,
- submitted with a future application for de minimis aid as evidence of de minimis aid already granted. Undertakings which are subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid illegal and incompatible with the common market are ineligible for individual aid.

2 Object of funding

Funding is provided for the preparation of applications for R&D projects which address the thematic areas of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020 (<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/>) and other relevant EU funding programmes.

The preparation of applications for R&D projects is a two-phase process:

The aim of the first funding phase is the establishment or development of bi- or multilateral project partnerships. In addition, the project consortium is expected to identify EU calls for proposals to which it intends to submit an application for funding.

The aim of the second funding phase is the completion and submission of the application.

2.1 Horizon 2020

The topics addressed in Horizon 2020 include those in the area of "Societal Challenges" (<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/societal-challenges>):

- Health, demographic change and well-being
- Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research
- Secure, clean and efficient energy
- Smart, green and integrated transport
- Climate protection, resource efficiency and raw materials
- Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies
- Secure societies

Work done as preparation of applications for cross-border and project-based "Innovative Training Networks" (ITN) and for "Research and Innovation Staff Exchanges" (RISE) under Marie Skłodowska-Curie measures is also eligible for funding.

Furthermore, proposals may also be submitted for funding of preparatory measures in the individual funding lines of the framework programme's "Industrial leadership" pillar. The funding line for "Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies" (key technologies) covers the areas of information and communication technologies, nanotechnology, advanced materials, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing and processing.

Funding for preparatory measures in the areas of advanced manufacturing and processing is restricted to the following target countries listed under No. 1.1 above: Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Estonia. Such preparatory measures should also be aimed at Public Private Partnership (PPP) in "Technologies for Factories of the Future (FoF)". Preparatory activities for planned measures under Horizon 2020 to close the innovation gap in Europe are also eligible for funding. Specifically, these are measures which pursue the 'widening participation' approach to develop capacities for excellent research in less research- and innovation-intensive regions. These capacities involve infrastructure and staff, cooperation between science and industry, and professional research and innovation management.

2.2 European territorial cooperation (INTERREG)

Funding is also provided for preparatory activities associated with applications submitted to research and innovation-relevant programmes under the European territorial cooperation (INTERREG) initiative. These should focus in particular on the interface between the priorities of national and regional smart specialization strategies, the fields of action of the Federal Government's High-Tech Strategy and – in so far as it is relevant – the priorities of the EU strategies for the Baltic Sea region (<http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/>) and the Danube region (<http://www.danube-region.eu/>).

2.3. Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)

Measures in preparation of the submission of proposals under relevant priority areas of the Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) (http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/overview/index_en.htm) are eligible for funding if they correspond to the funding purpose and the target countries of this call (see 1.1) and if they enable cooperation with German applicants through complementary measures (e.g. in the IPA component "Cross-Border Cooperation").

3 Funding recipients

Recipients of funding may be commercial companies that are active in Germany, and particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) - as well as other institutions which provide contributions to research and fulfil the funding purpose and funding prerequisites, as well as higher education institutions or non-university research institutions. Research institutions which receive

joint basic funding from the Federal Government and the *Länder* can only be granted project funding supplementary to their basic funding for additional expenditure under certain preconditions.

4 Prerequisites for funding

Funding will only be provided for proposals that have high potential for realization and success in line with the objectives of this call.

Each consortium must include at least three institutions eligible for funding: In addition to the German party, the consortium must consist of at least one partner from a target country listed in No. 1.1 of this call and at least one further partner from another EU-28 state, or a state which is associated with the Horizon 2020 programme (http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm). Further partners from EU-28 states and associated states may be involved.

Applicants are advised to familiarize themselves with the European programmes identified in 2.1 - 2.3. They should check whether the intended project includes specific European components which make it eligible for EU funding. The result of such checks should be described briefly in the national application for funding.

5 Type, scope and rates of funding

Funds will be awarded in the form of non-repayable project grants.

Grants for universities, research institutions and similar establishments will be calculated on the basis of the eligible project-related expenditure (grants for Helmholtz centres and the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft (FhG) will be calculated on the basis of the project-related costs eligible for funding), up to 100% of which can be covered in individual cases.

Grants for commercial companies will be calculated on the basis of the eligible project-related costs, up to 50% of which can as a rule be covered by government grants, depending on the project's relevance to application. The BMBF's policy requires an appropriate self-contribution of at least 50% towards the eligible costs incurred.

The European Commission's Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development must be taken into account when determining the rates of funding. The Community Framework allows a differentiated bonus arrangement for collaborative projects and SMEs, which may result in a higher rate of funding.

As a rule, German institutions that are eligible for funding can receive up to €80,000 for at least 12 months up to a maximum period of 24 months. The funding period consists of two consecutive funding phases of up to twelve months each. Applications for funding cover both phases. Awarded funding is made available for the second phase upon successful conclusion of the first funding phase and a positive evaluation of the prospects of success of the second project phase.

The following are envisaged as eligible expenditures/costs for grant funding:

a) Project participant exchange:

The following conditions apply for the funding of travel costs for German project participants:

The costs for one round-trip journey (in economy class for air travel) and the per diem expenditures of German experts to the project partner's site in the target countries listed in No. 1.1 are eligible for funding. Per diem consists of a fixed rate of €94 per day for accommodation and meals.

In addition, the expenditures/costs for project-related domestic travel which is incurred by German project partners are eligible for funding.

The following conditions apply for the funding of travel costs for foreign project participants:

Per diem allowances and expenditures/costs for project-related travel within Germany by foreign experts from the countries listed in No. 1.1 are covered as follows: Visits to Germany will normally be funded for a maximum period of 2 months per year by the German funding provider with a fixed rate of €104 per day or €2,300 per month (where stays last between 23 and 31 days). A per diem rate of €77 will be provided for individual additional days in a subsequent month. The day of arrival and day of departure are counted as one day.

Contributions to health insurance and, if applicable, other types of insurance are included in this allowance and must be paid by the grant recipients themselves.

b) Non-cash resources:

Project-related grants for non-cash resources (such as expendables, appliances, phone and office supplies, transport, literature, rent, orders etc.) can be provided to a limited extent in duly substantiated exceptional cases.

c) Workshops:

Workshops with known partners or aimed at opening up new potential for cooperation may receive the following support:

With regard to the organization of bi- or multilateral workshops in Germany, grants can be provided towards expenses such as the accommodation of the foreign guests, transfers within Germany, hospitality and rental of venues. The exact amount of the grant depends on the size of the event and the number of foreign guests. In such cases, no per diem allowances (see a) above) will be provided.

Costs and expenditures for events which take place in the target countries named in No. 1.1 above may, in special well-founded cases, also be funded.

d) Personnel costs/expenses:

Project-related staff costs incurred on the German side for student assistants, administrators and/or scientific staff can be funded for a total of up to eight person-months (full-time), with remuneration generally commensurate with up to salary grade TVöD EG 13.

In general, the costs of standard basic equipment such as office material, communications, laboratory and IT equipment can not be covered.

The provision of further funding for foreign project participants by the competent funding agencies in the countries specified in No. 1.1 above is desired.

6. Other terms and conditions for funding

The Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Kostenbasis (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds provided on a Cost Basis) (NKBF98) will be part of the notification of award for grants on a cost basis.

The Allgemeine Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen zur Projektförderung (General Auxiliary Conditions for Grants provided for Projects on an Expenditure Basis) (ANBest-P) and the Besondere Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen des BMBF zur Projektförderung auf Ausgabenbasis (Special Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds provided by the BMBF for the Promotion of Projects on an Expenditure Basis) (BNBest-BMBF98) will form part of the notification of award of grants on an expenditure basis.

7. Procedure

7.1 Involvement of the International Bureau and request for documents

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has commissioned the International Bureau with processing the funding measures:

Internationales Büro des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung (IB)
im Projektträger beim Deutschen Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. (DLR)
Heinrich-Konen-Str. 1
53227 Bonn
Internet: <http://www.internationales-buero.de>

The respective contact persons are:

Scientific officer at the International Bureau:

Dr. Hans-Peter Niller
Phone: +49(0)228-3821-1468
Fax: +49(0)228-3821-1490
E-mail: hans-peter.niller@dlr.de

Christian Schache

Phone: +49(0)228-3821-1465
Fax: +49(0)228-3821-1490
E-mail: christian.schache@dlr.de

Administrative contact at the International Bureau:

Derya Manda
Phone: +49(0)228-3821-1896
Fax: +49(0)228-3821-1490
E-mail: derya.manda@dlr.de

Potential applicants are advised to contact the responsible body for advice on writing their proposals. Further information and explanations will be made available.

7.2 Submission of formal funding applications and decision-making procedure

The procedure consists of two phases.

7.2.1 Submission and selection of project proposals

In the first phase, draft proposals are to be submitted in German or English within this call which will be permanently open until **29 December 2017**, using the electronic system pt(outline* (<https://www.pt-it.de/ptoutline/application/RA2014>). If the project outline is prepared in English, it must be accompanied by a summary in German language.

The submission of a project proposal does not lead to a legal claim for funding.

The draft proposal should be structured as follows:

Part A.) These data fields are regular components of all calls for proposals and are entered in an internet form.

A.I Information for administrative purposes

A.II Financial overview

Part B.) An individual, call-specific project description, with the following structure:

B.I Title

B.II Contact details of the project coordinator

B.III Contact details of further project partners

B.IV Content summary of the planned activity

B.V Definition of the objectives to be achieved within the first phase of this measure (building or developing the project consortium), and description of the excellence and originality of the project and - if already possible - identification of those European research programmes which may be used for the planned follow-up after the first funding phase

B.VI Experience in research management / coordination of international projects and a brief overview of the current state of scientific knowledge and previous work / research for the project topic

B.VII Description of existing contacts and cooperation with the target countries in the region

B.VIII Information on the research and innovation potential of potential partners in the partner countries

B.IX Medium and long-term effectiveness of the proposed measures in terms of the objectives of this call for proposals

B.X Detailed work plan and timetable and, if necessary, division of labour and cooperation with existing and potential partners

B.XI Structured financing plan with details of the applicants' own resources and financing, divided into the two phases of funding, as well as the permissible types and rates of funding (see also 5, a - e.)

B.XII Measures to protect intellectual property / IPR

B.XIII Suggestions for the evaluation of the proposed activities

B.IV Need for project support

B.XV Gantt chart

The project description (Part B) can be uploaded as a PDF document on pt(outline*.

The project outline provides the basis for the scientific and specific evaluation of the project. The project description should therefore contain comprehensive evidence for all items (see structure for project description above). The description should not exceed 10 pages.

The German coordinator has to add to his grant application at least one letter of intent to cooperate from a foreign partner institution in the target countries mentioned in point 1.1.

In case of technical questions regarding the internet-based application pt(outline* (but not regarding the content of the call for proposals), please contact the:

Projekträger beim Deutschen Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. (DLR)

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Heinrich-Konen-Straße 1

53227 Bonn

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E-mail: PT-Outline_IB@dlr.de

Received applications for funding will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Compliance with the specified key content and compliance with the prescribed formal requirements
- Plausibility and potential for success of the overall concept
- Initiation of new partnerships and development and expansion of existing project consortia
- Technical and administrative expertise of the German applicant to lead the envisaged project consortium
- Plausibility and feasibility of the methodology and the work plan and timetable
- Research and innovation potential of the possible partners in the partner countries
- Relevant connections of the applicant with the desired partner countries

- Involvement of companies in the R&D networks, in particular SMEs: Willingness to cooperate within the consortium over the period of the project
- Benefits of the proposed measures from the German perspective, as well as medium and long-term effectiveness concerning the funding phases
- Success of the project with regard to funding under a European funding programme

Funding decisions will be made after a final review of the applications based on the evaluation criteria mentioned above. Applicants will be informed in writing of the result of the selection process.

The applicant has no legal claim to the return of a submitted project outline.

7.2.2 Submission and selection of formal applications

In the second phase, applicants whose draft proposals have been evaluated positively will be invited to submit - in coordination with the designated project coordinator- a formal application for funding on which a decision will be taken after a final evaluation. To draft formal applications for funding, applicants must use the web-based application system "easy-online" (in case of a positive assessment, applicants will be provided with the link automatically). Guidelines, instructions, information and supplementary provisions can be found under

https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare&formularschrank=mbf&menue=block

or can be obtained directly from the project management organization.

In all cases, it is essential that the formal application includes at least a German summary of the project description in accordance with the terms and conditions concerning grants on the basis of expenditure or cost.

The approval, disbursement and accounting for the funds as well as the evidence of an examination of their use and, if necessary, revocation of the award and the recovery of the funds are governed by the administrative regulations pertaining to Section 44 BHO and Sections 48 to 49a Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz (VwVfG) (Administrative Procedure Act), unless deviation is permitted under the present funding regulations.

8. Entry into force

These funding regulations will enter into force on the date of their publication in the Bundesanzeiger (Federal Gazette). They replace the funding regulations dated 3 November 2014 (BAanz AT 03.11.2015 B5)

Bonn, 8 July 2016

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Dr. Matthias Hack

Head of Division

Cooperation with European Countries, Israel