



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

Innovative Hochschule

An initiative by the German Federal and *Länder* governments to promote the research-based transfer of ideas, knowledge and technology



Foreword

There is enormous, as yet unused innovation potential at the interfaces between higher education institutions and the players in their region. It is a potential which should be tapped and exploited. We advance higher education institutions (*Hochschulen*) and regional innovative strength through reciprocal processes of exchange and transfer of knowledge and ideas between the two sides.

The “Innovative Hochschule” joint funding measure of the Federal Government and the *Länder* aims to build on this innovative strength that emerges as a result of the networks, interaction and participation of and among different players. Whether it is health care, climate change mitigation or digital transformation – “Innovative Hochschule” is a worthwhile investment in Germany’s future!

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Third Mission: New goals for higher education institutions

Research and teaching are the core responsibilities and missions of higher education institutions. Nowadays, however, the transfer of ideas, knowledge and technology – often referred to as their “third mission” – has become a part of the portfolio of nearly every university and of universities of applied sciences in particular. The idea of transfer in this context is broad-based and assumed to be reciprocal. Higher education institutions provide access to knowledge at regional level in innovative transfer formats aimed at specific target groups. In exchange, they acquire information about the needs of businesses in their respective region. This results in more effective and creative solutions to the current and future challenges facing industry and society. In addition to technological solutions, these challenges call for social, cultural and education-related innovations.

Who is eligible for funding?

All state-funded and state-recognized institutions of higher education are eligible for funding as are small and mid-size universities which are funded by the *Länder*. These institutions can submit proposals either on their own or as an alliance with a sound concept for a five-year project aimed at strengthening their strategic role for the region. A second round of the call for proposals is in the pipeline. Further information about the joint initiative by the Federal Government and the *Länder* is available at:

innovative-hochschule.de



How is funding provided?

Enhancing the transfer of ideas, knowledge and technology can be achieved in a number of ways. “Innovative Hochschule” targets strategic and structural measures, for example the establishment or enlargement of transfer agencies or the trialling of transfer instruments and methods in implementation projects. Funding is thus provided for new, innovative transfer approaches. The Federal Government and the *Länder* are co-funding the measure (Federal Government: 90%; host *Land*: 10%) in the period 2018–2027 with up to 550 million euros in two selection rounds of five years each.



What is eligible for funding?

Regional networks

There is great potential to be tapped by linking higher education institutions and regional partners which should benefit everyone, for example through sustainable urban development, educational innovations, forums for participation and innovation hubs.



Transfer development at higher education institutions

“Innovative Hochschule” institutions create new transfer-oriented structures or improve and professionalize their existing transfer instruments. These can range from incentive and motivation schemes to event management.



Technological innovation

As regional partners of industry and businesses, “Innovative Hochschule” institutions provide vital stimulus for technological solutions through the reciprocal transfer of ideas and knowledge which can originate from diverse fields of technology such as robotics, agriculture, biotechnology, energy technology and transportation.



Social innovation

In addition to technology-based innovation, social, cultural and educational innovations are developed to solve current and future challenges in business, industry and society.



Start-ups and entrepreneurship

To ensure that research outcome with commercialization potential is not filed away and forgotten, it is essential to maintain a close exchange between research, industry and society.





First round of funding: 2018–2022

A total of 168 higher education institutions submitted 118 project proposals for consideration in the first round of funding. Twenty-nine projects were selected for funding in which 48 designated “Innovative Hochschule” institutions have been collaborating since early 2018.

- The 48 innovative institutions include 35 universities of applied sciences, one music and arts college and 12 universities and universities of education.
- Ten of the 29 projects are research collaborations involving the participation of two to five institutions.
- Other project participants are the more than 30 direct partners, which also receive funding, and what now numbers more than 1,000 associated partners – and counting.
- The overall funding volume allocated for the first round is a sum of up to 270 million euros.

Many of the “Innovative Hochschule” institutions focus on trialling and implementing innovative transfer instruments and formats. These range from living labs, co-working spaces and citizen science projects to more unusual formats like concerts in uncommon venues, dialogue forums in museums and an array of innovative, digital presentation and meeting formats. Ad-hoc support measures have been introduced to cope with the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. They have frequently demonstrated that many of the innovative instruments and formats of the “Innovative Hochschule” institutions offer an excellent basis for coping with such challenges.

Published by

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung/
Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
Division: Universities of Applied Sciences
53170 Bonn
Germany

August 2020

Edited by

Projektträger Jülich (PtJ), Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH

Layout

Projektträger Jülich (PtJ), Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH

Photo credits

Cover and p. 3: Projektträger Jülich (PtJ),
Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH

p. 5: Hochschule Landshut

Icons: Projektträger Jülich (PtJ), Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH

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