

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Call within the framework of the Federal Government's Strategy for the Internationalization of Science and Research

Regulations governing the "Establishment and Expansion of Joint Research Structures in Europe" funding programme

15 December 2014

1 Funding purpose and legal basis

1.1 Funding purpose

Cooperation with Central and Eastern European as well as South Eastern European countries in the field of education, research and innovation is characterized by the further development of the European Education and Research Area, the Innovation Union and the enlargement and consolidation of the European Union (EU).

The call aims to support research institutions, universities and (research-performing) companies from Germany in exploiting knowledge and innovation potential in less research intensive European regions and assuming a leading role in cooperation with partners from the target regions. This will also improve the latter's prospects for cooperation in the European Research Area and narrow the innovation gap within Europe. The target countries of this call are

the EU Member States Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia

and the official EU accession countries Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The aim is to help German institutions benefit as strategic partners from access to research capacities and centres of excellence that have been or are being newly established in the regions. Knowledge and technology transfer between German institutions and partners in the above listed countries is expected to strengthen economic cooperation between innovation stakeholders and open up new market prospects for Germany in the long term.

The call assists the implementation of BMBF¹ initiatives with these countries. It supplements existing instruments by adding a focus on the structural component of cooperation.

Furthermore, it supports the EU's research and innovation policy efforts, particularly with regard to strengthening the prospects of less research intensive regions for cooperation in the European

¹ BMBF =Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Research Area, thus increasing its overall performance and participation in excellence-driven European and international research and innovation activities².

1.2 Legal basis

Project grants will be awarded in accordance with the present funding regulations, the BMBF's standard terms and conditions for grants on an 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 funding. The funding provider will decide freely after due assessment of the circumstances and within the limits of the available budget funds.

2 Object of funding

Funding will be provided for:

- the development or intensification of structural and institutional collaborations of German universities, research institutions and research-performing companies with partner institutions in the target countries listed under 1.1 in the field of joint research and innovation with a focus on symmetrical institute-institute collaboration
- the establishment of sustainable cooperation of German universities, research institutions, clusters and networks with those regions in the specified target countries which already have or are able to develop structures or capacities for excellent research and innovation. These target regions should have a Smart Specialisation Strategy in place (<http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/de>). Market potential is also expected to be exploited for German institutions in the medium term if SMEs are involved.

Participation by companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)³, in the R&D⁴ consortia is expressly desired. If SMEs are involved in collaborative projects, there must be evidence showing that they play a central role in the achievement of the project goal.

3 Funding recipients

² In particular the Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation programme lines of Horizon 2020 (<http://www.horizont2020.de/einstieg-verbretung.htm>)

³ In accordance with 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

⁴ R&D = Research & Development

Recipients of funding may be commercial companies that are active in Germany – particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – as well as other institutions which fulfil the funding purpose and funding prerequisites, as well as universities 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 on top of 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.

Cooperation between the partners must be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The partners must demonstrate that they have reached fundamental agreement before a funding decision is taken.

In their own interest, applicants should familiarize themselves with the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, in the context of the envisaged national project. They should check whether the intended project includes specific European components which make it eligible for exclusive EU funding. Furthermore, applicants should check whether an additional application for funding can be submitted to the EU in the context of the proposed national project and whether participation in an EU funding initiative will be possible after the conclusion of the project. The result of such checks is to 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 and science 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.

German institutions eligible for funding can, as a rule, be funded for a maximum period of 24 months. Maximum amounts of €120,000⁵ will be provided per project. Collaborative projects with major SME involvement will receive funding of up to €140,000⁶ per project.

The project period can be extended for up to one extra year in special justified cases. Such cases include the preparation of projects of applied research and innovation under Horizon 2020. Maximum amounts of €60,000⁷ or, if SMEs are involved, €70,000⁸ per project will be granted for this additional funding period.

The funding provider assumes that cooperation will have been lastingly established on a self-financing basis and continued operation of the joint research structure will be possible upon conclusion of the project period.

As a rule, grants may be awarded to cover the following eligible expenditure/costs:

- a) Grants towards non personnel related costs/expenditure incurred e.g. for the establishment of networking/communication platforms, notary involvement in the establishment of a title to the research structure, preparation of feasibility studies.
- b) Grants towards personnel costs/expenditure, that is, project-related costs/expenditure on student, administrative and/or research staff (as a rule up to the TVöD 13 salary grade).
- c) Grants towards the costs of events in Germany and/or the target countries (e.g. technical equipment, catering, rental of premises, accommodation of participants, transfer within the host country). No additional per diem (see d) below) will be paid to project participants taking part in the event.
- d) Exchange of project participants:

- The following applies to funding for expenditure/costs incurred for travel by German project participants:

Funding is provided for travel by German experts to and from the project partner's location in the target countries specified under 1.1 (if by air: economy class) and for their subsistence expenses in these countries. A standard rate of €82 per day⁹ resp.

⁵ (plus 20% flat-rate grant per project for universities and teaching hospitals)

⁶ (plus 20% flat-rate grant per project for universities and teaching hospitals)

⁷ (plus 20% flat-rate grant per project for universities and teaching hospitals)

⁸ (plus 20% flat-rate grant per project for universities and teaching hospitals)

⁹ when traveling to Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia and Poland

€94 per day¹⁰ will be paid for accommodation and meals. Furthermore, funding is provided to cover the expenditure/costs incurred by German project partners for project-related local travel. The day of arrival and day of departure are counted as one day.

- The following applies to funding for expenditure/costs incurred for travel by foreign project participants:

Per diem and funding to cover expenditure/costs incurred for project-related local travel by foreign experts from the target countries listed under 1.1 visiting Germany are provided as follows: Visits to Germany will normally be funded for a maximum period of two months per year by the German funding provider who will pay a fixed rate of €104 per day or €2,300 per month (where stays last between 23 and 31 days). An amount of €77 will be paid for each additional day in a subsequent month. The day of arrival and day of departure are counted as one day.

- This standard rate is understood to include contributions to health insurance and any other types of insurance so that grant recipients may be required to pay their own contributions.

- e) Higher education institutions (public and private) and university hospitals (regardless of the legal form) may apply for an additional fixed project grant of 20% of the grant lump sum for research projects when the estimated overall budget comprises federal funding for personnel, awards of contracts, leases, and computer costs and / or investments.

Expenditure on usual basic equipment including office materials and communication and on laboratory and IT equipment is generally not covered or funded.

The provision of further funding for foreign project participants by the competent funding agencies in the countries specified under 1.1 is desirable.

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.

¹⁰ when traveling to Albania, Estonia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Hungary

The Allgemeinen Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen zur Projektförderung (General Auxiliary Conditions for Grants provided for Projects on an Expenditure Basis) (ANBest-P) and the Besonderen 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:

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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 stages.

7.2.1 Submission and selection of project proposals

In the first stage, draft proposals are to be submitted in German or English until 20.03.2015 (12.00 ME), using the electronic system PT-Outline (<https://www.pt-it.de/ptoutline/application/COMSTRUC>). 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 Description of the excellence and the originality of the proposed measures

B.VI Definition of the objectives to be achieved

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

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

B.X Description of the roles and tasks of the partners within the proposed measures

B.XI Description of the additional benefit of the co-operation

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

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

B.XIV 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

B.XV Measures to protect intellectual property / IPR

B.XVI Suggestions for the evaluation of the proposed activities

B.XVII Need for project support

B.XVIII 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 in the call for proposals), please contact:

The Projektträger at the Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. (DLR)

Thorsten Krämer / Horst Leiser

Heinrich-Konen-Straße 1

53227 Bonn

Phone: +49(0) 228 3821 2040

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
- Excellence and the originality of the proposed measures
- Professional and administrative expertise as well as research and innovation potential of all partners

- Initiating new partnerships and developing and deepening existing project consortia (In case of initiation of new partnerships with regions also: Strategies of Smart Specialisation in the target region)
- Results and expected impact of the project
- Benefits of the proposed measures from the German perspective
- Medium and long-term effectiveness of the cooperation as well as ensuring the sustainability of the cooperation
- Additional benefit of the envisaged co-operation
- Differentiation to resp. ties to measures under a European funding programme
- Plausibility and feasibility of the methodology, the work plan and timetable and the financial breakdown of costs

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 outlines.

7.2.2 Submission and selection of formal applications

In the second stage, 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=bmbf&menue=block

or can be obtained directly from the project management organisation.

With reference to the formal request, at the minimum a summary of the project description in German language in accordance with the "Guidelines for grant applications on an expenditure basis" or "Guidelines for grant applications on a cost basis" is mandatory.

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 §44 BHO and §§48 to 49a Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz (VwVfG)

(Administrative Procedure Act), unless deviations from these regulations are permitted under the present funding guidelines.

8. Entry into force

These funding regulations will enter into force on the date of their publication in the Bundesanzeiger (Federal Gazette).

Bonn, 15 December 2014

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

On behalf of

Dr. Matthias Hack

Director

Cooperation with European Countries, Israel