Writing a DFG Proposal
Individual Grants and Priority Programmes

Dr. Simon Jörres, E-Mail: simon.joerres@dfg.de, Phone: 0228/885-2971
Anja Kleefuß, E-Mail: anja.kleefuss@dfg.de, Phone: 0228/885-2293
1 | The DFG – About Us

2 | Individual Grants

3 | Priority Programmes

4 | General Advice

5 | Links and Resources
The DFG – About Us

- The DFG is the largest **independent** and self-governing research **funding organisation** in Germany.

- It is an **association** under German private law.

- It serves all branches of science and the humanities by **funding research projects**.

- Mandates: facilitate national and international **cooperation** among researchers, provide scientific **policy advice**, promote **gender equality**, encourage advancement and training of **early career researchers**.
Research Funding in 2019
by Programme

Amount of research funding awarded by programme for 2019 (in €m and %)

- Infrastructure funding: 210.1 (6.4%)
- Prizes, other: 55.1 (1.7%)
- Individual grants programme: 1,215.1 (37.0%)
- Research Units: 169.2 (5.1%)
- Collaborative Research Centres: 796.7 (24.2%)
- Priority Programmes: 229.2 (7.0%)
- Research Training Groups: 223.4 (6.8%)
- Excellence Strategy: 204.4 (6.2%)
- Excellence Initiative: 168.0 (5.1%)
- Research Centres: 14.4 (0.4%)
- Prizes, other: 55.1 (1.7%)
Researchers

► who have completed their scientific training, i.e. who hold a doctorate and
► who (would like to) work in Germany.

For questions on eligibility:
verfahren-nachwuchs@dfg.de
Phone: +49 (0)228 885-3008
Funding Principles

► Open, bottom-up choice of **research topics**

► **Basic research** in any field of science and the humanities

► **No age** restrictions

► Individual **career phases** and family-related career breaks are considered in the review process

► **No deadlines***

---

* excl. Priority Programmes, international calls etc.
1 | The DFG – About Us

2 | Individual Grants

3 | Priority Programmes

4 | General Advice

5 | Links and Resources
Individual Grants offer you an opportunity to pursue your research project in Germany with a clearly defined topic and duration, regardless of the subject.

Funding generally for up to three years.

Flexible funding modules:
- staff
- consumables
- travel
- instrumentation
- publication funding
- public relations
- …
- module »Temporary Position for Principal Investigators« E13-E14 TVöD/TV-L (your host institution becomes your employer)

Success Rates: ~30 %
Proposal Requirements
Fulfil Review Criteria According to International Standards

► Quality of the Project / Qualification of the Applicant
  ● **Originality**, expected advancement of knowledge (also in relation to costs)
  ● Scientific significance (in its own field and/or across different fields)
  ● Soundness of the preliminary work, **quality of publications**

► Working Environment / Scientific Environment

► Objectives and Work Programme
  ● **Clear working hypotheses**
  ● Reasonable limitation of the topic
  ● Appropriateness of the methods
  ● **Feasibility**, particularly with respect to the proposed timeframe
Submitting Your Proposal via elan

For SPP 2364: Register until December 1, 2021
Review Process in the Individual Grants Programme

1. Proposal
   - formal examination
   - reviewer selection

2. Written Reviews
   - Reviewers
     - project quality
     - applicants’ qualifications
     - aims and work programme
     - working environment
     - grant budget

3. Draft of funding recommendation
   - Assessment
     - Review Board
     - assessment of reviewer selection
     - proposal and reviews
     - comparative merit and funding volume

4. Communication of funding recommendation
   - Decision
     - Joint Committee
     - cross-subject comparison

5. Notification
   - decision letter with reviewers' comments

Inquiries

DFG Head Office

Writing a DFG Proposal

10/18/2021
Writing a DFG Proposal
Priority Programmes
Funding Scheme: Purpose, Requirements

► Purpose

● To advance knowledge in an emerging field of research through the use of new methods and networking

● To bring about added value through interdisciplinary cooperation

► Requirements

● Novelty of the proposed topic both in Germany and in an international context

● Clear short- and medium-term objectives

● Synergy: Concept and resources to facilitate collaboration

● Measures to promote early career researchers and equal opportunities

● International involvement and visibility
Priority Programme
Funding Scheme: Selection Procedure

➤ Topical Selection Procedure

● Annual submission deadline for proposals to establish Priority Programmes
  ● Typical annual number of proposals: 60 to 80

● Comparative review by members of the DFG Standing Review Boards

● Decision by Senate of DFG
  ● Typical annual number of established Priority Programmes: 12 to 15
  ● Typical budget: 2.0 €m to 2.5 €m per annum

➤ Call for Proposals and Review

● Submission of individual proposals
  ● Typical percentage of oversubscription: 300 % to 500 %

● Oral review or written reviews

➤ Funding of the individual proposals
Priority Programme
Special Review Criteria for Individual Proposals in a PP

► Standard review criteria
  ● **Scientific quality** according to international standards for Individual Grants

► Additionally: Matching the call’s topical requirements
  ● Potential and intention to **significantly contribute** to the Priority Programmes scientific goals
  ● Solid **cooperations**
The Review Process

Reviewer selection

Protocol, funding recommendation

Decision letter, Reviewers' recommendations

Proposal

Review
(Peer review panel)
Reviewers

- Project quality
- Applicants' qualifications
- Quality and added value of cooperation
- Programme-specific criteria
- Aims & work programme
- Employment opportunities
- Planned allocation of funding

Decision
Decision-making Body

- Cross-subject comparison

Notification

DFG Head Office

Discussion

confidential
1 | The DFG – About Us
2 | Individual Grants
3 | Priority Programmes
4 | General Advice
5 | Links and Resources
General Advice for Your Research Career

► Develop your own and independent research profile
► Publish independently (or with various researchers)
► Be mobile and find the best environment for your research
► Build networks of collaboration partners
Preparing Your Proposal

► Start with smaller projects
► Carefully read and follow the guidelines and proposal instructions
  → Necessary information can be found on the DFG website
► Questions? Ask for help
► Put yourself in reviewers’ shoes
► Seek honest criticism from colleagues
► Plan on a feasible timeline: on average, time to decision is over six months
► Decide on proposal language: English or German (if not determined by call)
► Communicate openly with DFG Head Office staff
Preparation Your CV

- Clear structure
- Include prizes, fellowships and awards
- Mention time away from research relating
  For Applications Relating to Special Personal Circumstances / Hardship Applications see DFG-Form 73.01
- List up to ten of your most important publications
Grant Budget

- No upper limits
- Needs to be realistic and justified by the project
- Supplemental, project-specific needs vs. existing resources at the higher education institution
- Seek advice from other grant applicants, recipients, institutions
- Information on staff amounts provided on the DFG website
10 Golden Rules for Submitting a Proposal

1. The proposal follows the guidelines and instructions and does not exceed the maximum length.

2. The proposal is clear, precise, well structured and understandable even to a non-expert audience.

3. The project idea is original and contributes considerably to our understanding of scientific questions.

4. The scientific aims are focused on central questions and hypotheses.

5. The descriptions of the current state of research are up to date and relate directly to the project’s objectives.
6. The preliminary work and personal track record reflect the qualifications and academic/scientific independence of the applicant.

7. The work programme is clear and follows a realistic timeline.

8. The methods are tailored to address the issues at hand.

9. The proposed budget is consistent with the work programme.

10. Information relevant to the proposal, such as unpublished manuscripts and written agreements with significant cooperation partners, are included.
If Your Proposal Is Not Successful…

► Don’t be discouraged
► Take the reviewers’ comments seriously but not personally
► Consult the DFG Head Office if you need advice or feel that you have been treated unfairly
► Consider the reviewer’s comments – they might give you some pointers for reworking your proposal
Topics

1 | The DFG – About Us
2 | Individual Grants
3 | Priority Programmes
4 | General Advice
5 | Links and Resources
Links and Resources

▶ DFG funding programmes at a glance:
  www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes

▶ Advice for early-career researchers:
  www.dfg.de/research_careers

▶ DFG facts and figures:
  www.dfg.de/facts-figures

▶ GEPRIS – database with all DFG-funded projects:
  www.gepris.dfg.de/en

▶ GERiT – German research institutions:
  www.gerit.org/en

▶ General questions about research careers:
  info-nachwuchs@dfg.de

▶ Contacts:
  www.dfg.de/en/dfg_profile/head_office
For more information

► on the DFG: www.dfg.de
► on DFG-funded projects: www.dfg.de/gepris
► on over 25,000 German research institutes: www.gerit.org