

CALL

PIONEER PROJECTS – IMPETUS FOR THE GERMAN RESEARCH SYSTEM

Next Deadline: for preproposals twice p.a., 31 March and 31 October, respectively



All disciplines



Innovative pioneer projects for the (German) research system



Max. 500.000 EUR



Max. 3 years



PhD holders, professors and academic administrators at German universities and research institutes



1 OBJECTIVES

The Volkswagen Foundation aims to create experimental spaces for fundamental innovations and significant improvements in different areas of the (German) research system. To this end, the Foundation will fund promising ideas for pioneer projects from the research community.

With this funding offer, the foundation pursues the goal of influencing structures of the German research system to such an extent that

- the system becomes **more innovative**;
- **competition** and **cooperation** are balanced in the system;
- the system becomes more **resilient** and **adaptable** to current developments.

This funding offer addresses researchers and academic administrators who share these goals and who want to provide new impetus and shape structures with a focused pioneer project in a specific area of the German research system.

2 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The funding offer addresses active researchers who, in addition to their research activities, would like to explore a project idea for the further development (of a specific area) of the German research system, as well as academic administrators at research institutions in Germany. A project can relate to any aspect of the research system, such as the organisation of research, teaching, transfer, governance and administration. The project should pursue practical improvements; research projects are not eligible for funding. The Foundation expects that the knowledge gained during the projects is shared with interested stakeholders.

In addition to the **qualification** of the applicants for the implementation of the project as well as the **feasibility** of the project planning (including time and cost planning), the following **criteria** are important for the review of the proposals:

1. The project addresses an **existing desideratum or problem** in the (German) research landscape;
2. The project provides an impetus towards change, new structures are created or existing borders crossed;
3. The project is decisively novel;
4. The project can **continue without long-term support** from the Foundation and, ideally, be scaled up if successful. The actors directly relevant for upscaling should therefore be involved from the onset of the project.

3 WHAT WE OFFER

Researchers with a PhD, professors and academic administrators at research institutes and universities in Germany are eligible for funding.

The budget should be in the range of 50,000 to 500,000 EUR and appropriate to the proposed project. The chances of funding depend on the content of a project, not on its cost or size. The budget can include any type of staff positions, with the **exception** of personnel funds for the main applicants' own position and PhD positions, both of which cannot be applied for.

There are no other restrictions to the cost plan, as it is determined by the requirements of the project in question. The duration of the project also depends on the specific requirements - as a rule, the Foundation assumes that pioneer projects require a duration of between one and three years.

Both academic and non-academic cooperation partners may be involved in a project. However, a proposal must always have one main applicant who acts as coordinator and main contact for the Foundation.

4 APPLICATION AND TIMELINE

Projects will be recommended for funding after a two-stage selection process:

In the first stage, the submitted short proposals (deadline is given above) are assessed comparatively within the Foundation and a decision is made as to which projects will be invited to submit an application.

In the second stage, a jury of experts reviews the invited full proposals and recommends a subset of these for funding. The Board of Trustees of the Volkswagen Foundation decides on the funding based on the experts' recommendations.

Please note that the Volkswagen Foundation accepts and reviews projects ideas only once. Modified or revised versions of the same previously rejected project will not be accepted.

5 CHECKLIST AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

Please submit all documents via the Foundation's application portal by the respective deadline.

For the **preproposals** please use the template available on the Volkswagen Foundation website. This is the only document that must be submitted and will be reviewed at the first stage of the assessment process. You can write the preproposals in English or German.

If you are invited to submit a **full proposal**, please submit the following documents by the deadline communicated in the invitation:

- Summary in German (max. 1 page)
- Summary in English (max. 1 page)
- Main text of the proposal in English (max. 10 pages)
 - including impact strategy and strategy for continuation
 - Statement on why the project is not eligible for funding from other sources
- CV and list of publications of main applicant and further project members, if applicable
- Budget (as a table)
- Budget explanation
- Self-set goals including success criteria in a separate document (max. 2 pages)

Please be aware that all documents of the full proposal with the exception of the German summary must be submitted in English.

Contact

Dr. Oliver Grewe

Phone: +49 511 8381 252

Email: grewe@volkswagenstiftung.de

VolkswagenStiftung

Kastanienallee 35

30519 HANNOVER

GERMANY

Please inform yourself about the electronic application system of the Volkswagen Foundation prior to submitting your application. Information can be found in the document “Electronic Application System – Instructions and Tips”. Please also read the responses to the “Frequently Asked Questions” thoroughly as they are part of the call.