

German Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Guidelines for Funding Centres for Innovation Competence in the New Federal States

"Create Excellence – Foster Talent"

Module 2: Supporting Fast-track research groups

1. Purpose of funding, legal basis

According to its guidelines of 10 July 2002, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) supports the development of strategy concepts for the establishment of flexible, internationally efficient centres for innovation competence at selected locations in the new federal states (Module 1). Following this phase of drawing up concepts, it is intended to support scientists in realizing their interdisciplinary research projects independently in their own working group at these sites (Module 2). These research centres will thus be provided with additional scientific know-how, creative ideas will be implemented and the centres' international reputation will thus be further expanded.

The BMBF awards grants in support of projects for the above-mentioned purpose pursuant to these guidelines, to the BMBF's standard guidelines for grants on an expenditure and cost basis, and to the pertinent administrative rules and regulations (§ 44 BHO – Federal Budget Regulations). Applicants are not automatically entitled to receive a grant. The grant-awarding agency makes the decision after duly assessing the circumstances within the framework of the budget funds available.

2. Object of funding

At the centres for innovation competence, support will be given to fast-track research groups from various disciplines selected on the basis of a competition (see no. 7). The working groups are to deal with topics relating to the centres' special priorities.

3. Recipients of grants

Applications may be filed by public, non-profit-oriented universities, non-university research institutions and other comparable institutions in the new federal states, whose strategy concepts funded in Module 1 have been evaluated as being particularly promising by a panel of experts appointed by the BMBF.

4. Prerequisites for funding

A prerequisite for funding is that the host institution provides the respective fast-track research group at the centre for competence with the facilities required for implementing the project in accordance with the strategy concept (allocation of basic lab space and other infrastructure facilities) and assists the head of the group in all project-related matters. Another prerequisite is that the respective institution implements the strategy concept developed in Module 1 of this funding activity. Corresponding declarations by the host institution are to be attached to the applicant's project outline (see no. 7.2).

In their own interest, applicants should familiarize themselves with the EU RTD Framework Programme and verify whether the planned project has specific European components so that exclusive EU funding is possible. Furthermore, it should be verified whether, complementary to the national application, an application for funding can be filed with the EU. The result of such verification should be briefly described.

5. Type and scope, amount of the grant, other funding agencies

Non-repayable grants will be awarded for the fast-track research group projects selected by way of project funding for a period of up to five years.

The assessment basis for R&D projects is the eligible additional **expenditure** (in the case of Helmholtz Centres and the Fraunhofer Society the eligible additional costs), which can be funded up to 100 %.

Eligible per project is – depending on the technical outlay – the expenditure/cost on the basis of the standard guidelines for BMBF project funding, with the following special features:

- Staff (unless budgeted), as a rule, not more than seven posts in total:
 - one fast-track research group group leader
 - postdocs, PhD students,
 - technical staff,
 - one half-time position for management tasks of the fast-track research group (for planning and evaluations/controlling, budgeting, initiation of cooperation, patent strategy, assistance of scientists) as well as payments to employees.
- Expenditure on construction measures, large-scale investments, computer services and rents is not eligible.
- Contracts to third parties and external R&D services must not exceed 10 percent of the total eligible expenditure.
- During the project term, up to four project-related research stays of up to six months each can be applied for separately

- for members of the fast-track research group (except employees under collective agreements and students) abroad
- or research visits by foreign scientists and students to the respective centre for innovation competence.

The upper limit for eligible expenditure is governed by the regulations of the Federal Act on Travelling Expenses.

Additional staff expenditure by recipients of grants, which is predominantly financed from public funds, can be accepted as eligible under collective agreement regulations, provided that the employees concerned are not better off due to this expenditure than comparable federal employees.

The project-related activities and goals of a stay and the expected benefit for the centre should be explained in detail. As a general rule, a research visit to the centre by foreign students and scientists will only be funded, if

- they have not primarily lived in Germany in the two preceding years,
- their work and studies have focused on the thematic priorities of the centre in the two preceding years and
- students are not over 28 years of age.

A cumulation of funds of the activity *Create Excellence – Foster Talent, Module 2*, and of supporting funds from other Federal Government programmes for complementary financing within individual projects is not allowed. The extent to which projects can be jointly funded from other public sources depends on the legal form of the applicant and on the type of project and will be verified in each individual case.

6. Other terms and conditions for the awarding of grants

The General Conditions for Grants for the Promotion of Projects (ANBest-P) and the Specific Conditions for Grants from the BMBF for the Promotion of Projects on Expenditure Basis (BNBest-BMBF 98) will be an integral part of the notification of a grant.

The Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Grants on Cost Basis to Companies in Industry for R&D Projects (NKBF 98) will be an integral part of the notification of a grant.

7. Procedure

7.1. Engaging a project management organization

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research has entrusted Project Management Jülich with the implementation of the funding activity "Create Excellence – Foster Talent" at the following address:

Projekträger Jülich (PTJ) des BMBF und BMWA
Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH
Außenstelle Berlin
Wallstrasse 17-22
D-10179 Berlin
Tel : +49 (0)30 201 99 484
Fax: +49 (0)30 201 99 470
e-mail: e.tais@fz-juelich.de

Further information and instructions can be obtained there.

7.2 Application and decision-making procedure

The BMBF intends to also encourage suitable scientists through an international call for proposals. The selection procedure consists of two stages. First of all, applicants can post a project proposal and a personal application in German and English to the project management organization (no. 7.1), for which a deadline will be defined by BMBF in the individual case. The time limit for submitting applications is not a cut-off period. However, it may not be possible to consider project proposals received after the specified date. No legal claims can be derived from the submission of a project proposal.

Proposals can be submitted by a German or foreign scientist with a doctoral degree or *Habilitation* in agreement with the host university or institution. This scientist should not be older than 35. Applicants who have lived primarily in Germany in the two preceding years must provide evidence of a scientific activity abroad for at least two years.

An eligible project outline should contain the following information (exclusion criteria):

- I. name of the centre for innovation competence for which the application is filed;
- II. topic and overall scientific aim of the research project, which must be in the subject field characteristic of the centre;
- III. technical and scientific significance;
- IV. economic significance and market potential, if any;
- V. project goals in comparison to the current global state of the art;
- VI. the applicant's own previous work;
- VII. the methods to be applied;
- VIII. detailed description of the work plan and of the innovative approaches;
- IX. resource planning;
- X. time schedule and planned milestones;
- XI. prospects for success as well as scientific and economic exploitation possibilities of the expected projects results.

In addition, a complete list of the applicant's own publications and, if any, patents as well as an English summary of the project proposal not exceeding half a page should be submitted.

The **personal** part of the application should contain the following information (exclusion criteria):

- I. brief description of scientific career (CV from school leaving certificate up to the present);
- II. date of birth;
- III. present employment;
- IV. references;
- V. description of the scientist's own motivation (so-called "third aspect").

The project proposal (without the above supplementary information) should not comprise more than twenty pages, the personal part not more than five pages, and must be submitted in duplicate, unbound and in font size 12 written on one side (paper size DIN A4 or letter).

Depending on the number of applications received, the project proposals are first evaluated by an international jury together with representatives of the research institutions involved, Project Management Jülich (PTJ) and the BMBF (where necessary, drawing on external expert opinions) in a preliminary selection procedure.

Evaluation criteria – apart from an examination of the funding prerequisites – are above all

- the scientific originality and also the feasibility of the project,
- the applicants' qualifications and competence profile,
- the compatibility of the project with the profile of the centre for innovation competence,
- the penetration of the relevant scientific disciplines as well as the potential for innovation and the relevance for economic exploitation.

In the selection of proposals, attention is also paid to gender-specific aspects in the sense of gender mainstreaming accounted for in the individual criteria.

Applicants will always be informed about the evaluation results.

In case of a positive evaluation, the host university or institution will be requested to file a formal application in German in a second stage of the procedure. For rapid processing, the applications for funding should be submitted to the project management organization not later than two months after selection of the project proposals.

Printed forms for a formal application for funding, guidelines, fact sheets, instructions and auxiliary terms and conditions are available on the Internet at

<http://www.kp.dlr.de/profi/easy/index.htm>

or can be obtained directly from the Project Management. The use of the electronic application system "easy" (also for project outlines) is recommended.

The BMBF will decide on the applications for funding after examination within the scope of the budget funds available.

The appropriation, payment and settlement of the grant as well as the demonstration and verification of its use and the possibly necessary withdrawal of the notification of a grant and reclamation of the funds granted shall be subject to the administrative rules under § 44 BHO (Federal Budget Regulations) and §§ 48 to 49a of the law on administrative procedures (VwVerfG) unless exemptions are provided for in these funding guidelines.

The BMBF intends to also evaluate the progress in implementing the strategy concept supported in Module 1 with a view to the effectiveness of future support measures during the term of this Module 2.

8. Entry into force

These funding guidelines shall enter into force on today's date.

Bonn, 23.04.2003

For the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung / LS 25

Hans-Peter Hiepe