

**Federal Ministry  
of Education and Research**

**Call for proposals**

**Regulations**

**governing funding of projects on the study of matter in the fields of materials science and structural biology using neutrons and synchrotron radiation as part of the German-Swedish cooperation (Röntgen-Ångström Cluster) under the framework programme “Exploration of the Universe and Matter – ErUM”**

9 March 2021

**1 Aim and purpose of funding, legal basis**

1.1 Aim and purpose of funding

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) intends to provide funding under the BMBF framework programme “Exploration of the Universe and Matter – ErUM” for projects which serve the objectives of the German-Swedish Röntgen-Ångström Cluster (<http://www.rontgen-angstrom.eu/>), particularly against the background of Germany's involvement in the European research infrastructures European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund (Sweden) and European XFEL in Schenefeld (Germany). The funding measure is based on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the German and Swedish governments on 15 June 2009 and on the recommendations of the steering committee supporting the Röntgen-Ångström Cluster.

The aim of the funding measure is to continuously develop the scientific excellence and international visibility of the Northern German-Swedish research area with its large research infrastructures in order to strengthen the scientific and economic competitiveness of the region and thus Germany as a whole. It thus implements the strategic research partnership with Sweden as part of the “Networking” action area of the BMBF's ErUM framework programme.

In order to achieve this aim, funding will be provided to projects concerned with the exploration of matter conducted jointly by German and Swedish research groups for the purposes of

- intensifying binational cooperation in selected large research infrastructures and
- developing new research methods and instruments that are suitable for increasing both the performance and possible uses of selected large research infrastructures.

The funding measure exclusively supports binational collaborative projects and is coordinated jointly with the Swedish Research Council (VR). The German and Swedish funding institutions will only provide funding for project partners based in their respective countries.

## 1.2 Legal basis

The Federal Government will award grants in accordance with these funding regulations, sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the administrative regulations adopted thereunder as well as the BMBF's regulations governing applications for expenditure-based grants (AZA) and/or cost-based grants (AZK). There is no legal entitlement to a grant. The granting authority will decide freely after due assessment of the circumstances within the framework of the budget funds available.

## 2 Object of funding

The focus of funding is on collaborative projects which are conducted jointly by German and Swedish research groups in the field of structural biology or materials science using neutrons or synchrotron radiation and pursue the purpose specified under 1.1 above.

The binational collaborative projects are required to involve at least one of the photon/neutron sources listed below as a large research facility.

Funding will be provided for the development of new research techniques and methods and the expansion of the experimental facilities.

The recruitment and training of young research talent through involvement in research at large facilities is expressly welcomed.

Photon sources:

- BESSY II, Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin für Materialien und Energie, Berlin
- FLASH, Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron DESY, Hamburg
- PETRA III, Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron DESY, Hamburg
- European XFEL, Schenefeld
- MAX IV Laboratory, Lund
- ESRF, Grenoble

Neutron sources:

- FRM II, Technical University of Munich, Garching
- HFR, Institut Laue-Langevin, Grenoble
- ESS (under construction), Lund

In duly substantiated cases, funding can also be provided for projects at other large facilities if they are closely related to the topic and relevant for the progress of a funding project conducted at the large facilities listed above.

The funding measure has a special focus on projects which support the early use of ESS, in particular by preparing first experiments and sample environments as well as developing methods and analysis software. Another objective is to strengthen the links between collaboration partners for its commissioning.

In the field of research on photon sources, projects which exploit the outstanding properties of the new radiation sources such as coherence and brilliance are particularly welcome.

Funding will not be provided for projects addressing scientific issues which are not related to the development of new instruments or methods.

The routine operation of experimental facilities and standard equipment associated with the source are not eligible for funding.

### **3 Funding recipients**

Applications for funding may be submitted by German universities and research institutions. Applicants are required to have an entity in Germany serving the activities of the funding recipient (university, research institution) at the time of payment of the grant.

Research institutions which receive basic funding from the Federal Government and/or the *Länder* can only be granted project funding supplementary to their institutional funding to cover additional project-related expenditure or costs under certain conditions and provided that the involvement of the research institution is essential for ensuring the success of a collaborative project.

Concerning the conditions for when state aid is or is not deemed to be involved and the extent to which funding can be provided without constituting aid, please consult the Community Framework for State Aid for R&D&I.<sup>1</sup>

### **4 Special prerequisites for funding**

The partners in a collaborative project must set out the terms of cooperation in a written agreement. Collaboration partners that are research institutions within the meaning of Article 2 (83) GBER must ensure that companies do not receive any form of indirect aid as part of the collaboration. The provisions of Section 2.2 of the Community Framework for State Aid for R&D&I are to be observed. Before a funding decision on a collaborative

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<sup>1</sup> Commission communication (2014/C 198/01) of 27 June 2014 (OJ C 198 of 27 June 2014 p.1 ff.) as amended by Commission communication C(2020) 4355 final of 2 July 2020 (OJ C 224 of 8 July 2020, p. 2), in particular Section 2.

project is taken, the cooperation partners must prove that they have reached a basic consensus on further criteria stipulated by the BMBF (cf. BMBF leaflet no. 0110).<sup>2</sup>

## 5 Type, scope and rates of funding

Funding will be awarded in the form of a non-repayable project grant.

Grants for higher education institutions, research and science institutions and similar establishments that do not fall into the category of economic activities are calculated on the basis of the eligible project-related expenditure (in the case of the Helmholtz centres and Fraunhofer, eligible project-related costs), which can be awarded up to 100% coverage in individual cases, taking legislation on state aid into account.

In the case of non-commercial research projects at higher education institutions and teaching hospitals, a flat-rate grant amounting to 20% of total expenditure will be awarded in addition to the eligible expenditure covered by the BMBF.

Eligible expenditure/costs will be in accordance with the BMBF's regulations governing applications for expenditure-based grants (AZA) and/or cost-based grants (AZK).

## 6 Other terms and conditions

The *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Kostenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung an gewerbliche Unternehmen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsvorhaben* (NKBF 2017) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to Commercial Companies for Research and Development Projects on a Cost Basis) will be part of the notification of award for grants on a cost basis.

Notification of award for grants on an expenditure basis will include the *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Ausgabenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung zur Projektförderung* (NABF) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research for the Promotion of Projects on an Expenditure Basis) and the *Besondere Nebenbestimmungen für den Abruf von Zuwendungen im mittelbaren Abrufverfahren im Geschäftsbereich des BMBF* (BNBest-mittelbarer Abruf-BMBF) (Special Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for the Drawdown of Funds by means of the BMBF's Indirect Drawdown Procedure) if funds are provided in a drawdown procedure.

For the purpose of conducting progress reviews within the meaning of administrative regulation (VV) 11a pertaining to section 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO), funding recipients are required to provide the BMBF or reviewing institutions with the data necessary for the progress review without delay. The information will be used exclusively for the purposes of supporting research and any subsequent evaluation; it

<sup>2</sup> [https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy\\_index.php?auswahl=easy\\_formulare](https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare); under "BMBF > Allgemeine Vordrucke und Vorlagen für Berichte" (only available in German).

will be treated confidentially and published in anonymized form, so that it is not possible to trace it back to any individual persons or organizations.

Funding recipients are expected to ensure open electronic access if they publish the results of the research project in a scientific journal. This can be done through publication in an electronic journal which is accessible to the public free of charge. If the results are not initially published in a journal which is electronically accessible to the public free of charge, they must be made publicly available free of charge by electronic means, following a suitable embargo period where appropriate (secondary publication). Embargo periods for secondary publication should not exceed 12 months. The BMBF expressly welcomes secondary open access publication of scientific monographs resulting from the project.

## 7 Procedure

### 7.1 Involvement of a project management organization, application documents, other documents and use of the electronic application system

The BMBF has currently entrusted the following project management organization with implementing the funding measure:

DESY Project Management Agency  
22603 Hamburg  
Germany

Phone: +49 40/8998-3702

Fax: +49 40/8994-3702

Email: [pt@desy.de](mailto:pt@desy.de)

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Any modifications will be announced in the *Bundesanzeiger* (Federal Gazette) or in another suitable form.

Application forms, guidelines, information for applicants and the auxiliary terms and conditions are available at <https://foerderportal.bund.de> (under “Formularschrank/BMBF”) or can be obtained directly from the project management organization.

The electronic application system “easy-Online” must be used for drafting formal applications (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>).

Please take note of the information for applicants on the project management organization’s website: <http://pt.desy.de/bekanntmachungen>

The collaborative research proposal is to be assigned either to the neutron or to the photon sources group, depending on which of the two research infrastructures is mainly used.

Only the joint English description of the collaborative project should be uploaded as a project description. It must be identical to the project description which the Swedish collaboration partner has submitted in the Swedish application system. The cover page of the project description must include a list of all partners involved in the project (including associated partners) and their respective institutions. The project description (including milestone planning and a Gantt chart) must clearly indicate each individual partner's responsibility for the respective work packages.

The German applicants will also submit an outline of the collaboration. The relevant form is available on the project management organization’s website.

The feasibility of the project and safeguarding of the operation of the established experimental infrastructure (hardware and software) in the medium to long term must be agreed with the source operator before application as necessary and appropriate and described in the proposal. The project management organization will obtain a relevant statement from the source operator.

## 7.2 Single-step application procedure

The German application procedure will be carried out in coordination with the Swedish procedure.

Timely submission of the Swedish collaboration partner's application in the Swedish application system (Prisma) is the prerequisite for submission of the German application. The deadline for submission in the Swedish application system is a cut-off deadline.

Formal funding applications must be submitted to the project management organization by 12 May 2021 at the latest using the electronic “easy-Online” application system. It is absolutely essential that the Swedish application number is included so that the application can be cross-referenced with the corresponding Swedish application details.

In the case of collaborative projects, applications must be submitted in consultation with the envisaged collaboration coordinator.

It may not be possible to consider applications received after the above date.

The review and evaluation of the applications received will involve a joint panel of experts appointed by the BMBF and the Swedish Research Council and be based on the following criteria:

- contribution of the project to the research policy goals and scientific objectives of the measure
- scientific quality
- potential for scientific innovation
- prospects of success and feasibility (work, time and cost schedule)
- expertise of the applicant and
- utilization of the results

A funding decision will be taken following final consideration of the application on the basis of the above criteria and evaluation.

Funding is expected to start on 1 April 2022.

The projects should be designed to run for a period of between two and a maximum four years and should be structured around specific milestones.

### 7.3 Relevant regulations:

The approval, payment and accounting for the funds as well as the proof and examination of the proper use and, if necessary, the revocation of the award and the reclaiming of the funds awarded are governed by sections 48 to 49a of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVfG), sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the related general administrative regulations, unless the present funding regulations allow for deviation from the general administrative regulations. The *Bundesrechnungshof* is entitled to carry out audits in accordance with section 91 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO).

## 8 Validity

These funding regulations will enter into force on the day of their publication in the Federal Gazette (*Bundesanzeiger*) and remain valid until 31 December 2028.

Bonn, 9 March 2021

Federal Ministry  
of Education and Research

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