

Funding Initiative

Knowledge for Tomorrow – Cooperative Research Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa

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1. Objectives

The Foundation's funding initiative "Knowledge for Tomorrow – Cooperative Research Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa" aims at providing a contribution to the development and sustainable reinforcement of research in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is to be achieved via research projects developed and carried out by African scholars and scientists in cooperation with German partners, providing junior scientists in Africa with an opportunity to enhance their skills and academic qualification. Besides this Afro-German cooperation, a special focus will be on the development, reinforcement and extension of academic networks inside Africa, also extending beyond existing language barriers.

Funding will be available for projects across all disciplines. The Foundation seeks to support middle to long-term cooperation between German and African scholars. By means of providing targeted support to junior scholars and scientists it is intended to create the conditions necessary for a self-sustaining process of development in research and higher education in Africa. The funding encompasses workshops, symposia, summer schools and research projects. Applications for the latter can only be submitted in the frame of calls for pre-proposals.

2. Current funding possibilities

- Workshops, Symposia and Summer Schools
- currently no open calls

3. Structure and Development of the Funding Initiative

The funding initiative was begun in June 2003. A preliminary stage comprised a number of meetings organized by the Foundation. The objective of these meetings was to define a basic frame for the funding in cooperation with African scholars and scientists. The offer of funding is open to all disciplines; it

addresses researchers in the natural and engineering sciences, medicine, the social sciences and the humanities.

In order to identify leading-edge areas for research and to ensure the development of innovative research topics, in consultation with experts the Volkswagen Foundation is drawing up concepts for thematic workshops and organizes them.

The purpose of these meetings will be to review the current status of research to define pertinent research issues and to explore and develop the potential for collaboration, possibly also to include other researchers and research locations within Sub-Saharan Africa. The Foundation will send out invitations to attend these workshops. In case of the possibility to apply for the participation details will be posted on the Foundation's website (see Section 2).

A total of six thematic workshops has been held so far, each resulting in subsequent calls for proposals:

- "Political, Economic and Social Dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa" (2004)
- "Communicable Diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa – from the African Bench to the Field" (2004)
- "Resources, their Dynamics and Sustainability – Capacity Development in Comparative and Integrated Approaches" (2005)
- "Violence, its Impact, and Coping Strategies" (2005)
- "Negotiating Culture in the Context of Globalization" (2006)
- "Resources, Livelihood Management, Reforms, and Processes of Structural Change" (2006)

Information on the respective workshop program, participants attending and calls for proposals can be found on the Foundation's website.

Subsequent to these workshops it is possible to submit applications for the funding of research proposals based on the research desiderata identified during the workshops. Respective thematic areas and subjects for investigation together with pertinent funding criteria, deadlines, etc., will subsequently be posted in a "Call for Pre-Proposals" on the Foundation's website.

In the medium term, it is planned to repeat the calls for pre-proposals after 2 to 3 years – which may include thematic modifications or changes of an instrumental nature. Respective calls will be announced in advance on the Foundation's website. It will then also be possible to submit proposals for the funding of follow-on projects.

4. Funding Conditions

Applications are open to scholars and scientists of all disciplines. The submission of applications does not depend on attendance at any of the thematic workshops.

In order to be considered for support, projects must entail a considerable collaboration between German and African scholars/scientists, or between their research institutions. Ideally, this would encompass an extension of the cooperation to include an additional south-south component. Moreover, priority will be given to projects that intend to deal with the development and support of networks within Africa and that exhibit an interdisciplinary and integrative character.

The research projects should enable students holding a first (local) African degree to acquire further academic qualifications (Masters, PhD) and to continue conducting research as postdocs. It would be of advantage if the junior scholars involved in the proposed projects were embedded in an already existing research infrastructure. Support for the German partners will be provided only to the extent necessary to achieve the overall objective of the funding initiative.

It is not possible to fund development aid projects.

5. Funding Possibilities

Within the framework of the calls for pre-proposals this funding initiative foresees the following funding instruments that under certain circumstances may be enhanced by other means.

- Funding can be provided for research projects and networks for enhancing qualifications to pay for costs incurred by staffing, equipment and travel. This is intended in the main for the African project partners (see Section 3.). As a rule, the project life should be two to three years. In the case of particularly promising results necessitating further research this may be prolonged by up to two or three years.
- Funds can be provided to pay for the cost of research stays of up to twelve months by (junior) African researchers in Germany, or for their German counterparts in Africa.
- Workshops, symposia and summer schools may be part of research projects. Funding for these has to be included in the overall research proposal. The number of participants should not exceed 50 persons at workshops and 60 persons in the case of symposia and summer schools. In addition to the travel costs incurred, other non-personnel expenses in the context of such events can also be included in the budget. Participants in these events should comprise established research

workers from both Africa as well as Germany and also include junior researchers.

Beyond the calls for pre-proposals, funds can be provided for workshops, symposia and summer schools in the targeted region. In a first step, applicants are requested to send draft proposals. If approved by the Foundation, the applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Number and selection criteria of participants should be in accordance with the previously mentioned guidelines.

Furthermore, the Volkswagen Foundation aims at enhancing communication between science and the public and supports public relations efforts concerning funded projects. Applicants are encouraged to explore new, target group oriented tracks of sustainable science communication within the framework and aims of the respective project. Funds for those public relations measures may be included in the original project application or applied for later on separately. Should you be interested in making use of this opportunity, please contact the respective member of the Foundations' staff in charge of your project.

The funds will be distributed to the German partner, who will also be responsible for their administration.

It is desirable and expected from applicants, where possible, to contribute some of their own resources toward the running of projects.

Please note that the VolkswagenStiftung – in accordance with regulations safeguarding data privacy – records electronically the title and a short characterisation of your project as well as the address of the grant seeking institution, the names of the responsible participants and other relevant data.

6. Submission of Applications and Further Information

Applicants are strongly recommended to consult the appropriate member of the Foundation prior to submitting their application or workshop proposals (either by telephone or by e-mail).