

Funding Initiative

Scoping Workshops

Profile Area: Exploration

Deadline: March 17, 2026, once a year

Scoping workshops are for researchers who want to take a step beyond their current activities and think about the future of their field of research. They offer a space for what happens at conferences in the spare time next to presentations and the official program: exchange about how a field of research is doing; what could be done differently in it; what potentials exist and how they could be realized; and how such developments can be initiated.



Research Area: All disciplines



Funding Type: Organization of a scientific workshop



Target Group: Researchers at German universities and research institutions, international co-applicants possible

1 Objectives

The Volkswagen Foundation's **scoping workshops** are for scientists who want to take a step beyond their current research activities and think about the future of their field of research. Together with max. up to 30 experts, they develop ideas on how their field can evolve further, both in terms of research itself and the academic conditions for pursuing it. **Discussion and intensive exchange** are at the core of each workshop.

Thereby, they offer a space for what happens at conferences in the spare time next to presentations and the official program: exchange about how a field of research is doing; what could be done differently in it; what potentials exist and how they could be realized; and how such developments can be initiated. Scoping workshops contribute to the reflection and further development of disciplinary and interdisciplinary research areas and communities.

Through this funding, scientists are given the opportunity to assess the **current status of their field of research** together with other researchers and, on this basis, to work out **perspectives for its further development**.

This can happen, for example, through

- identifying ways to establish or consolidate newly emerging research areas,
- an elaboration of strengths, weaknesses, and development of perspectives for an existing research area,
- an identification of intersections and cooperation potentials between different research areas,
- the development of strategic recommendations for actors in science policy, science funding or science management to support the further development of a research area.

Accordingly, and in distinction from traditional symposia or conferences, scoping workshops should be clearly designed as **work meetings**, where the focus is not on presentations of latest research results, but rather on an intensive exchange about the status quo and the development of a joint positioning for the further development of a research area. In order to ensure that findings and recommendations have a lasting effect and can be taken up by others, the **development of a position paper** summarizing the main results is an essential part of each workshop.

Funding is available for workshops with a duration of three days. The group of participants is limited to 30 persons and should predominantly consist of **proven experts in the relevant fields**. Participation by doctoral students or recently graduated scientists is possible to a limited extent if this is expected to give innovative impetus to the field of research. If it makes sense for the further development of the respective research area, an involvement of non-academic experts is also possible. Please note that meetings of established working groups or research collaborations are not supported.

2 Scope of Funding

Funded scoping workshops take place at the Xplanatorium Herrenhausen Palace conference centre in Hanover. Various rooms and professional technical infrastructure are available for hosting the events. Once approved, the Foundation's Events Team will assist with preparing the workshops and provide on-site support. In addition, the Volkswagen Foundation will directly cover the costs of providing the conference rooms, equipment and catering at the Xplanatorium conference centre.

Funds to cover the following costs can be requested in the application:

Personnel costs

- Funds for student assistants during preparation, running and follow-up of the event in an amount not exceeding 7,000 EUR. For on-site support of the event, the Foundation will cover **overnight and travel expenses for a maximum of one student assistant**. Please list the corresponding costs in the category "travel costs".

Travel costs

- Expenses for accommodation for all participants. Please request a lump sum of 140 EUR per person, per night. Depending on the start time of your programme, you might consider having participants arrive earlier. It is possible to apply for a total of up to 4 nights for participants from overseas.
- Travel expenses for all participants. Please also refer to the Volkswagen Foundation's Recommendations for sustainable traveling (see section 6). Please estimate the following sums per participant in the cost plan for travel to and from the event in total (please note that only costs actually incurred can be settled with the Foundation after the event):
 - Participants from Germany: 250 EUR
 - Participants from the rest of Europe: 500 EUR
 - Participants from the east coast of the USA: 1,000 EUR
 - Participants from the rest of the world: 1,500 EUR

Non-personnel costs, e.g.

- Expense allowances for professional moderators or facilitators who contribute to the conception and implementation of the workshop.
- Consumables in an amount not exceeding 500 EUR.
- Funds for childcare costs, e.g. travel and accommodation costs for an accompanying person or the coverage of care expenses by service providers or agencies. If you apply for funds for childcare, please provide a brief explanation of the planned arrangements and a breakdown of the associated costs.

Publishing costs

- If the position paper is intended to be published, funding may be requested for this purpose.

As part of the grant, the following services are provided by the Volkswagen Foundation:

- hotel reservations (please do not make any bookings yourself),
- provision of conference equipment and materials at the conference center Xplanatorium Herrenhausen Palace (whiteboards, presentation kits, flipcharts, projectors, etc),
- catering at the conference center Xplanatorium Herrenhausen Palace.

3 Application and Selection Procedure

Eligible to apply are researchers from all fields and at all career levels after the PhD who are employed at a scientific institution in Germany. Researchers from foreign institutions can be involved as project partners. Applications can be submitted in German or English.

3.1 Procedure

Applications received will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary jury based on the following criteria:

- scientific quality,
- clear explication of the goals of the workshop and a convincing concept for achieving them,
- potential of the event to contribute to the further development of the field of research,
- the concept for creating the position paper,
- composition of the group of participants.

The Foundation aims to announce decisions on applications within four to five months, leaving at least six months until the respective workshop date.

3.2 Online Consultation

Do you have questions about our funding programme? Then we invite you to join our online consultation, where we will introduce the programme and answer your questions. No registration is required. The date of the online consultation can be found on the call's website (see section 6). The access details will be published there shortly before the event.

4 Information on the Application

4.1 Our Funding Platform

Applications and short proposals have to be submitted via the Volkswagen Foundation's [funding platform](#). All templates (Template, CV) are available for download on the funding platform and on the website for the respective programme announcement. Please only use the templates available for download there when submitting your application.

Please note that in addition to the PI, each application may include a maximum of four further project partners. Project partners are researchers involved in the conception and organization of the event without receiving their own budget.

If you have any technical questions about using the funding platform, please contact support@volkswagenstiftung.de.

4.2 Information on Enclosures

4.2.1 Proposal template

Please use the template available for download at the funding platform or on the website for the respective programme announcement. Please adhere to the stated word and characters limit.

Preferred dates of the event

Following dates are available for holding your scoping workshop:

March 3–5, 2027	April, 14–16, 2027	June 2–4, 2027
July 7–9, 2027	July 21–23, 2027	October 6–8, 2027

Please specify **two preferred event dates** in the application template. Your choice of dates will not be taken into account in the review process and will not influence the decision on your application. **Please note that while we aim to grant one of the preferred dates in each case, this might not always be possible. We will offer you an alternative date in such a case.**

Project description

Please describe the topic of the planned scoping workshop and the relevant scientific background or context. Please explain how you intend to address a gap or a potential for further development in your field.

Development of the position paper

The documentation and dissemination of the insights gained at a scoping workshop takes place via a position paper (typically 10 to 15 pages in length). The intended audience of the position paper can go beyond the circle of experts. It can include, for example, people from science policy, science management or science funding, to whom recommendations for the further development of the discussed research area are to be suggested. A position paper should therefore be understandable for non-specialists and place the results of the workshop in a broader academic or societal context, where this is necessary. The Foundation expects the position paper to be completed within three months of the respective scoping workshop. It will be in the responsibility of applicants to ensure the dissemination and communication of the final position paper to the scientific community and, where appropriate, to a broader audience.

Please describe how you envision your position paper and how you plan to create it.

Room requirements

Please indicate your room requirements and the approximate number of participants for each room. Please note, however, that depending on the occupancy of the conference center, a smaller number of rooms may be assigned to your workshop.

List of participants

Please use the table in the application template to list your intended participants (including yourself) and mark the respective status of each person there (i.e. „applicant“, „invited“, „confirmed“). Please make sure that your intended group of participants

- corresponds to the objectives of the workshop and comprises all relevant expertise in a balanced way,
- is institutionally and (where appropriate) internationally balanced and appropriately diverse,
- has an appropriate gender balance.

The evaluation as well as the review of your budget plan will be based on the (intended) participants listed here. Please make sure that the table shows the total number as well as the composition of your planned group of participants. The number of participants is limited to a maximum of 30 people, including applicants.

4.2.2 Expenditure Plan

Please use the Excel sheet template available for download at the funding platform. It is not possible to upload and use other Excel sheets.

Under this initiative, funding will only be awarded to the institution of the PI.

Please note that no funding will be granted for overheads, equal opportunity funds or sustainability funds.

4.2.3 Planned Programme of the event

The programme does not have to be worked out to the last detail at the time of application. However, it should be clear from the application which goals are to be pursued with the workshop and how these are to be achieved methodically. To ensure this, funds can be requested for a professional moderator to prepare or accompany the workshop. Upload the planned programme in free format as a PDF file in the funding platform under "Programme".

4.2.4 Curricula Vitae

Please submit the curricula vitae of all applicants in tabular, narrative form, using the template available for download at the funding platform or on the website for the respective programme announcement. Please upload all CVs as one PDF file.

4.3 Further Information

4.3.1 Open Science

The foundation is committed to Open Science ([Open Science Policy](#)). Thus, we expect that results will be published open access and that data generated will be made available for scientific use following the FAIR principles via recognized repositories (see [NFDIs](#), [re3data](#), and [RI-sources](#)).

4.3.2 General Information

The foundation cannot be held responsible for any obligations entered into prior to the receipt of grant approval.

Applications that have been or are intended to be submitted in this or a similar form to another funding organization will not be processed by the foundation. Applications that do not meet the formal requirements will not be considered for review. The foundation can only award funds to scientific institutions.

5 Contact

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6 Further Information

- [Website VolkswagenStiftung](#)
- [Website “Scoping Workshops”](#)
- [FAQ and Service \(including download section\)](#)
- [Influence of Generative AI on Research and the Volkswagen Foundation’s Funding Activities](#)
- [Recommendations for Sustainable Travel](#)