

FUNDING INITIATIVE

Open Up New Research Spaces for the Humanities and Cultural Studies

Profile Area Exploration

Next deadline: see website



area of research: humanities, cultural studies, theoretical social sciences



type of funding: research projects, funding of a teaching substitute



up to 250,000 or 350,000 Euro



up to 1.5 years



research teams involving two or three investigators (main applicant has to be a member of a German university/research institution)



short proposal, anonymized application process



additional benefits: funding for communication of science and research



1 OBJECTIVES

PROFILE AREA “EXPLORATION”

In the profile area “Exploration”, the Volkswagen Foundation aims to provide researchers with opportunities to contribute to resolving major science-driven challenges with unorthodox questions and experimental methods. As a future lab, the Foundation wants to pave the way for new topics and research methods and establish previously untapped research fields.

THE INITIATIVE

To ‘open up’ something is associated with the curiosity to take the first step into something new and unknown. With our funding initiative “Open Up” we are looking for projects that not only offer new perspectives on already known research subjects, but also explore entirely new research spaces and topics. The initiative assumes that these topics are currently characterized by a particular complexity and require a multi-perspective approach in order to reveal and understand this complexity. We therefore want to support researchers who open up new research and knowledge spaces in the humanities and cultural studies through the joint exploration of complex and previously unexplored research topics.

By funding research collaborations of two or three researchers, the Foundation intends to facilitate the full creative potential of the interaction of different expertise and perspectives. Explicitly sought are projects with a high degree of exploration, which can also be accompanied by a corresponding risk character of the project – the possibility of not achieving the envisaged project goals is therefore not a reason for rejecting a project.

At this point, we would like to invite you to **think about whether your project fits the “Open Up” funding initiative.** .

In the view of the Volkswagen Foundation, a project does not fit ‘Open Up’ if there are already...

- ... recurring courses on the topic of your project.
- ... numerous articles on the topic of your project.
- ... journals on the topic of your project.
- ... expert associations on the topic of your project.
- ... discussion on the topic in the supplements / feuillets.

2 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The funding initiative addresses teams of two or three researchers who aim to explore untapped and original research spaces. Projects involving empirical studies, data analysis, or interviews cannot be funded within this initiative. **A timely project start is assumed.** The Foundation aims to fund approx. **10 projects** per funding round.

An essential component of the funding is the discussion of (preliminary) results at a **workshop or small conference** in the last third of the funding period. On the one hand, this is intended to facilitate a transfer of research results to the respective scientific communities, which, due to the explorative nature of the projects, may be difficult to communicate via common forms of scientific publication. On the other hand, it is supposed to create an opportunity for critical reflection of ongoing research processes both with scholars and, if appropriate, with non-academic actors (e.g. from sectors of culture, art, or business) and to incorporate this into the final project work.

An additional **kick-off event** at Herrenhausen Palace in Hanover organized by the Volkswagen Foundation will facilitate exchange and networking of the grantees at the beginning of the funding period.

3 WHAT WE OFFER

Eligible for funding are

- scientists working in the humanities or cultural studies as well as scientists working in theoretical social sciences, who are employed at a scientific institution in Germany;
- at all career levels after the PhD;
- researchers from foreign institutions are welcome to apply as co-applicants.

The design of the budget is free and depends on the requirements of the respective project. Funding will be allocated on a lump-sum basis to enable a flexible reallocation of funds in accordance with the course of the project. Funding can be allocated to cover the following costs:

- Total budget for projects with two partners is limited to **250.000 euros. and 50.000 for projects with three partners (excluding overheads)**
- Duration 1.5 years
- personnel costs (own position or teaching substitute, but no additional scientific staff);
- non-personnel costs (such as travel and conference expenses, costs arising from the involvement of project partners within Germany and abroad, research stays at other institutions, workshops, translation costs etc.);
- mid-term Workshop (for planning and implementation, a lump sum of 10,000 euro should be included in the budget plan).
- For universities and universities of applied sciences: additional 10 % overheads

If data are used, newly collected, or processed in your project, then please provide essential information on data handling. Please either fill out the data management plan of an already identified data repository or enter the information in the form basic data management plan. If your project does not use or generate any data to a relevant extent, please state this explicitly.

4 APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Application

- **Short proposal** (see template) and a **self-assessment** (see template).
- Applications should be written in English or German.
- Submission via the electronic application system of the Volkswagen Foundation (see item 5.). Please familiarize yourself with the electronic application system at least three weeks before the deadline to avoid problems at the final stage of the application process.

The selection procedure is organized in the following way: First, all submitted short proposals will be reviewed and shortlisted by the Foundation's funding division. The resulting shortlist is then rated by an interdisciplinary jury in a double-blind way, i. e. with anonymized documents.

Criteria for the selection procedure

- Opening of a new research space
- Exploratory character of the research project
- Added value of the constellation for exploring the research object
- Scientific quality of the project
- Conclusiveness of the intended approach

Unfortunately, in view of the expected high number of applications, it will probably not be possible to provide more detailed reasons for decisions resulting from the review process or to obtain individual feedback from the jury. Likewise, it is not possible to provide information on the review status of individual applications during the selection process.

5 APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please submit your application online via the Volkswagen Foundation's electronic application system, using the templates which can be found at the end of section 6 and on our website.

The following attachments should be uploaded (pdf files):

- **Short proposal** (see template 'Short application')
 - incl. positioning of the project in the state of research (up to 20 references – not included in the word count)
- **Summary of the project** in German and English (max. 200 words each)
- **Self-assessment** addressing the following questions (max. 70 words):
 - Where do you see the 'open up character' of your project?
 - Where does your project take a risk?
 - What difficulties or counter-arguments do you expect and how would you like to address them from the outset?
 - Which academic and non-academic target groups do you want to address with your project-related workshop?

All documents **should be anonymous** and omit the applicant's name, their institute's name, the career level, and any references by the applicant's group.

Additionally, the following documents should be uploaded (these will only be used for internal processes and will not be made accessible to members of the jury):

- **Short CVs of all applicants** (max. 2 pages per applicant), including the position you hold at your institution, and a list of five selected publications (please submit all CVs in one file).
- **Miscellaneous** (optional)

Please enter an

- **approximate budget plan** directly in the application system and enter the budget plans for each applicant separately. In case you apply for personnel costs, please specify if the costs are for your own position or a teaching substitute. Please enter a sum of 10.000 EUR for the mid-term workshop.

- **For universities and universities of applied sciences, 10% overheads can be applied for in addition to direct project costs, that have to be entered under "other non-recurring costs".**

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" (see item 6). For technical questions regarding the use of the portal, please contact .

6 CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Further Information

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Additional Information

- [Webpage Open Up](#)
- [Template Short Proposal \(download\)](#)
- [Template Self Assessment \(download\)](#)
- [Open Up – FAQs](#)
- [General Application FAQs](#)
- [Electronic Application System – Instructions and Tips](#)
- [Volkswagen Foundation Electronic Application System](#)