

### Collaborative Projects

## Additional Funding for Science Communication

**Profile Area:** Exploration

**Deadline:** June 17, 2025 (2 pm)

**Deadline Workshops:** April 24, 2025

Multiple crises are currently showing us the ever-increasing importance of self-mediated science communication. Also in the future, trust in and credibility of science will largely depend on how convincingly researchers communicate their knowledge to non-scientific target groups – and in turn how constructively they incorporate the questions, concerns and ideas of these groups.



Research Area: All disciplines



Funding Type: Innovative measures for science communication



Target Group: Current Grantees of the Volkswagen Foundation



Max.: 150,000 EUR



Max.: 2 years



Current funding by the Volkswagen Foundation. Applications can be submitted up to 6 months after the end of the funded project.

## 1 Objectives

Multiple crises are currently demonstrating the need for fact-based science communication oriented toward the common good – not least, because of the trust it creates among target groups. This is the prerequisite for science to maintain its independence and fulfill its role in shaping the future. With the growing number of social transformation processes, there is now increasing pressure on the science system to defend its relevance and legitimacy and to have a voice in more and more arenas of discourse, including digital ones.

This poses enormous challenges for science communication – challenges that the Volkswagen Foundation also seeks to address. In particular, the increasing complexity resulting from the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and the spread of misinformation and fake news call for fact-based science communication. This funding program therefore aims to support innovative projects that not only make science and research more comprehensible and generally accessible, but above all give selected target groups the opportunity to effectively enter into dialog with science and generate new impetus with their own ideas and suggestions. The goal is not simply more science communication, but better science communication. Therefore, the Foundation emphasises the importance of applicants integrating reflections on impact criteria and measures for evaluating their communication activities into the application.

To this end, the Foundation also supports competence building in the field of science communication: Applicants are invited to participate in a workshop on the conception and implementation of science communication projects before submitting their application.

## 2 Scope of Funding

All researchers currently funded by the Volkswagen Foundation are eligible to apply. In the case of thematic synergies, applications can also be submitted for collaborative projects involving different grantees who are funded in different initiatives or with different projects.

Funding will be provided for innovative, especially dialogic and participatory science communication projects up to a maximum amount of 150,000 euros. The funding amount requested should be in proportion to the total budget of the main project. The Foundation encourages applicants to seek cooperation with private and institutional partners from civil society as well as with professional science communicators (e.g., press offices, specialized agencies, cultural institutions). The latter should be capable of enabling an exchange of experience and knowledge and thereby contribute to increasing the quality and sustainable success of science communication.

The Foundation also encourages its grantees to apply for the funding of science communication projects that address ethical issues in the research process.

Part of the funding offer is the participation in a pre-application workshop conducted by the National Institute for Science Communication (NaWik). The following aspects of a science communication project are addressed:

- Design and implementation of science communication projects;
- Development of criteria for measuring success/effectiveness;
- Involving practice partners in the conception, creation and dissemination of communication measures (project management);
  - Cost and capacity planning;
  - Difficulties and risks of science communication projects: What causes science communication to fail?

### 3 Application and Selection Procedure

#### 3.1 Overview

Time schedule:

- Workshops:
  - 6/7 May 2025, 9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. (digital, in English)
  - 13/14 May 2025, 9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. (digital, in German)
- Deadline for the submission of applications: 17 June 2025 (14:00)
- Processing time until notification of the decisions is approximately 6 months

#### 3.2 Procedure

We recommend that all grantees who wish to apply for additional funding for a science communication project attend one of the workshops offered in advance of the deadline. The workshop will take place over two half days on the dates listed above.

Only **one person** from each project can attend the workshop. The max. number of participants per workshop is **9 persons**.

Applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by an external, transdisciplinary panel of researchers and practitioners according to the following criteria:

- Quality and originality of the project
- Congruence of measure(s) and selected target group
- Relevance for the selected target group

- Plausibility of impact criteria and evaluation measures
- Coherence of the intended approach in conception, implementation and dissemination of the measures

## 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 (CV, staff concept, expenditure plan, etc.) 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.

It is important that all applicants (PI, co-PIs, etc.) register early on in the process. Co-applicant(s) can only be invited to work on an application if they have registered.

For further support please contact [support@volkswagenstiftung.de](mailto:support@volkswagenstiftung.de).

### 4.2 Information on Enclosures

#### 4.2.1 Project Description

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

#### 4.2.2 Expenditure Plan

Please use the Excel template available for download at the funding platform. It is not possible to upload and use other Excel sheets. For instructions on how to fill in the template, please refer to the respective help sheet.

Please note: Each co-PI has to submit an individual expenditure plan.

#### 4.2.3 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.

#### **4.2.4 Staff Concept**

The Volkswagen Foundation is committed to support good working conditions in academia. Hence, the foundation requires a so called staff concept which entails detailed descriptions of the team structure, responsibilities and career development opportunities for all positions.

Please use the template available for download at the funding platform or on the website for the respective programme announcement. Further information on the staff concept and personnel costs can be found [here](#).

#### **4.2.5 Equal Opportunity Funds**

To support equal opportunities and diversity in the research system, the Volkswagen Foundation offers the possibility to apply for equal opportunity funds. These funds – granted in addition to the maximum funding sum – support measures that serve to compensate for disadvantages at an individual level and/or aim to strengthen diversity in the education and research system in general. The funds are calculated based on staffing tableau and project duration.

To apply, please use the template equal opportunity funds available for download at our funding platform or on the website for the respective programme announcement and indicate the correct lump sum in the expenditure plan at the corresponding position. For further information please refer to our [website](#).

#### **4.2.6 Sustainability Funds**

The Volkswagen Foundation is committed to sustainability, and in particular resource-efficient research processes. It therefore provides funds to certify research laboratories involved in the research project via providers such as [LEAF](#) or [mygreenlab](#) as sustainable. These funds – granted in addition to the maximum funding sum – amount to a lump sum of up to 3,000 EUR per laboratory. Laboratories are eligible if at least one of the PI/co-PIs conduct the respective research there. To apply, please indicate the correct lump sum in the expenditure plan at the corresponding position.

#### **4.2.7 Further Enclosures**

In the case of cooperation with external partners such as museums, agencies, artists, associations or other institutions, please upload the relevant cooperation agreements, letters of intent, offers or calculations under "Statement/Letter of support/Letter of intent".

## **4.3 Further Information**

### **4.3.1 Overheads**

No overheads can be applied for in this initiative.

### **4.3.2 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](#)). If data generation is intended, please submit a data management plan provided by the foundation ([Basic Data Management Plan](#)). Alternatively, you can submit a more detailed, discipline specific data management plan. Please clearly state in your application if you don't intend to generate data.

Note: The Volkswagen Foundation offers the module 'Data Reuse - Additional funding for the preparation of research data' for funded projects to prepare research data. You can apply for the module during or up to six months after the project duration.

### **4.3.3 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**

Dr. Pierre Schwidlinski

Email: [Schwidlinski@volkswagenstiftung.de](mailto:Schwidlinski@volkswagenstiftung.de)

Phone: +49 511 83 81 – 228

For administrative/organisational issues and telephone appointments:

Barbara Neubauer

Email: [neubauer@volkswagenstiftung.de](mailto:neubauer@volkswagenstiftung.de)

Phone: +49 511 83 81 - 232

VolkswagenStiftung  
Kastanienallee 35  
30519 HANNOVER, GERMANY

## 6 Further Information

- [Website VolkswagenStiftung](#)
- [Website programme announcement](#)
- [FAQ and Service \(including download section\)](#)
- [Influence of Generative AI on Research and the Volkswagen Foundation's Funding Activities](#)
- [Recommendations for Sustainable Travel](#)