

# Profile



➤ The Volkswagen Foundation in brief



Volkswagen**Stiftung**

## What does the Foundation do?

The purpose of the Foundation is to promote the advancement of the sciences and technology in research and higher education (Section 2 of the Statutes). We support the humanities and social sciences as well as engineering and the natural and life sciences. Interdisciplinarity and internationality are important to us.

## Who can apply for funding?

We support outstanding scholars and scientists in Germany and abroad who want to advance research and higher education with their original and challenging ideas. As a funder of such innovative research, we are prepared to take the associated risks and therefore also accept that a promising project may not always reach its goal. After all, there can be no scientific progress without trial and error.

Photo: Julia Sellmann for Volkswagen Foundation



➤ Transformation researcher Karoline Augenstein

## How is our funding structured?

In its strategy, the Foundation promotes the advancement of scientific knowledge, international scientific cooperation, and the improvement of the structural conditions of research and higher education. In order to address these goals, the funding programme is divided into four profile areas, each with its own focus (see right).

## On **what** basis are funding decisions reached?

Hundreds of experts in Germany and abroad support the Foundation each year in reviewing applications (peer review). They submit individual evaluations and sit on review panels, their recommendations forming the basis for the funding decisions reached by the the Supervisory Board and the CEO. The overriding goal is to ensure the highest scientific quality.

## Our profile areas

### Exploration

Exploring previously unexplored areas of research practice with unconventional ideas and experimental approaches.

### Social Transformations

Expanding knowledge about processes of transformation and developing possible courses of action together with stakeholders in civil society.

### Understanding Research – evaluation and science practice

Critically exploring and reflecting on the research system with a view to initiating positive change on areas such as career paths, governance, research, and higher education.

### zukunft.niedersachsen

Funding programme for top-level research and higher education in Lower Saxony.



Photo: Philip Bartz for Volkswagen Foundation

➤ Audience at Herrenhausen Palace

## Where does the money come from?

The funding finance comes from income generated by investment of the Foundation's assets (€ 4.1 billion as of 31 December 2024). The zukunft.niedersachsen funding programme, on the other hand, is primarily financed by dividend payments on the Volkswagen shares held by the state of Lower Saxony.

## What does the Foundation do for knowledge transfer?

We promote knowledge transfer on different levels: experts from the research community meet and exchange views at international conferences; at evening events they share their knowledge with the wider public. The venue for such meetings and discussions is the Herrenhausen Palace conference centre in Hanover, but increasingly also the Internet with its live streams and opportunities for dialogue.

## Who established the Foundation?

The Foundation owes its existence and its name to an agreement concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany and the federal state of Lower Saxony in 1961: The then Volkswagenwerk GmbH was converted into a stock corporation, thus settling the dispute over unresolved ownership. The proceeds from this privatization were transferred as the assets of the newly established Foundation, a private charitable foundation under civil law – neither a corporate nor a public foundation.

## Who works at the Foundation?

The CEO Dr Georg Schütte manages the office in Hanover-Döhren. Around 115 people are employed as members of his staff unit and the three departments of Funding, Investment, Finance and Administration. Anyone interested in a job at our foundation can find vacancies on our homepage, but is also welcome to contact us directly.

Photo: Isabel Winarsch for Volkswagen Foundation



➤ 115 employees hold the Foundation threads together



**'The Foundation** is committed to the principles of academic freedom and to ensuring the highest academic quality and integrity.'

➤ From the Foundation statutes

Photo: Thomas Bach for Volkswagen Foundation

# A Foundation of **Knowledge**



## **Editor**

Volkswagen Foundation  
Kastanienallee 35  
30519 Hanover  
[www.volkswagenstiftung.de](http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de)

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Jens Rehländer

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