Symposia

Next Deadline: see website

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I. Objectives

Within the framework of “Symposia and Summer Schools”, the Foundation supports events which provide the opportunity to develop new ideas and cutting-edge research perspectives and to promote the discussion of topics and approaches which have not yet been addressed. Generally, these meetings have to have an interdisciplinary and international orientation. In exceptional and duly justified cases, it may also be possible to fund events within the context of a single discipline, provided that the results are expected to shed new light on the respective subject. The Foundation puts emphasis on a significant scientific issue as initial motivation and the active participation of young researchers (doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers). In addition, the Foundation expects a significant representation of women both as speakers and participants. The Foundation particularly wants to encourage the development and testing of new event formats and instruments to promote the interaction among the participants.

II. Funding Opportunities

Support is available for events concerning any topic and is not restricted to a particular discipline. It is therefore not necessary to address a topic related to a current funding initiative from the Foundation’s funding portfolio. Funding is available for symposia, workshops, and conferences, provided that they fulfil the criteria listed in this information leaflet. The selection of the participants should reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the topic and allow active individual participation and intensive interaction between all the group members, which can be strengthened by adopting different formats for events. A significant participation of German scientists or scholars is expected. In all cases the organizers must provide adequate justification for the number of participants. A series of symposia comprising up to three consecutive events which build on each other may also be eligible for support.

III. General Conditions

Starting fall of 2013, symposia funded by the Foundation have to take place in Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover, within the framework of the Volkswagen Foundation’s “Symposia Weeks” (see website for dates). The venue offers meeting and conference rooms of different sizes, together with a professional organizational structure. Applications for symposia must be filed before the deadline mentioned on the website. Larger events which only occasionally take place in Germany but are of high scholarly relevance may also be eligible for funding. In such cases, the Foundation reserves the right to fund only part of the costs incurred. Support can be made available for events with usually up to 50 persons. In duly justified exceptional cases, funding can also be provided for symposia which have to take place at the applicant’s local research institution.

The Foundation limits its support to the following items:

- Travel expenses for participants actively involved in the event. The costs are expected to be kept to a minimum, especially with regard to air travel (in accordance with regulations governing travel costs in the public sector). In the case of larger events, the Foundation reserves the right to fund only part of the costs incurred.
- Expenses for accommodation (hotel contingents are provided by the Volkswagen Foundation). Please estimate € 100 per night/person.
- Up to € 500 for non-personnel costs (e.g. printing costs for programs).
- Funds for and/or contribution to support staff during the preparation and running of the event.
• Funds for child care within the scope of the event (however, child care is not provided on site at Herrenhausen Palace).
• Funds for the publication of papers on the internet. The Foundation generally expects that the results of the meeting will be published open access.
• Expense allowances for freelancers (e.g. architects or journalists), who are actively involved in the event.

In the case of events held in Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover, various services at the venue will be provided, given that they are part of the grant:
  • hotel reservations,
  • provision of conference equipment,
  • catering.

No funds can be provided for the following items:
  • Flat rate amount to cover general organizational expenses.
  • Cost of honoraria, assistants and similar items.
  • Expenses for accompanying persons or family members.
  • Any supplementary programs or entertainment expenses for accompanying persons.
  • Costs for participants from industry.
  • Travel expenses at the request of individuals.

The following types of events are excluded from funding
  • Meetings which are organized within the framework of established disciplines and research areas, and which are mainly limited to a discussion of the status quo or serve to elucidate the current situation in a given discipline.
  • Commemorative and tribute colloquia.
  • Large congresses, annual meetings of scientific associations and similar large-scale events or parts thereof.
  • Follow-up events as well as regularly occurring meetings between largely closed groups of specific experts.
  • Conferences which primarily bring together colleagues from partner institutions within the framework of university partnerships.
  • Activities connected with third party funded graduate schools, clusters of excellence or similar events.
  • Events partially financed by other funding organizations or with a planned or pending application for funding elsewhere.
  • Satellite symposia taking place before or after a large-scale event.

The Foundation shall not be held liable for any commitments entered into before the grant letter has been received.

IV. Application and Selection Procedure
Applications must be submitted together with all necessary details no later than the deadline date. If there is a sufficient number of applications, they will undergo comparative peer review by an interdisciplinary commission. Otherwise, written expert opinions will be obtained for each application. Meetings of the review commission are scheduled for four months after the deadline. Notification about the foundation’s decision will be sent to applicants once the review committee has completed its work respectively once the written expert opinions have been evaluated.

V. Application Checklist

Proposals should describe the event in such a way that adequate information is available for the scientific review. Applications may be submitted either in English or in German. In case the language of the meeting is not German, the application has to be submitted in English. Applications have to be submitted via the Volkswagen Foundation’s electronic application system. Instructions on the electronic application system are provided online. The following information and data (.pdf) are required:

- Details on the applicant, co-applicants and grant recipient.
- Budget and justification (you can use the template that can be found under Additional Information).
- Short scientific curriculum vitae (max. 3 pages per applicant) of the main applicants (incl. a publication list of max. 10 of the most important and relevant publications).
- German and English summary of the project (each max. 300 words) including the date the event is planned to take place.
- The proposal itself (detailed description and reasoning, max. 5 pages exclusive of the bibliography) including an explanation of how it is intended to integrate young researchers.
- List of attendees including the following information: Surname and first name(s) of all participants, academic degree(s), gender, home institution, institute, field of studies, title of presentation or poster, senior researcher or young researcher (only doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers count as young researchers, students cannot be funded). Please state whether attendance is confirmed or not. Young researchers should be included in a separate list. You can use the template that can be found under Additional Information. The list of participants can be completed by details on the announcement of the event and the planned selection procedure for participants.

- (Tentative) program of the event including the titles of the presentations or subjects on which the presentations will be held, rooms needed (rooms for up to 50 people can be made available), and details on the respective event formats.
- A short “newspaper article” designed to give the interested public an understanding of the event’s topic.

If the event is organized by both German and foreign colleagues, the person in charge should be an academic from a German university or research institute. According to the statutes, the Foundation can only grant funding to universities and other scientific institutions.
Information

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Additional Information

- Symposia FAQs
- Template List of Participants
- Template Budget Justification
- Electronic Application System – Instructions and Tips
- Application FAQs
- Information for Applicants from Abroad
- Website Symposia and Summer Schools
- Video on events in Herrenhausen Palace