

Call for Proposals

Experience of Violence, Trauma Relief and Commemorative Culture – Cooperative Research Projects on the Arab Region

Application deadline

September 10, 2015

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1. Objectives

The processes of transformation and transition that started in 2011 have already led to significant changes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) – and continue to cause considerable, increasingly severe tension. By far not all hopes and expectations of the advocates of the so-called “Arab spring” have been fulfilled, and in particular, the calls for democratisation and rule of law have been frequently neglected. While a small number of states were successfully transformed, in a number of others disorder, instability, and conflict continue to dominate everyday life. The MENA-region is undergoing radical change and the political and social situation in many of its states is still fragile.

In July 2011, shortly after the beginning of the uprisings in the Arab World, the Foundation published its first call for proposals focused on the region, offering support for research projects investigating the civil and political processes of change. In 2013, another call was launched, offering funding for projects exploring political, social, and economic change, conducted by multilateral-cooperative consortia consisting of German and Arab scholars. By supporting such cooperative research projects, the Foundation aimed to strengthen inter- but also intra-regional networks. Furthermore, junior scholars based at institutes in the region were given opportunities for further qualification. The current processes in the MENA-region offer an extensive breadth of potential research questions. Against this backdrop, the Foundation has decided to launch another call focusing on these developments.

This call is open to scholars from the humanities and the social sciences. Moreover, it addresses (at least) bilateral research teams consisting of one partner based at a German research institute and (at least) another one based in the MENA-region. The involvement of additional researchers is also possible (for details, please refer to p. 2). With this call, the Foundation aims to not only support the establishment of international networks, but also the capacity-development in the region by enabling the further qualification of junior scholars.

2. Thematic Scope

Apart from the focus on recent processes of transformation in the Arab region, this call is thematically defined by the following three key terms:

- **Experience of Violence**
- **Trauma Relief**
- **Commemorative Culture**

These thematic pillars allow for an investigation of the current transformations, the relevant contexts and specific conditions, as well (potential or actual) consequences such as the experience of violence and trauma or the ways in which traumatic experiences are processed. Against this backdrop, the Foundation specifically welcomes proposals that look at the cultural, social, or political structures and the changes they have undergone, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, at processing strategies as well as opportunities and prospects for development that have emerged – both for the region as well as individuals. Furthermore, the Foundation especially encourages applications by research teams that utilize the thematic foci mentioned above to critically engage with questions addressing the stability of the dominant moral system, which is (allegedly) crucial for maintaining existing structures.

Requirements

Disciplines

The call is generally open to researchers from the humanities and social sciences. Interdisciplinary projects connecting both areas are also welcome.

Personnel

Funding will be provided for both bilateral and multilateral cooperative research projects. Besides one scholar based at a German institution, who will also act as the main applicant, and at least one partner based in the MENA-region, additional Arab partners, who are currently based in the “diaspora”, can be included. However, these partners are required to have their roots in the MENA-region; moreover, they are expected to have established connections to a local academic system, for instance, via a recent employment.

Promotion of Junior Scholars

The promotion of both German and Arab junior scholars is a central element of this call. To contribute to the regional capacity development, all projects are required to support the further qualification of junior researchers in the MENA-region. Accordingly, they are required to integrate at least one Ph.D. student based at the regional partner institute (alternatively, and in the absence of suitable Ph.D.-candidates, M.A.-students can be incorporated). If scholars from the diaspora are part of the cooperation, they may also recruit junior researchers. Suitable supervision of these junior scholars is to be guaranteed by a senior partner at the same institution.

As part of the training for junior scholars from the MENA-region (or the relevant diaspora), funds to finance extended visits to the German partner institute (i.e. to receive training in specific methods or theories) can be included in the budget.

3. Funding Opportunities

Duration and Finances

Funding will be provided for three to four years. Bilateral projects may apply for up to 350.000 EUR, whereas multilateral cooperative projects may apply for up to 500.000 EUR. The budget can cover personnel as well as non-personnel expenses, such as travel costs, consumables, and equipment. Senior partners based in Germany must not apply for personnel funds to cover their own position; they can, however, apply for funds to finance the position of a junior researcher (65% part-time, up to Ph.D.-level) or for administrative staff tasked with the coordination (50% part-time). This can also be combined to a full-time position (100%) for a Ph.D. researcher who also takes on the coordination of the project. With respect to the funds granted for non-personnel costs, the Foundation expects a relatively even distribution amongst the different partners.

As the project's needs may vary over time (and, sometimes, rather unexpectedly), the Foundation also offers the possibility to apply for additional funds on a modular basis in the course of the project. Such modules may, for instance, cover funds for additional personnel (such as, for instance, additional junior scholars), workshops, conferences, or trips abroad. The details of such application should be discussed with the relevant programme manager individually and in the course of the project.

4. Review Process

Applications must be submitted in English, as they will be reviewed by an international review panel.

The application is organized in two phases: Firstly, all proposals submitted by September 10, 2015, will be reviewed and assessed by an international expert committee. Project teams that receive a positive evaluation will then be invited to present their project at a review panel meeting, which will presumably be held at the beginning of 2016. Final decisions on the proposals are expected to be made and communicated in the course of April 2016.

5. Further Information

The Foundation is unable to process applications that have been submitted in identical or similar form to any other funding body. Moreover, the Foundation does not pay for financial obligations made prior to the receipt of a grant letter.

The Volkswagen Foundation can award grants to academic institutions only. Applicants outside of universities and well-known research institutions need to provide details on the legal status, statutes, trustees and boards, charitable/non-profit status, budgeting, and auditing of the institution to be able to receive funding.

6. Check-list

Please submit your application using the Foundation's electronic application system

(<https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/vwsantrag/login.do?siteLanguage=en>).

On the system, you need to provide the following information:

Full name and office address of the main applicant(s), intended grant administrator (German research institution), **brief information on the project** (brief informative title, duration, and total budget) as well as a **budget**.

In addition, the following information needs to be provided as "enclosures" (pdf-files):

- **Signature sheet** (with all relevant signatures) (generated on the electronic system)
- **Cover letter**
- **Summary of the proposal** (up to one page, preferably in German and English)
- **Description of the research project** (up to 7,000 words):
 - Aims of the project
 - State of the art
 - Research questions
 - Theoretical framework
 - Methodological approach
 - Reference list (not part of the word count)
- **Partner(s) and plan for promotion of junior scholars**
- **Work plan and timeline**, including information on organisation of group
- **Budget** in EUR, subdivided into
 - Personnel expenses
 - Travel and accommodation costs
 - Publication costs
 - Equipment and literature
 - Administrative costs for partner institution(s), if necessary (max. 5,000 EUR per partner institution)
- **CVs, list of relevant publications** (max. 1 page per partner for publications)
- **Statement by cooperation partner(s) and partner institution(s)** (please use template)

Closing date is September 10, 2015.

Electronic application

Please use the Foundation's application system:
portal.volkswagenstiftung.de
for the electronic submission of your application. Please do not forget to print, sign and upload the scanned signature sheet. Instructions on the electronic application system are provided online.

7. Electronic Application – Instruction and Tips

Please note that you (and your partner(s)) need to register on the electronic application system to be able to submit an application and have access to application data. It is required for all applicants to register themselves (instructions are also provided on the system).

Please follow these steps to compile and submit your application:

If you are a new user, please register on the application portal with your name, your e-mail address, and a password. When registering, you will be asked the details of your work address. Subsequently, you must activate your account using the link sent to you by e-mail. If you already have an account, you can immediately login using your e-mail address and password.

Via the button “new application”, you can select the relevant funding initiative (“Experience of Violence, Trauma Relief and Commemorative Culture – Cooperative Research Projects on the Arab Region”) and begin the application process.

- Please fill in the required fields and forms.
- Remember to read and accept the legal statement. If you wish, you can generate a PDF of the complete application for verification and your files.
- Under the button “other enclosures”, you are able to upload files as required according to the checklist on the preceding page. The detailed budget should also be uploaded here. Only PDF files are accepted.
- Additionally, it is required to generate a signature sheet for print-out. Instructions are provided on the system. Please do not forget to print, sign, scan, and upload your signature sheet.

Please note that the “save”-button does not transfer any data to the Foundation. You are able to revise all data until final submission and can interrupt the application process at any time as often as required. Once your application is completed, you can submit it electronically.

In the course of processing your application, the Foundation might request additional information. The button “new supplement” is used to upload and submit these respective files.