

Information for Applicants 120

Corona Crisis and Beyond – Perspectives for Science, Scholarship and Society

Next Deadline: see website

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I. Objectives

The novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 and the associated respiratory disease COVID-19 are spreading at a rapid pace, dominating all areas of public and private life worldwide thereby challenging basic, clinical and translational viral research. Measures to contain the pandemic such as physical distancing, contact reduction, working from home or homeschooling are massively affecting the life of each individual. Likewise, the pandemic raises new questions regarding the sustainability and resilience of our societies. The international division of labour, global value chains, democracy and the rule of law are suddenly being put to the test while health and economic systems are being called into question worldwide. These new and unprecedented developments have both immediate and not yet fully foreseeable long-term consequences that raise new research questions and may even lead to new research fields.

Against this backdrop, the Volkswagen Foundation supports research projects from all disciplines whose findings not only contribute directly to overcoming the crisis, but can also provide impetus for overcoming major societal challenges in the medium to long term. The Foundation especially welcomes projects that – in light of the current pandemic – challenge or question established social assumptions or existing scientific paradigms. In particular, the Foundation encourages interdisciplinary approaches and the integration of a global perspective. Furthermore, transdisciplinary projects that seek exchange with representatives of practice, stakeholders and the general public (e.g. citizen science) are welcome. The use of a wide range of data, which is currently being generated and collected on a large scale, is of great relevance, as well.

Projects dealing with classical viral research or treatment of viral diseases are not part of this call's scope. Furthermore, the large-scale production of goods (e.g medical supplies like face masks, ventilators etc.) or infrastructural projects are excluded from funding.

II. Funding Opportunities

This call is not confined to any particular subject area and invites applications from life, natural and engineering sciences as well as social sciences and the humanities. It includes two funding opportunities:

1. **Small Grants:** Support for individual or cooperative projects to test or develop new scientific approaches, methods and/or theories.
2. **Additional modules** within the context of currently funded research projects: This provides an option for grant recipients of projects currently funded by the Foundation – in addition to the grants already made – to extend their respective projects by an additional module addressing the above mentioned challenges. These modules need to be complementary or an add-on to the (overarching) ongoing project.

Applicants may apply for a **total funding amount of EUR 120,000 for a term of up to 18 months** for individual or cooperation projects involving up to 3 partners. These conditions apply for both funding schemes.

III. General Conditions

This call targets **postdoctoral researchers and professors** who are employed by a university or an extramural research institute. The proposal must be submitted by an applicant employed at an institution in Germany, the participation of researchers from abroad is welcome. In case of cooperation projects, the main applicant's university will be responsible for administering the grant.

The Foundation covers all project-related costs; however, general overheads cannot be granted. Funding will be allocated on a lump-sum basis, i.e. there is no need for the individual applicant to adhere to a firm budget plan. This is to enable a flexible reallocation of funds in accordance with the course of the project.

Projects are expected to start soon after the decision has been communicated. Towards the end of the funding period, the Foundation intends to organize a symposium at the conference center Xplanatorium Herrenhausen Palace in Hanover, Germany. Each project is invited to discuss and present the results of the research. The date of the symposium will be announced in due time.

The Foundation is unable to process applications that have been submitted in identical or similar form to any other funding body. Usually, applicants can only be involved in one proposal. Please contact the Foundation in case you intend to participate in more than one project.

IV. Application and Selection Procedure

The applications for **Small Grants** are to be submitted by the respective deadline (2 p.m.) in digital form via the Foundation's electronic application system together with the documents listed in Section V (Application Checklist). Following an internal assessment by the Foundation, an international and interdisciplinary expert panel reviews the applications based on the following criteria:

- relevance of the topic (in light of the Coronavirus pandemic induced challenges and changes),
- quality and originality of the research project,
- quality of the research team, also (where applicable) with respect to the composition of the applying team and the integration of inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives,
- potential for innovation and transformation of established research fields,
- potential for addressing major societal challenges beyond the current pandemic,
- relevance of the topic for science, the general public and society as a whole.

Due to the expected high number of proposals, the Foundation will not be able to provide feedback on proposals that were not successful.

Applications for **additional modules** can be filed at any time (until further notice). Before drafting detailed proposals, applicants should **first contact the program manager** responsible for the currently funded project.

V. Application Checklist

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](#)".

Applications have to be submitted **in English** via the Foundation's [electronic application system](#). A **mandatory template** for structuring your application can be found on the respective [website](#). In the application system, forms providing details on the applicant, the grant recipient (institution), project title, duration, rough budget breakdown, and a legally binding declaration have to be completed online. The following attachments (pdf) need to be uploaded:

- 4-page project description (see [template file](#)) including keywords, "In a Nutshell" section, figures (optional), and a maximum of 10 references
- Short CV of each applicant (up to 2 pages each)
- **Only if applicable:** In case the project involves substantial and systematic data generation and preservation, a data management plan (DMP) is required. Please either refer to the DMP provided by Science Europe (see [template file](#)) or use the institution-specific DMP of the target repository.
- **Only if applicable:** If you are currently not employed by the grant recipient institution please provide a signed letter by the respective chair or group leader stating the feasibility, the grant administration and the employability (the latter only in case of applying for your own position) under "Institutional Declarations".

VI. Information

If you have any questions regarding the application conditions, please feel free to send them by email to the contact persons listed below.

Small Grant Program:

- **Natural and life sciences:** Dr. Pavel Dutow (dutow@volkswagenstiftung.de)
- **Humanities:** Dr. Maximilian Räthel (raethel@volkswagenstiftung.de)
- **Social Sciences:** Dr. Hanna Wielandt (wielandt@volkswagenstiftung.de)

Additional Modules:

Program director in charge of currently funded project

For administrative and organisational questions and if you would like an appointment for a telephone consultation, please contact:

- **Administrative questions:** Catharina Altevogt (altevogt@volkswagenstiftung.de, +49 511 8381 397)

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Further Information

[FAQs for Applicants from Abroad](#)

[Short Proposal Template \(Download, RTF\)](#)

[Electronic Application System](#)

[Electronic Application System – Instructions and Tips](#)

[Personnel Rates for Academic Staff \(in Germany\)](#)

Webpage [“Corona Crisis and Beyond – Perspectives for Science, Scholarship and Society”](#)

Module: Science Communication and Knowledge Transfer

The Volkswagen Foundations offers funding for science communication and knowledge transfer both as an additional part of new proposals and for projects that currently receive funding from the Foundation. This measure aims to support communication formats between academics and non-academics (citizens, journalists, professional communicators etc.). Applicants should always contact the program director in charge before submitting their proposal. For further information about all funding opportunities within the context of science communication, see

www.volksstiftung.de/en/sciencecommunication.