VolkswagenStiftung

Funding Initiative

Key Issues for Research and Society –
Integrative Projects in the Area of the Humanities, Cultural Studies, and Social Sciences

1. Objectives

With this funding initiative the VolkswagenStiftung focuses on complex research questions which have the quality, significance and relevance of a "key issue for research and society". Increasingly, a successful analysis of such topics beyond conventional settings requires – as in cultural studies and social sciences – a close cooperation between several researchers with different expertise. However, the VolkswagenStiftung does not define the key topics. On the contrary, the call is for the resourcefulness and creativity of the scholars to track down corresponding problem areas and questions and to demonstrate the relevance and significance of a "key issue" in a comparative peer review process. A requirement for applying is that the project is primarily located in the humanities, cultural studies, or social sciences. However, co-applicants from science or engineering are also welcome.

2. Criteria

The following requirements for project acceptance reflect the programme's selection criteria. They are as follows:

- Defining a topic which holds the relevance and significance of a "key issue in research and society"

- Evidence of the outstanding project originality and its innovative potential

- Placing the research question in the scientific context of the relevant disciplines

- Identifying the topic as a clearly defined research question with concise project targets

- Developing a clear concept with core hypotheses and sound theoretical foundation placed in an integrative project design

- Detailing the methodological approach (and, if necessary, highlighting the combination of different methodological approaches)

- Scientific expertise of the team members and topic relevant composition of the research team

- Integration of junior researchers in the project
- Detailing a clear work schedule for all subprojects and their compilation to answer the overall research question
- Stating budget plans for each applicant
- Establishing networks in Germany and on an international level
- Developing a convincing publishing plan for the German and international scientific community
- Project promotion measures to attract public attention

3. Funding possibilities

Research teams may consist of 2 to 5 applicants at one or several scientific institutions. Funding may include personnel costs, especially for junior researchers, but also for guest professorships. Other suitable types of costs include equipment or running costs such as travel allowances – for example, this could cover the costs for conferences and for project relevant research visits in Germany or abroad, or those of your cooperation partners.

Regarding the research project, funding is available for up to four years. Project duration and personnel resources have to be chosen depending on the project requirements.

Please note: The VolkswagenStiftung can award grants to academic institutions only. In German-international team projects, the German research institute should take the lead concerning the overall project responsibility. See also general information "What Applicants Need to Know" (www.volkswagenstiftung.de/funding/general-information-what-applicants-need-to-know.html).

Electronic Application

Please use the Foundation's electronic application system in the internet:
portal.volkswagenstiftung.de

Please remember to print the **cover sheet** provided, sign it, and send it to us. Instructions on the electronic application system are provided online and below.

4. Application submission and processing

Applications will be subject to a two-stage review on an annual basis. First only pre-proposals (please see the checklist for pre-proposals) will be accepted and assessed competitively by international reviewers. Based on their decision a selected number of projects will be invited to submit a full proposal and to present the project in front of an interdisciplinary and international review panel. Please note: In case of rejection, the VolkswagenStiftung will not state the respective reasons; we apologize for any inconvenience. Project pre-proposals and proposals can be submitted in German or English.

5. Checklist for pre-proposals

Please submit the pre-proposal electronically via the webportal. Fill in the forms for (co-)applicants, institutions (i.e. the grant recipients) and project details (title, duration, budget). Moreover, the following documents should be added as pdf-files:

- Cover letter

- Summary (max. 1 page)

- Project description:
  Rationale and objective
  Current state of international research
  Hypotheses
  Methods
  Sources/material/corpora
  Project design
  Expected outcome (scientific publishing plan, public visibility)
  (max. 8 pages, Arial 11 pt font size, 1.5 spacing; pre-proposals of larger volume will not be accepted)

- Bibliography (selected bibliography, max. 2 pages)

- Short 1-page CV of each applicant with up to 5 project relevant or most important publications

- Work schedule (max. 2 pages)

  Other enclosures:

- Budget in short tabular form for each applicant (personnel cost, running costs, equipment, max. 2 pages)

- If required, miscellanea

Electronic Application Made Easy – Instruction and Tips

The VolkswagenStiftung accepts applications via its electronic application system portal www.volkswagenstiftung.de. Please note that only registered users of the electronic application system have access to application data and are able to submit applications and receive corresponding e-mail messages. Hence, it is required for all applicants with project responsibility to register him/herself or to ask a co-worker to register in his/her name with the proper e-mail address. Note: Your e-mail address and not your name is your webportal identification.

Please follow the six 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 your own password. When registering you will be asked about your work address details. Subsequently, you must **activate** your account using the link sent by e-mail. If you already have a user account you can immediately **login** using your e-mail address and password.

- The **function new application** starts the selection of the corresponding funding initiative (here: Key Issues in Research and Society), the application type (here: pre-proposal), the grant-receiving institution, and the language.

- Now – and later on – you can interrupt the completion of your application at any time. You can logout and login again as often as required.

- Please check whether the pre-filled data of the applicant are correct. Please **invite** all co-applicants. Furthermore, we need application data (e. g. project title, duration) and the budget. The budget must be uploaded as pdf-file under the heading "Other Enclosures". You are asked to enter all information in the respective forms.

- Please note that the **save button** does not transfer any data to the Foundation. You are able to revise all data until the **submission** of your application.

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- Under "Enclosures" you are able to upload files as required according to the checklist on the preceding page in the "Information for Applicants". Only pdf-files are accepted. Before submission all files can be exchanged for new versions.

- Once your application is complete you can **submit** it electronically to the Foundation. Additionally, a PDF generation of a cover sheet for print-out is required. Add your signature and send it by postal mail. In the course of processing your application the Foundation might request additional information. The function **new supplement** is used to upload and submit the respective files.