

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Announcement within the framework of the Federal Government's Strategy for the Internationalization of Science and Research

Regulations governing funding for African-German cooperation as part of the “Programme Advocating Women Scientists in STEM” (PAWS)

19 August 2019

1 AIM AND PURPOSE OF FUNDING, LEGAL BASIS

Equal rights for men and women is one of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (Sustainable Development Goal 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”), hence of global relevance. The BMBF is therefore focussing attention on the promotion of young female scientists and representation of women in academic leadership positions in its new Africa Strategy. As one of the Africa Strategy’s two cross-cutting issues, the increased support of women in higher education, research and innovation is recognized as a key factor for economic and societal development on the African continent. The aim of the BMBF is to achieve a qualitative increase in the employment of women and sustainable systemic development of science organizations, in particular in the STEM subjects, where women are usually very underrepresented.

The “Programme Advocating Women Scientists in STEM” (PAWS) uses the instrument of international cooperation in research to establish African-German networks of scientists in the STEM subjects which focus on subjects of mutual interest.

1.1 AIM AND PURPOSE OF FUNDING

The major aim of the measure is to achieve lasting improvement of the conditions for women in science institutions, in particular in Africa.

Each funded project must each tackle the following tasks:

- a) Implementation of joint research projects of high quality and originality for the benefit of both sides
- b) Identification of research topics which address a local need
- c) Promotion of young female researchers, in particular on the African partner side
- d) Provide support for the international networking of researchers

Funding will be provided in two phases in order to achieve the objectives of the call. The content and organization of the envisaged project will be planned during a preliminary phase. This phase provides the opportunity to develop existing collaborations between German applicants and partners in Africa further, or to initiate new collaborations. The aim is to prepare the submission of a full project proposal at the end of the project period. Following a positive evaluation of the preliminary phase, the research project can then be realized in the subsequent main phase. The long-term goal is to establish intensive, sustainable collaborations with partner institutions on the entire African continent.

The funding measure is carried out under the Federal Government's Strategy for the Internationalization of Education, Science and Research ([Internationalization Strategy](#)), in particular target areas 1 “Strengthening excellence through global cooperation”, 3

“Developing the international aspects of vocational training and qualifications”, and 4 “Working with emerging and developing countries to shape the global knowledge society”) and the new [Africa Strategy of the BMBF](#) (cross-cutting issue “Increased support of women”). The funding measure is also closely coordinated with the BMBF's national action plan for STEM “[MINT for the Future!](#)”. In addition, the funding measure supports the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the [Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024](#) (STISA 2024) of the African Union.

1.2 LEGAL BASIS

The Federal Government will award grants in accordance with these funding regulations, sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the administrative regulations adopted thereunder as well as the BMBF's regulations governing applications for expenditure-based grants (AZA) and/or cost-based grants (AZK). There is no legal entitlement to a grant. The granting authority will decide freely after due assessment of the circumstances within the framework of the budget funds available.

Under these funding regulations, state aid will be granted on the basis of Article 25(2)(a) fundamental research, (b) industrial research and/or (c) experimental development of the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 Declaring Certain Categories of Aid Compatible with the Internal Market in Application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (General Block Exemption Regulation – GBER) (OJ L 187 of 26 June 2014, p. 1) in the version of the Regulation (EU) 2017/1084 of 14 June 2017 (OJ L 156 of 20 June 2017, p. 1). Funding is provided in accordance with the Common Provisions set out in Chapter I GBER, in particular taking account of the definitions given in Article 2 of the Regulation (please refer to the Annex with regard to the requirements of state aid legislation applying to these funding regulations).

2 OBJECT OF FUNDING

Funding takes place in two phases which run consecutively:

- Phase 1: Preliminary phase (duration 6 months)
- Phase 2: Main phase (duration up to 4 years)

The research topics must relate to the STEM subjects and must address actual local or regional needs of the African partners. (Click on the following link for a list of all STEM subjects, as classified by the Federal Statistical Office (in German only): <https://www.komm-mach-mint.de/Service/Daten-Fakten/Das-zaehlt-zu-MINT>). The projects are expected to have great practical relevance and set out strategies for the political, societal and economic implementation of research findings; however, projects adopting a basic research approach are not categorically ruled out.

The target region in Africa can be a single country or include several countries.

2.1 PHASE 1: PRELIMINARY PHASE

Funding in the preliminary phase is provided to individual and collaborative projects which establish stable partnerships within six months and jointly draft a convincing plan for a research project to be realized in the main phase. Successful projects are those whose overall strategy adopts realistic and sustainable capacity building goals and which contribute to the achievement of gender equality in science and academia. The presentation of an implementation plan for the research results is therefore required. The drafted strategy provides the basis on which the project is evaluated for approval of the main phase.

Relevant authorities and political levels should be involved in the preliminary phase wherever possible. Any declarations of support must be submitted in writing.

Institutions from Germany and Africa can announce their interest in project cooperation using the web-based PT-Partnering platform (<https://partnering.pt-dlr.de/paws>) and for the specific purpose of initiating partnerships.

2.2 PHASE 2: MAIN PHASE

Successful completion of the scoping project in the preliminary phase is a condition, although not a guarantee, of funding in the main phase. The scoping projects are subject to a further evaluation based on the drafted strategy for approval of the main phase (selected projects to start around mid-2021).

The aim of a project in the main phase is to implement a four-year joint research project in the STEM subjects and to provide training for young women scientists that targets Masters and PhD-level degrees. This aim does not rule out the involvement of men in a project.

It is imperative for project partners from Africa to be involved in the main phase. Care must be taken to ensure that the participating foreign partners will co-finance at least part of their project activities. This may include in-kind and cash contributions. The foreign project partners must participate on an equal basis in the project activities of the main phase in every respect (expertise, work sharing, exploitation of property rights, etc.). Implementation of the project on a level playing field is expected.

3 RECIPIENTS OF FUNDING

Proposals may be submitted by research institutions and universities which apply for funding under the present call on behalf of a German-African research network. Commercial companies – particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – are eligible for funding, provided they are part of a collaboration with a university. Small and medium-sized enterprises or SMEs within the meaning of this call are companies that meet the requirements of the EU definition of SMEs (cf. Annex I of the GBER or the Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (notified under [document number C \(2003\) 1422\(2003/361/EC\)](#)). The funding recipient will declare its classification according to the Commission's recommendation to the granting authority in its written application for funding. Applicants are required to have a plant or branch (company) or another entity to act as funding recipient (university, research institution) in Germany at the time of payment of the grant.

During the main phase, the African partners involved in the project consortium may receive additional federal funds under transfer contracts. Funding including the grants for the foreign partners is paid to the German funding recipient in this case. The African partners will conclude a contract with the German funding recipient concerning the transfer of their grants in accordance with No. 12 of the administrative regulations pertaining to Section 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO). In accordance with No. 13a.2 of the administrative regulations pertaining to Section 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO), funding recipients are not permitted to transfer a grant that is calculated on the basis of eligible project-related costs.

Research institutions which receive basic funding from the Federal Government and/or the *Länder* can only be granted project funding supplementary to their institutional funding to cover additional project-related expenditure or costs under certain preconditions.

Concerning the conditions for when state aid is or is not deemed to be involved, and the extent to which funding can be provided without constituting aid, please consult the

Commission communication concerning the Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation of 27 June 2014 (OJ C 198 of 27 June 2014 p.1 ff); in particular Section 2.

4 SPECIAL PREREQUISITES FOR FUNDING

The project outline for the preliminary phase must be submitted by the German applicant(s). It is desirable to involve further partners from Germany and at least one cooperation partner from at least one African country during the process of drafting the project outline for the preliminary phase. The involvement of further African partners and the formation of a multilateral, multisectoral project consortium is expressly desired. African administrations and research institutions/organizations outside Africa and Germany can participate in consortia with their own funds.

Projects seeking funding under this call should document their potential for longer-term sustainable cooperation with the partner institutions in Africa. The proposal should clearly state how its research topic serves the interests of the German and the African partners.

The participating institutions will entrust a German and an African partner with the joint coordination of the measure. It is expressly desired that a woman scientist assume the task of project coordination at both the German institution and the African partner institution. Project leaders, together with their consortium, will draw up the application materials for the German applicant(s). When submitting their proposals for the main phase, all partners must submit a Letter of Intent (LoI) confirming their interest in project participation.

In cases where a project consists of a research collaboration in the main phase involving several German partners, these partners will establish the terms of their cooperation in a written agreement. In addition, it is recommended that a cooperation agreement be concluded between the German and African partners. Collaboration partners which are research institutions within the meaning of Article 2(83) GBER must ensure that no indirect aid flows to companies under the collaboration. The provisions of Section 2.2 of the Commission communication concerning the Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation of 27 June 2014 (OJ C 198 of 27 June 2014, p. 1) must be observed. Before a funding decision on a collaborative project is taken, the cooperation partners must prove that they have reached a basic consensus on further criteria stipulated by the BMBF (cf. [BMBF leaflet Nr. 0110](#))¹.

Funding recipients are obliged to participate in possible evaluation measures and to provide any information needed to assess the success of the funding measure. The BMBF also reserves the right to incorporate mandatory supportive measures in the main phase which support the participating German and African institutions in advancing the equality of men and women in their organization. Such activities include the presentation of examples of good practice, workshops to position the organization in terms of gender equality, and relevant follow-up advisory activities for the implementation of measures aimed at the specific organization.

5 TYPE, SCOPE AND RATES OF FUNDING

As a rule, project funding is granted in amounts of up to

¹ https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare; header BMBF under "Allgemeine Vordrucke und Vorlagen für Berichte".

- EUR 60,000 for a maximum period of six months in the preliminary phase
- EUR 570,000 for a maximum period of 48 months in the main phase.

Grants for commercial companies and for projects of research institutions which fall into the category of economic activities will be calculated on the basis of the eligible project-related costs. (For definition of economic activity, see no. 17 of the R&D&I state aid Framework). As a rule, up to 50 % can be covered by government grants, taking state aid legislation into account and depending on the project's relevance to application. BMBF policy requires an appropriate own contribution of at least 50 % towards the eligible costs incurred.

The basis for calculating the grants for higher education institutions, research and science institutions and similar establishments which do not fall into the category of economic activities is the eligible project-related expenditure (in the case of the Helmholtz centres and Fraunhofer, eligible project-related costs), which can receive up to 100 % coverage in individual cases, taking into account state aid legislation.

In the case of non-commercial research projects at higher education institutions and teaching hospitals, a flat-rate grant amounting to 20 % of total expenditure will be awarded during the main phase in addition to the eligible expenditure. This project grant is included in the above-mentioned maximum funding amount.

The calculation of the respective rate of funding must take account of the GBER (see Annex).

5.1 POTENTIAL FUNDING IN THE PRELIMINARY PHASE

The following expenditure/costs will be eligible for funding in the preliminary phase:

a) Funds for project-related staffing needs

Project-related expenditure/costs for student assistants and/or research staff incurred by the German recipient of funding can be funded to a limited extent.

As a rule, funding will not be provided to cover any of the expenditure/costs for staff, actual research or the participating institutions' normal basic equipment.

b) Travel and research periods

The following applies to the funding of travel and stays by researchers and experts employed by the German partner institution:

The costs/expenditure for travel to and from the project partner's location will be covered including the necessary visas (if by air: economy class) and the expenditure/costs for travel within Germany in accordance with the applicable rules of the institution or company. Per diem allowance is intended to cover overnight accommodation costs, insurance and vaccinations. For a list of per diem rates by country go to the Download Center of the International Bureau (https://www.internationales-buero.de/de/download_center.php). The day of arrival and day of departure are counted together as one day.

The following applies to the funding of travel and research periods by foreign project researchers and experts:

The costs/expenditure for travel to and from the project partner's location in Germany will be covered (economy class for air travel). Stays in Germany will be funded at a fixed rate of EUR 104 per day or EUR 2,300 per month. A per diem rate of EUR 77 will be provided for individual additional days in a subsequent month. The day of arrival and day of departure are counted together as one day. Accommodation costs, contributions to health insurance and, if applicable, other types of insurance are included in this allowance.

A BMBF workshop in Africa is planned to kick off the preliminary phase (possibly in association with a related large-scale event). The travel costs for this 2-3-day trip must be reflected in the report on expenditure of funds.

c) Workshops

Workshops with existing partners or to tap new potential for cooperation may receive support in Germany and in the partner country as follows:

Funding will be provided to cover various expenditure and/or costs related to the organization of workshops. Grants can be provided towards expenses such as accommodation of guests, transfers, provision of workshop documents, adequate hospitality and rental of premises. The exact amount of such support depends on the size of the event and the number of foreign guests. In such cases, no per diem allowances (see b) above) will be provided.

Because funding in the preliminary phase is aimed at project-related mobility and therefore does not constitute research funds within the meaning of the *Richtlinien für Zuwendungsanträge auf Ausgabenbasis* (regulations governing expenditure-based grants), flat-rate project grants cannot be awarded to universities and university hospitals.

As a rule, no funding will be provided to cover the cost of the participating institutions' normal basic equipment in whole or in part.

The determination of the respective eligible costs must take account of the GBER (see Annex).

5.2 POTENTIAL FUNDING IN THE MAIN PHASE

The following expenditures/costs are eligible for funding in the main phase (constituting the basis for the project proposal and cost/expenditure budget):

a) Staff for conducting scientific activities or research

Project-related expenditure/costs for student assistants and/or research staff (normally up to the TVöD German public sector pay scale EG 13), as a rule for a maximum period of 48 months for both the German and African partners.

It is expressly desired that women Masters or PhD students are hired who have the opportunity to earn their degree in the context of the research project.

b) Travel and research periods (cf. 5.1 b)

For the purpose of international networking, funding for mobility may be used by female African project leaders to enable short research periods at the German partner institution or in another African country (South-South mobility). Travel costs and per diem allowance are eligible for a grant in accordance with the regulations under 5.1 b below.

c) Workshops (cf. 5.1 c)

d) Project-related non-cash resources and funding for equipment

Funding for project-related non-cash resources (e.g. consumables, office supplies, appliances, patents) incurred by the German and African partner can be provided to a limited extent.

e) Contracts

The expenditure or costs incurred for contracts with third parties in Germany or Africa may be eligible for funding to a limited extent.

f) Flat-rate project grants

In the case of non-commercial research projects at higher education institutions and teaching hospitals, the German recipient of funding will receive a flat-rate grant amounting to 20 % of total expenditure in addition to the eligible expenditure.

g) Conference participation

The participation of German and African researchers involved in the project at relevant international conferences, and junior researchers in particular, is desirable. Conference fees and costs for travel and accommodation (cf. 5.2 b) are reimbursable.

h) Supporting measure

Funding for gender equality measures implemented by the equal opportunities officer and possibly further relevant organs within the applicant institution in Germany and/or Africa may be available to a limited extent.

As a rule, no funding will be provided to cover the cost of the participating institutions' normal basic equipment in whole or in part.

The determination of the respective eligible costs must take account of the GBER (see Annex).

6 OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Kostenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung an gewerbliche Unternehmen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsvorhaben* (NKBF 2017) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to Commercial Companies for Research and Development Projects on a Cost Basis) will be part of the notification of award for grants on a cost basis.

Notification of award for grants on an expenditure basis will include the *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Ausgabenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung zur Projektförderung* (NABF) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research for the Promotion of Projects on an Expenditure Basis) and the *Besondere Nebenbestimmungen für den Abruf von Zuwendungen im mittelbaren Abrufverfahren im Geschäftsbereich des BMBF* (BNBest-mittelbarer Abruf-BMBF) for the drawdown of funds.

For the purpose of conducting progress reviews within the meaning of administrative regulation 11a pertaining to section 44 BHO, funding recipients are required to provide the data necessary for the progress review to the BMBF or the institutions charged with such tasks without delay. The information will be used exclusively for the purposes of supporting research and any subsequent evaluation; it will be treated confidentially and published in anonymized form, making it impossible to trace it back to individual persons or organizations.

Funding recipients are expected to ensure open electronic access if they publish the results of the research project in a scientific journal. This can be done through publication in an electronic journal which is accessible to the public free of charge. If the results are initially published in a way which does not provide the public with free electronic access, the article must be made publicly available free of charge by electronic means following an embargo period where appropriate (secondary publication). Embargo periods for secondary publication must not exceed 12 months. The BMBF expressly welcomes secondary open access publication of scientific monographs resulting from the project.

7 PROCEDURE

7.1 INVOLVEMENT OF A PROJECT MANAGEMENT AGENCY, APPLICATION DOCUMENTS, OTHER DOCUMENTS AND USE OF THE ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SYSTEM

The BMBF has currently entrusted the following project management agency with implementing the funding measure:

DLR Project Management Agency
European and International Cooperation
Heinrich-Konen-Straße 1
53227 Bonn
Internet: <http://www.internationales-buero.de>

Contact persons

For information related to the research topic:

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It is recommended that applicants contact the project management agency for advice on applications.

Any relevant changes will be announced in the *Bundesanzeiger* (Federal Gazette) or in another suitable form.

Forms for funding applications, guidelines, leaflets, information and auxiliary terms and conditions are available [here](#).

Applicants must use the 'PT-Outline' electronic tool for drafting project outlines [<https://ptoutline.eu/app/PAWS>] and the 'easy-Online' electronic application system for drafting formal proposals (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>).

7.2 TWO-PHASE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The application procedure consists of two phases.

7.2.1 SUBMISSION AND SELECTION OF PROJECT OUTLINES FOR THE PRELIMINARY PHASE

In the first step of the preliminary phase, project outlines must be submitted to the PT-DLR by

10 October 2019

Outlines must be submitted in electronic form using the PT-Outline online tool (<https://ptoutline.eu/app/PAWS>).

In the case of research collaborations, the project outlines must be submitted in consultation with the proposed collaboration coordinator.

The deadline for submission is not a cut-off deadline. However, it may not be possible to consider project outlines received after the above date.

Project outlines should not exceed six pages (including attachments). In order to facilitate coordination with the African partners, the project outline may be submitted in English. In this case, the outline must be submitted along with a one-page summary in German.

The outline should include the following aspects of the project:

- I. Information about project coordination and the partners
- II. Description of the scientific objective of the project
- III. Information on the state of the art (including the applicant's previous work, experience and findings)
- IV. Assessment of potential for exploitation and application
Involvement of third parties
- V. Estimated expenditure/costs (prospective funding requirement)

A legal claim to funding cannot be derived from the submission of a project outline.

7.2.1.1 SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR THE PRELIMINARY PHASE

The project outlines received will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- I. Representation of women researchers in the project, in particular in the project management of the German and African partner
- II. Fulfilment of the formal prerequisites for funding
- III. Compliance with the funding aims of the call stated in section 1 above and the object of funding stated in section 2 above
- IV. Scientific criteria
 - a. Scientific quality and originality of the project idea
 - b. Relevance to BMBF programmes on the topic
 - c. Expertise of the project management and the German and international partners involved
- V. Criteria concerning international cooperation
 - a. Initiation/development of new partnerships
 - b. Experience of the project management in international cooperation
 - c. Creation of lasting bilateral/international partnerships
 - d. Quality of the cooperation and added value for the partner institutions
 - e. Support for young researchers and of young women researchers in particular
 - f. Balance within the consortium – substantial contribution of African partners
- VI. Plausibility and feasibility of the project (financing; milestones; time frame)

Suitable project outlines will be selected for funding on the basis of the above criteria. Applicants will be informed in writing of the result of the selection. The BMBF reserves the right to seek advice from experts before making a decision on funding.

The project outlines and any other documents submitted in this phase of the procedure will not be returned.

7.2.1.2 SUBMISSION OF FORMAL APPLICATIONS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURE FOR THE PRELIMINARY PHASE

In the second phase of the procedure, the applicants whose project outlines have been successful will be invited to submit formal proposals. An application for funding is only complete if at least the requirements of Article 6(2) GBER (cf. Annex) are fulfilled. The project description in the formal application should not exceed ten pages (including attachments). In order to facilitate coordination with the African partners, the project description may be submitted in English. In this case, the outline must be submitted along with a one-page summary in German. The formal proposals must observe and fulfil any thematic or funding requirements and/or the evaluators' recommendations for the implementation of the project.

The "easy-Online" electronic application system must be used for drafting formal applications (taking into account the requirements set out in the Annex) (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>). In the case of research collaborations, the funding applications must be submitted in consultation with the proposed collaboration coordinator(s).

For projects starting after 19 April 2018, the structure of formal proposals must in all cases adhere to the *Zuwendungsanträge auf Ausgaben-/ bzw. Kostenbasis* (regulations governing expenditure-based grants). Details can be read [here](#). Guidelines, leaflets, further information and auxiliary terms and conditions are available online at <http://foerderportal.bund.de/>, "Formularschrank BMBF".

Formal proposals must include:

- I. Cooperation objectives
- II. Planned activities for implementing the goals of the funding measure mentioned in section 1 above
- III. Added value of international cooperation
 - a. Contributions of the international partners, access to international resources
 - b. Relevance of the project to the cooperation policy objectives of the call
 - c. Cooperation experience, previous collaboration
- IV. Detailed description of the cooperation work plan
 - a. Proposed milestones of the cooperation project, milestone planning in terms of content and time
 - b. Project-related resources planning
- V. Utilization plan
 - a. Consolidation of the cooperation with the partners in Africa
 - b. Plans for cooperation in follow-up projects

c. Plans for expansion of cooperation to other institutions and networks

VI. Reason for funding requirement

A claim to funding cannot be derived from the submission of a formal proposal. The funding applications and any other documents submitted will not be returned. A funding decision will be taken after a final review based on the above criteria and evaluation.

7.2.2 SUBMISSION AND SELECTION OF PROJECT OUTLINES FOR THE MAIN PHASE

The strategic plan developed in the preliminary phase for implementation of the research project in the main phase must be submitted to the project management agency by the end of the preliminary phase at the latest. The grant award document for the preliminary phase will notify the applicant of the deadline and form in which the proposals to be developed must be submitted. Applicants must use the 'PT-Outline' electronic tool for drafting project outlines. The project management agency will provide the link to the tool in good time.

Project proposals should not exceed eight pages (including attachments). Proposals should be drafted in English but must be accompanied by a meaningful summary in German.

The proposal should include the following aspects of the project:

- I. Information about project coordinator(s) and German/foreign project partners
- II. Summary of project objectives and activities for implementing the goals of the funding measure identified in section 1, research priorities, translation of results
- III. Support for young female researchers
- IV. Scientific framework of the project (state of the art; (possible) involvement of third parties, such as SMEs)
- V. International cooperation (added value of international cooperation, contributions of the international partners, possibly access to international resources, experience of the participating partners in international cooperation, evidence of previous collaborations, if any)
- VI. Description of the planned steps of the cooperation project
- VII. Estimated expenditure/costs

A Declaration of Intent must state the foreign partners' will to co-finance at least part of their project activities in the main phase. This may include in-kind and cash contributions.

7.2.2.1 SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR THE MAIN PHASE

The proposal provides the basis on which the project is evaluated by external experts for approval of the main phase.

The submitted proposal will be reviewed and evaluated according to the following criteria:

- I. Representation of women researchers in the project, in particular in the project management of the German and African partner
- II. Fulfilment of the formal prerequisites for funding
- III. Compliance with the funding aims of the call stated in section 1 above and the object of funding stated in section 2 above

- IV. Scientific criteria
 - a. Scientific quality and originality of the project
 - b. Relevance to BMBF programmes on the topic
 - c. Expertise of the project management and the German and international partners involved
 - d. Scientific benefits and prospects for the exploitation of the expected results
- V. Criteria concerning international cooperation
 - a. Initiation/development of new partnerships
 - b. Experience of the project management in international cooperation
 - c. Creation of lasting bilateral/international partnerships
 - d. Quality of the cooperation and added value for the partner institutions
 - e. Promotion of young scientists, in particular of young female scientists (capacity building strategy)
 - f. Quality and balance of the proposed consortium and envisaged cooperation – substantial contribution of African partners
 - g. Support from the political bodies relevant to project implementation in the partner country
- VI. Plausibility and feasibility of the project (financing; milestones; time frame)

Suitable project ideas will be selected for funding on the basis of the above criteria and evaluation. Applicants will be informed in writing of the result of the selection.

The project proposals and any other documents submitted in this phase of the procedure will not be returned.

7.2.2.2 SUBMISSION OF FORMAL PROPOSALS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURE FOR THE MAIN PHASE

Applicants whose project outlines have been successful will be invited to submit formal proposals. An application for funding is only complete if at least the requirements of Article 6(2) GBER (cf. Annex) are fulfilled. The project description in the formal application should not exceed twelve pages (including attachments) and must be clearly distinct from the concept paper (cf. structure guidelines). In order to facilitate coordination with the African partners, the project description may be submitted in English. In this case, the outline must be submitted along with a one-page summary in German.

The "easy-Online" electronic application system must be used for drafting formal applications (taking into account the requirements set out in the Annex) (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>). In the case of research collaborations, the funding applications must be submitted in consultation with the proposed collaboration coordinator(s).

For projects starting as of 19 April 2018, the structure of formal proposals must in all cases adhere to the *Zuwendungsanträge auf Ausgaben-/ bzw. Kostenbasis* (regulations governing expenditure-based grants). Details can be read [here](#). Guidelines, leaflets, further information and auxiliary terms and conditions are available online at <http://foerderportal.bund.de/>, "Formularschrank BMBF".

The application must clearly define how all the partners will participate in the project's tasks and results. The protection of intellectual property also plays an important role in this context.

Formal proposals must include:

- I. A detailed (sub)project description
 - a. Strategy for the implementation of the research results (Theory of Change and Impact Pathway)
 - b. Identification of the value added for Germany and the partner country/countries in Africa
 - c. Description of the scientific objectives, need for and relevance of the envisaged project (e.g. the reasons why the solution sought in the project means significant progress compared to the current situation)
 - d. International networking: Promoting the visibility of female African researchers
 - e. Stimulating a discourse between the political and research communities, society and industry on research and innovation issues
- II. A detailed work plan and time schedule
 - a. Feasibility of the work plan
 - b. Plausibility of the time schedule
- III. Description of the continuity of own research: Description of further steps and research questions the project will generate
- IV. Detailed information about the financing of the projects
 - a. Appropriateness and necessity of the requested funding
 - b. Guarantee of overall financing during the entire project period
- V. Sustainability of the measure/exploitation plan
 - a. Expected scientific results
 - b. Lasting consolidation of the cooperation with the partner in Africa
 - c. Plans for cooperation in follow-up projects
 - d. Plans for expansion of cooperation to other institutions and networks
 - e. Measures to implement the research results, initiate a dialogue with relevant politicians in the partner country
 - a. Preparation of follow-up activities (e.g. in BMBF specialist programmes, Horizon 2020, etc.).

The formal proposals must observe and fulfil any thematic or funding requirements and/or the evaluators' recommendations for the implementation of the project.

A claim to funding cannot be derived from the submission of a formal proposal. The research proposals and any other documents submitted will not be returned. A funding decision will be taken after a final review based on the above criteria and evaluation.

The deadline for submission of the formal proposals will be announced soon after the evaluation of the outline.

7.3 PROVISIONS TO BE OBSERVED

The approval and payment of and accounting for the funds as well as the proof and examination of the proper use and, if necessary, the revocation of the award and the reclaiming of the funds awarded are governed by sections 48 to 49a of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVfG), sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the related administrative regulations unless deviation is allowed from the administrative regulations under the present funding regulations. The *Bundesrechnungshof* is entitled to carry out audits in accordance with Section 91 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO).

8 VALIDITY

These funding regulations will be valid until the day of expiry of their legal basis for state aid, the GBER, to which a six-month adaptation period is added, that is, until 30 June 2021. If the period of the GBER is extended without relevant amendments concerning state aid rules, the duration of these funding regulations will be extended accordingly, though not beyond 31 December 2026. If the GBER is not extended but replaced by a new GBER or if relevant amendments are made to the content of the currently applicable GBER, follow-up funding regulations will be adopted which will comply with the then applicable exemption provisions and remain effective at least until 31 December 2026.

Bonn,

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Peter Webers

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Annex: Requirements of state aid legislation

Annex

The following requirements of state aid legislation apply to these funding regulations:

1. General prerequisites for funding

The aid is only lawful if all the prerequisites of Chapter I GBER and the prerequisites in Chapter III applicable to the designated category of state aid are fulfilled in line with Article 3 GBER and the national courts are obliged to order the repayment of unlawful state aid in accordance with the rulings of the European courts.

In applying for funding under these funding regulations, applicants commit themselves to actively cooperate in complying with state aid legislation. Thus, applicants must, upon application or subsequently, provide information and documentation requested by the funding provider as evidence of credit worthiness and conformity with state aid requirements. Furthermore, applicants must cooperate within any procedures of or at the European Commission and comply with all requirements of the Commission.

A prerequisite for the granting of state aid under an aid scheme exempted by the GBER is that this has an incentive effect within the meaning of Article 6 GBER. State aid is considered to have an incentive effect if the beneficiary has submitted a written application for the aid in the Member State concerned before work on the project or activity starts. The application for aid must include at least the following information: name and size of the undertaking; description of the project including its start and end dates; location of the project; the costs of the project; type of aid (e.g. grant, loan, guarantee, repayable advance payment or capital injection) and level of the public financing needed for the project.

State aid on the basis of the GBER will not be granted if there are grounds for exclusion under Article 1(2 to 5) GBER; in particular this applies if the undertaking is subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market or the undertaking is an “undertaking in difficulty” as defined in Article 2(18) GBER.

European legislation requires that every individual aid exceeding EUR 500 000 must be published on a special website (cf. Article 9 GBER).

In individual cases, the aid received may be monitored by the Commission in line with Article 12 GBER.

State aid is granted under these funding regulations in the form of grants in accordance with Article 5(1 and 2) GBER.

The GBER restricts the granting of state aid for economic activities in the following areas to the corresponding maximum amounts stated below:

- EUR 40 million per undertaking, per project which mostly involves fundamental research (Article 4(1)(i)(i) GBER); that is the case where more than half of the eligible costs of the project are incurred through activities which fall within the category of fundamental research;
- EUR 20 million per undertaking, per project which mostly involves industrial research (Article 4(1)(i)(ii) GBER); that is the case where more than half of the eligible costs of the project are incurred through activities which fall within the category of industrial research or within the categories of industrial research and fundamental research taken together;
- EUR 15 million per undertaking, per project which mostly involves experimental development (Article 4(1)(i)(iii) GBER); that is the case where more than half of the eligible costs of the project are incurred through activities which fall within the category of experimental development.

The rules concerning cumulation set out in Article 8 GBER must be observed when determining whether these maximum amounts (notification thresholds) are respected. The maximum amounts may not be circumvented by artificially splitting up projects with related content. Partial approval up to the notification threshold for an aid is not permitted.

2. Scope/rates of funding; cumulation

The following provisions of the GBER apply to these funding regulations, in particular concerning eligible costs and state aid intensities. The following eligible costs and intensities set out the overall thresholds within which eligible costs and rates of funding for projects involving economic activity can be granted.

The aided part of the research project must fall completely within one or more of the following categories:

- Fundamental research
- Industrial research
- Experimental development

(cf. Article 25(2) GBER; definitions according to Article 2 (84 ff.) GBER). For the purpose of classifying research work as industrial research and experimental development, please refer to the relevant information in no. 75 and footnote no. 2 of the R&D&I Community Framework.

The eligible costs of each R&D project must be allocated to the relevant R&D categories.

Eligible costs are: Article 25(3) GBER:

- Staffing costs: for researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the project (Article 25(3)(a) GBER);
- Costs of instruments and equipment to the extent and for the period used for the project. Where such instruments and equipment are not used for their full life for the project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the project, as calculated on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles are considered as eligible (Article 25(3)(b) GBER);
- Costs for buildings and land, to the extent and for the period used for the project. With regard to buildings, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the project, as calculated on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles are considered as eligible. For land, costs of commercial transfer or actually incurred capital costs are eligible (Article 25(3)(c) GBER);
- Costs of contractual research, knowledge and patents bought or licensed from outside sources at arm's length conditions, as well as costs of consultancy and equivalent services used exclusively for the project (Article 25(3)(d) GBER);
- Additional overheads and other operating expenses, including costs of materials, supplies and similar products, incurred directly as a result of the project (Article 25(3)(e) GBER).

Pursuant to Article 25(5) GBER, the aid intensity for each beneficiary must not exceed the following rates:

- 100% of the eligible costs for fundamental research (Article 25(5)(a) GBER),
- 50% of the eligible costs for industrial research (Article 25(5)(b) GBER),
- 25% of the eligible costs for experimental development (Article 25(5)(c) GBER).

The aid intensities for industrial research and experimental development may be increased up to a maximum 80 % of the costs eligible for state aid as follows if the prerequisites stated in Article 25(6) are fulfilled:

- by 10 percentage points for medium-sized enterprises
- by 20 percentage points for small enterprises
- by 15 percentage points if one of the following conditions is fulfilled:
 - The project involves effective collaboration
 - between undertakings among which at least one is an SME, or is carried out in at least two EU Member States, or in a Member State and in a Contracting Party of the EEA Agreement, and no single undertaking bears more than 70% of the eligible costs, or
 - between an undertaking and one or more research and knowledge-dissemination organisations, where the latter bear at least 10% of the eligible costs and have the right to publish their own research results;

- The results of the project are widely disseminated through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open source software.

Article 7(1) GBER requires that the eligible costs be supported by documentary evidence which must be clear, specific and contemporary.

For the purposes of calculating aid intensity and eligible costs, all figures used must be taken before any deduction of tax or other charge.

For the purposes of complying with the maximum permissible aid intensity, the rules concerning cumulation set out in Article 8 GBER must be observed:

The cumulation of several aid measures for the same eligible costs/expenditure is only allowed in exceptional cases as specified below:

Where European Union funding centrally managed by the institutions, agencies, joint undertakings or other bodies of the Union, which is not directly or indirectly under the control of Member States and therefore does not constitute state aid (including the European Structural and Investment Funds among others), is combined with state aid, only the latter may be considered for determining whether notification thresholds and maximum aid intensities or maximum aid amounts are respected, provided that the total amount of public funding granted in relation to the same eligible costs (including centrally managed Union funds) does not exceed the most favourable funding rate laid down in the applicable rules of European Union law.

Aid with identifiable eligible costs exempted by the GBER may be cumulated with:

- a. any other state aid, as long as those measures concern different identifiable eligible costs,
- b. any other state aid, in relation to the same eligible costs, partly or fully overlapping, only if such cumulation does not result in exceeding the highest aid intensity or aid amount applicable to this aid under the GBER.

Aid without identifiable eligible costs may be cumulated with any other state aid without identifiable eligible costs, up to the highest relevant total financing threshold fixed in the specific circumstances of each case by the GBER or a decision adopted by the Commission.

State aid exempted under the GBER may not be cumulated with any de minimis aid in respect of the same eligible costs if such cumulation would result in an aid intensity or aid amount exceeding those laid down in Chapter III of the GBER.