



# **Basic services in the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI)**

Second statement by the NFDI Expert Committee  
on the preparation and submission of proposals for basic service  
consortia in connection with the NFDI

July 2021

## Premises

In its [second statement](#), the NFDI Expert Committee distinguishes between two categories of cross-sectional tasks. Firstly, there are tasks that include establishing reputation mechanisms, teaching relevant skills and addressing legal and ethical issues. Such tasks are carried out jointly by the consortia, including in the sections of the NFDI Association.

Secondly, there are tasks involved in the joint **establishment and operation of basic services for the NFDI**. These include services relating to authentication and authorisation, tools for data annotation and also terminologies and services for standardised documentation of software developments. The second statement issued by the NFDI Expert Committee sets out notes and requirements relating to these so-called basic services, and there are three premises that deserve particular emphasis here.

1. The requirement for submitting a proposal for a basic service consortium is that the basic service(s) proposed cannot be covered sustainably and across disciplines by the subject-oriented consortia themselves. Parallel developments are only permitted in exceptional cases and only if such solutions clearly result from the needs of the consortia or benefit from competition.
2. Basic service initiatives must be closely aligned with the needs of the consortia, and this needs orientation must be appropriately demonstrated in the proposal.
3. Basic service initiatives must develop their technical solutions by means of a process that is supported by the consortia and they must ensure acceptance by the consortia. This negotiation process is fundamental to basic service initiatives and must also be documented in the proposal.

Furthermore, in accordance with the [agreement concluded by the federal government and the states](#), the NFDI Expert Committee confirms that funding for basic service consortia cannot be provided at the expense of funding for subject-oriented consortia.

### **Assessment in the light of the 3rd NFDI Conference**

At the [third NFDI conference](#), a plenary session was held on the subject of basic services: this involved presentation and discussion of ideas for a number of initiatives. In the light of these presentations and discussions, the NFDI Expert Committee has arrived at the following assessment:

- Basic services are highly relevant to the NFDI.
- There is a substantial need for coordination in order to identify the basic services required and the choice of concrete technical implementation.
- It is essential to ensure that the consortia already receiving funding are directly involved in the negotiation process relating to potential basic services.
- The consortia themselves must define their needs in terms of basic services and coordinate these among each other, in particular as distinct from those services they are to provide themselves as part of the overall structure of the NFDI.
- Infrastructure facilities that are able and willing to establish and offer potential basic services also need to coordinate with each other.
- It will be important to clarify the relationship between basic services and the sections being established within the NFDI Association.
- The timing for proposal submission for one or more basic service consortia must be aligned with the subject-oriented consortia.

Based on this assessment, the NFDI Expert Committee is **opening up the process for proposal submission for NFDI basic service consortia** as described below and issues the guiding questions and notes as listed below.

### **Further procedure**

The process for submitting proposals for subject-oriented consortia in the third round of the call will be separated from the process for submitting proposals for basic service consortia. In concrete terms, this means that a proposal for one or more basic service consortia is to be submitted at a later date. In the run-up to proposal submission, the NFDI Directorate will support the above-mentioned coordination and negotiation processes, in particular the interlinking of the basic service initiatives with the subject-oriented consortia as part of a multi-stage process. This process will be launched during the fourth quarter of 2021. The schedule for proposal submission and review of basic service consortia will then be determined by the NFDI Expert Committee. In the course of this extended preparatory phase, the NFDI consortia will also have the opportunity to comment on the guiding questions listed below.

In addition to the possibility of submitting a proposal for a basic service consortium, potential applicants should also consider other funding options such as the DFG funding programmes “Information Infrastructures for Research Data” and “e-Research Technologies”.

**Contact persons at the DFG Head Office**

Dr. Matthias Katerbow, +49 228 885-2358

Additional contact persons:

NFDI Hotline, +49 228 885-3500, [nfdi@dfg.de](mailto:nfdi@dfg.de)

## Guiding questions and notes for applying for NFDI basic service consortia

### 1. Maturity and relevance of the consortium

- Embedding of the basic service consortium in the subject-oriented consortia and involvement of relevant partners
  - L 1:** What are the needs of other consortia to be met by the basic service?  
How will the need for the proposed basic service be continuously identified and reviewed, also with a view to avoiding redundant developments?
  - L 2:** Who will the end users of the basic service be? How will it be possible for them to use the basic service and what measures will be taken to explain its use? How will the highest possible level of acceptance be promoted among the relevant user community?
  - L 3:** What are end users' needs in relation to the basic service? How is the involvement of end users ensured in the development of the basic service?
  - L 4:** Why are subject-oriented consortia not able to provide the proposed basic service themselves in a sustainable and interdisciplinary form?
  - L 5:** Which consortia and/or consortium initiatives will be partners to the development of the proposed basic service?
  - L 6:** In the case of a basic service consortium proposing multiple basic services: what synergies result from the joint proposal submission for basic services?
  - L 7:** What agreements and differentiations are established in relation to other consortia that are submitting proposals for one (or more) basic service(s) or developing and providing basic services as part of their subject-oriented work?
- Structural importance to the NFDI and the research system
  - L 8:** How does the proposed basic service consortium contribute to the internal networking of the NFDI as an overall structure?
  - L 9:** Where do links exist between the basic service consortium and sections of the NFDI Association and how will these be implemented?
- International compatibility
  - L 10:** What potential national and international links exist for the basic service and how will these links be pursued in concrete terms?
  - L 11:** How will the development of the basic service be coordinated with other relevant activities, in particular European and international initiatives?

## 2. Internal organisation, operating model, sustainability

- Efficiency and sustainability

**L 12:** How will negotiation, interlinking and coordination with subject-oriented and basic service consortia take place during the proposed project duration and beyond?

**L 13:** Where there are needs for the further development of a basic service that only arise as part of the ongoing process, how will these be identified, acted on and implemented?

**L 14:** Has a written agreement been signed with the NFDI Directorate on coordinated cooperation?

**L 15:** How will continuous feedback be provided on the development of the basic service to the NFDI Directorate and other bodies of the NFDI Association?

**L 16:** How will the NFDI Directorate be able to play a moderating and steering role in the implementation of the proposed basic service?

- Operating and financing model

**L 17:** How will the interoperability of the basic service be ensured on a permanent basis?

**L 18:** What legal framework conditions need to be established for the permanent operation of the basic service?

**L 19:** How will it be ensured that subject-oriented consortia will accept the basic service proposed and reliably make use of it?

**L 20:** What strategic partnerships will be necessary for the development and later operation of the basic service and how will these be established?

**L 21:** Please describe a possible operating and financing model to ensure that provision of the basic service is safeguarded in the long term.

## 3. Research data management

- Subject-specific relevance and quality of the measures

**L 22:** What fundamental infrastructural services are provided by the basic services consortium?

**L 23:** Please describe the state of the art of the proposed basic service. Explain how this level will be achieved in the context of implementation for the NFDI and how the quality of the services will be ensured in the medium and long term.

**L 24:** Please describe in detail the technical implementation of the proposed basic service. In doing so, consider what other existing developments can be used and what new developments will be necessary.

**L 25:** By which date is the requested basic service to be established? What are the milestones that will ensure implementation by this time?

- Establishment of reliable services

**L 26:** How will the scalability of a basic service be ensured for all consortia? Please specify both technical and non-technical aspects.