

Guidelines

for Consultation Panels on Initiatives in the Collaborative Research Centres Programme



Disclaimer: The English translation of this document is provided for informational purposes. In the event of a discrepancy between the English and the German versions, the German text takes precedence.

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Introduction

For the consultation panel on initiatives to establish a new Collaborative Research Centre or CRC/Transregio on the basis of a draft proposal, we ask you to consider the following criteria and questions.

The consultation panel is the basis for a first selection stage in the Collaborative Research Centres Programme. The purpose of the consultation panel is to help the initiative and the Senate Committee on Collaborative Research Centres (see section [III](#)) assess whether the draft proposal, in the opinion of independent experts, is an appropriate basis for a proposal. The main emphasis is on the overall strategy as opposed to the topical or methodological details of the individual projects.

Please note the formal aspects of the consultation panel as per section [II](#). Information on the consultation and decision process can be found in section [III](#). If you have any questions, please contact the officer responsible for the initiative at the DFG Head Office in the Collaborative Research Centres division.

I. Criteria and Questions

I.1. Collaborative Research Centre as a Whole

How do you assess the Collaborative Research Centre as a whole considering the following criteria?

Research

Research quality

Scholarly significance and timeliness of research topic
Originality and openness to risk
Research aspiration and long-term perspective
Preliminary work / results achieved
International visibility of the Centre
CRC's underlying information infrastructure concept

Coherence and synergies

Conclusiveness of project structure
Cooperation across disciplines
Added value through cooperation

Individuals

Qualification of people involved taking into account their respective career stage

Relevant expertise
Publication output
International visibility and networks

Research Profile of Applicant University(-ies)

Core support

Staffing situation
Research infrastructure

Strategy and planning

Role of Centre in strategic planning at applicant university/universities

Targeted personnel planning

Where applicable: cooperation with other research institutions

Where applicable: impact on teaching

Support Structures**Promotion of researchers in early career phases**

Participation of individuals in early career phases in the Centre

Opportunities for professional development at the doctoral and postdoctoral level

Promotion of equity and diversity

Participation of female researchers in the Centre

Measures to promote gender equality for researchers, diversity in research and the compatibility of research and family

Management and dissemination

Management structures of the Centre

Quality assurance and project selection

Where applicable: public outreach / knowledge transfer

I.2. Research Projects**How do you rate the scientific quality considering the following criteria?**

- Originality, innovation and risk
- Coherence, feasibility and long-term prospects
- Awareness of the current state of research
- Qualifications, preliminary work and publication output of designated principal investigator(s)
 - taking into account the individual career stage in each case
- Differentiation from other projects by the designated principal investigator(s)

How do you rate the integration of the project within the Centre?

- Does the project relate closely to the initiative's central idea?
- To what other projects do close relationships exist? How do the projects collaborate?

I.3. Assessment of Prospects for Success**How do you rate the initiative's prospects for success?**

- Does a proposal under the Collaborative Research Centre Programme appear to be plausible and promising, or would submission to another DFG funding programme be more likely to succeed?
- In summary, how do you rate the initiative's viability under the Collaborative Research Centre Programme according to the following four categories:
 - The draft proposal is promising and viable; it provides a suitable basis for a proposal (category A).
 - The draft proposal is generally promising and viable; if the suggestions and notes are incorporated, it will provide a suitable basis for a proposal (category B).
 - The draft proposal shows potential; if the points that have been criticised are revised and the concerns raised are addressed, it can provide a suitable basis for a proposal (category C).
 - The draft proposal in its current form does not provide a suitable basis for a proposal (category D).

II. Formal Aspects of the Consultation Panel

II.1. Confidentiality

All proposals and draft proposals submitted to the DFG must be treated confidentially. The contents of a draft proposal may not be exploited for the reviewers' or third parties' own research. Any questions regarding the draft proposal or the consultation process should be directed exclusively to the DFG Head Office

II.2. Conflicts of Interest

Please consider whether there are circumstances that may create an appearance of partiality. For more information on avoiding conflicts of interest, see DFG form 10.201:

www.dfg.de/formulare/10_201

II.3. List of publications

In the proposal you will find a project- and subject-related list of publications, and also a list of scientific results in the curriculum vitae. The DFG provides clear guidelines regarding the structure of publication lists in a proposal. To find out more, see our Guidelines for Publication Lists (DFG form 1.91). Please include the publication lists in your assessment, especially the highlighted papers in the proposal's list of publications. Additional information is available at:

www.dfg.de/formulare/1_91

The assessment of a researcher's achievements must be carried out in its entirety and based on substantive qualitative criteria. In addition to the publication of articles, books, data and software, other dimensions can be taken into account, such as involvement in teaching, academic self-administration, public relations or knowledge and technology transfer. Details of quantitative metrics such as impact factors and h-indices are not required and are not to be considered as part of the review.

II.4. Equity and diversity

In all of its funding programmes, the DFG actively promotes equity and diversity in the German research system. The review must not be based on non-scientific criteria such as age, gender, family obligations, origin or health restrictions, to the detriment of the applicant. Researchers are encouraged to declare periods of absence and periods of

restricted academic activity (minimum duration: three months in a year) due to unavoidable delays in their career. Such periods should be given appropriate consideration in the researcher's favour in order to compensate for any disadvantages experienced. For further information on equity and diversity in research, see:

www.dfg.de/diversity/en

In order to be able to make non-discriminatory, science-led funding decisions, it is important for the evaluation process to be based solely on the above criteria and free of non-scientific factors. Regularly engaging with the topic of bias can sensitise people to their own, often unconscious prejudices, thereby counteracting any potential bias in assessment. For further information, please refer to the recommendations and background material that are available at:

www.dfg.de/bias/en

II.5. Obligation to Observe the Principles of Good Research Practice

The principles of good research practice must also be observed during the assessment processes. A violation of these principles can result in a charge of scientific misconduct. Scientific misconduct is defined as the intentional and grossly negligent statement of falsehoods in a scientific context, the violation of intellectual property rights or impeding another person's research work, or breaching the principles set out in the section on confidentiality. The circumstances of each case shall be considered on an individual basis. In cases where scientific misconduct has been established, the DFG may impose one or more sanctions in accordance with its Rules of Procedure, depending on the nature and severity of the misconduct.

The DFG is looking closely at the potential uses of artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of generative models for text and image creation – both in research work itself and when submitting proposals to the DFG. When submitting proposals to the DFG, the use of generative models is permissible because of the considerable opportunities and development potential they offer, but such usage must be disclosed in a scientifically appropriate manner. The use of generative models is to be assessed neutrally per se when it comes to evaluating the subject-specific quality of a funding proposal. As far as the content of a proposal is concerned, full responsibility for research integrity remains with the applicants. Documents that are provided to you for review are confidential and they may

not be used as input for generative models. The use of generative models in the preparation of reviews is inadmissible in any case due to the confidentiality of the review process. What is more, the processing of proposal content using a generative model may constitute a copyright infringement.

III. Information on the Consultation and Decision Process

III.1. Consultation Panel

The consultation panel begins with an internal meeting by the panel to identify priorities and issues for subsequent discussion with representatives of the initiative. A short presentation (10 minutes in video conferences and 15 minutes in physical meetings) by the spokesperson of the initiative opens the discussion. Following the discussion, the consultation panel meets internally for a second time to come to a final assessment of the draft proposal, focusing on its viability as a proposal and any necessary revisions. This assessment is then communicated to the representatives of the initiative.

Participants in the consultation also include a member, with relevant expertise, of the Senate Committee on Collaborative Research Centres as rapporteur, and generally two representatives from the DFG Head Office.

III.2. Decision Process

The assessment by the consultation panel forms the basis for a recommendation by the Senate Committee on Collaborative Research Centres regarding the initiative's next steps. In a comparative, multidisciplinary discussion of all outcomes of recent consultation panels, the most promising initiatives are identified and invited to submit full proposals. The others are discouraged from applying. The assessment by the consultation panel is communicated to the Senate Committee orally by the rapporteur and in writing via the minutes, which are prepared by the DFG Head Office in agreement with the rapporteur.