

## Research Innovation // Network Formation // Knowledge Transfer

### Bringing new impetus to peace and conflict research

The German Foundation for Peace Research (DSF) is an independent research funding institution for peace and conflict research in Germany. The Foundation supports scientific projects on thematically relevant issues in discipline-based and interdisciplinary research contexts.

In its Funding Concept, the Foundation sets out its strategic funding objectives under the general headings *Research Innovation*, *Network Formation* and *Knowledge Transfer*. It defines the individual funding areas and funding formats, and determines the assessment criteria on which the evaluation and decision-making process is based.

#### Strategic objective of funding

The Foundation sees itself as an instigator of advancement in the research field, in particular by funding thematically and methodologically original research projects. The intention is to enhance not only the innovative capacity of peace and conflict research, but also the opportunities for cooperation with related research areas and with international research.

DSF considers knowledge transfer to be an integral part of its support measures. It provides the dialogue of peace and conflict research with politics and society in multifaceted ways.

The Foundation aligns its support measures to the specific conditions of the research field. The Funding Concept is based on the following strategic goals:

DSF provides new impetus to the structural and conceptual advancement of peace and conflict research.

With its support measures, it encourages the development of original research ideas, the crossing of disciplinary boundaries, and the utilisation of knowledge for political and social action.

The Foundation opens up opportunities for networked scientific work in research and teaching. It promotes interdisciplinary cooperation and research collaboration at the national, European and global level.

It places emphasis on the sustainable impact of its funding, which is why it attaches central importance to supporting early career researchers.

DSF promotes equal opportunities and a reflexive handling of issues related to diversity and plurality in peace and conflict research.

Acting as a mediator between science, politics and society, DSF contributes to knowledge transfer by providing funding and taking initiative.

## Funding areas

In line with the strategic objectives of DSF, the Funding Concept sets out three funding areas with different priorities within which applications can be made:

- **Funding Area 1: Research projects**  
Funding Area 1 is available for the application of funding for original research projects addressing relevant topics and research perspectives for peace and conflict research. The call for funding is thematically open and offers researchers from different stages of their career, and from different disciplines and specialisations, an opportunity to implement their research ideas.
- **Funding Area 2: Networking formation and knowledge transfer**  
DSF's Funding Area 2 supports scientific projects from the research field that address international and interdisciplinary cooperation, networking formation and knowledge transfer. The support measure is also thematically open, and provides opportunities for creative project ideas.
- **Funding Area 3: Thematic funding line**  
In its calls for funding within Funding Area 3, the Foundation sets a specific thematic framework. By doing so, it encourages peace and conflict research to open up new fields of research; further develop existing key research areas; and establish interdisciplinary forms of cooperation.

The funding areas are complementary to each other, i.e. the provision of funding does not prevent the recipient from applying for funding in another area. The DSF Foundation Council sets annual funding budgets for the funding areas.

### Funding Area 1: Research projects

The aim of the support measure is to initiate innovative research projects and facilitate explorative research. In this connection, originality and innovation can be thought of in different directions: in the development of new research topics and perspectives or the testing and further development of research methodology, or also as a synthesis of knowledge in a thematic field or as a targeted orientation of the research concept towards application-related issues.

DSF offers two formats in this funding area:

- Profile project with a standard duration of 30 months and a funding volume of up to €150,000
- Pilot project with a standard duration of 12 months and a funding volume of up to €50,000

Where profile projects are involved, DSF provides the additional opportunity of developing project-based cooperation, network formation and transfer projects during the funding period, enabling the recipient to apply for the subsequent approval of funding.

There are set deadlines for requesting funding for research projects.

## **Funding Area 2: Network formation and knowledge transfer**

The options available in Funding Area 2 are aimed at (conference) projects that especially enable the recipient to develop new research perspectives and cooperative activities or to establish and develop networks in research and teaching. The project formats are primarily intended to foster international and/or interdisciplinary cooperation.

In addition, DSF promotes knowledge transfer projects that use creative ideas to prepare findings in peace and conflict research for a specialist audience outside of academic research or for a broader public. Funding is provided for projects that address a need for information and advice, as well as projects that initiate a process of dialogue between science, politics and society.

In Funding Area 2, the Foundation offers the following four formats:

- Research network with a standard duration of 24 months and a funding volume of up to €25,000
- International symposium with a funding volume of up to €20,000
- Network formation project with a funding volume of up to €10,000
- Transfer project with a funding volume of up to €10,000

In the case of transfer projects that are of crucial importance for peace and conflict research, a higher grant may be requested in consultation with DSF.

Applications for funding for the purpose of networking and knowledge transfer projects may be submitted on an ongoing basis.

## **Funding Area 3: Thematic funding**

In contrast to the other two funding areas, the Foundation's Funding Area 3 provides targeted thematic impulses in a particular research field within peace and conflict research. This funding line is tendered in a separate framework. DSF pursues the following objectives:

To act as a stimulus for the development of research contexts on strategic important thematic areas of peace and conflict research.

To encourage interdisciplinary research collaboration and the development of interfaces with research fields related to peace and conflict research.

To support projects that establish or develop national and/or international research collaboration.

To initiate research projects that have a high potential for knowledge transfer to politics and society.

Submitted projects should primarily address central issues of the new research area, or the research area to be further developed, and additionally shed light on these issues from different perspectives. With this objective in mind, the Foundation also explicitly supports research syntheses that pool existing (interdisciplinary) knowledge; identify further research needs; and generate practice-relevant knowledge.

DSF concludes each thematic funding line with a symposium, enabling the results of the funded projects to be presented and further research perspectives discussed in the context of international research.

DSF specifies the funding formats in connection with the topic selected in each case. In any event, they include larger research and cooperation projects.

If the thematic calls for funding do not stipulate any specific requirements with regard to the submission of applications, the criteria for eligibility set out in the DSF Funding Concept apply.

The Foundation sets separate application deadlines for thematic funding. The call for funding usually covers two application dates.

### Criteria for eligibility

The DSF funding criteria, which are divided into core criteria and more specific additional criteria, are the determining factors for assessing project proposals in the evaluation and decision-making process:

The **core criteria** define the Foundation's basic qualitative requirements for project proposals. Their fulfilment is a prerequisite for a positive funding decision by DSF:

#### Scientific relevance

Relevance to peace and conflict research, originality and coherence of the research question, positioning in the current state of research, potential for new scientific findings, and compatibility with other strands of scientific research.

#### Quality of the research design

Coherence of the theoretical and methodological foundation of the research concept, appropriateness of the research methods and techniques chosen, suitability of comparison and validation methods, feasibility of the work plan and schedule, publication concept, and plausibility of budget planning.

#### Specialist qualifications of the applicant / project team

Thematic and methodological expertise, research experience and relevant groundwork (depending on stage of career), international networking and language skills.

#### Potential for knowledge transfer in politics and society

Significance for current peace and security policy issues, generation of knowledge for action and orientation, identification of key target groups for knowledge transfer, ideas for transfer formats and the accompanying utilisation of results (digital, print, etc.).

The **additional criteria** refer to other fundamental funding objectives. Consideration of these criteria has an impact on the overall assessment of the project.

#### Promotion of early career researchers

Involvement of early career researchers, project-related opportunities for qualification and networking, and participation in knowledge transfer

#### Collaborative research projects

Project-related national and international research collaboration, cooperation with local scientific institutions in the region under investigation, and the establishment and development of research networks

#### Interdisciplinary orientation

Tackling of the research topic from different disciplinary perspectives, development of interdisciplinary research cooperation, and linking of the project to interdisciplinary research contexts.

#### Diversity

Consideration of diversity issues, inclusion of theoretical-methodological concepts of diversity research

As a matter of principle, DSF requires that all research projects submitted take appropriate account of research ethics aspects, and implement them accordingly.

### **Evaluation procedure**

The DSF evaluation procedure is based on peer review processes that follow high quality standards of research funding.

The Foundation engages external experts to assess the proposed projects according to the quality criteria that it has defined.

All project proposals for funding in excess of €10,000 are subject to an obligatory evaluation procedure.

Provision is made for the following evaluations in the funding areas:

- DSF obtains at least two expert opinions for research project funding applications. In the event of significantly divergent funding recommendations, the Foundation commissions a third expert opinion.
- The Foundation usually commissions one expert opinion for applications on funding network formation projects.

The DSF Executive Board may decide on applications for funding under €10,000 without an external evaluation. In specific cases, funded projects may be subject to a follow-up evaluation.

Research project funding applications submitted by members of the Foundation's Executive Board or members of the Foundation Council (self-proposals) are subject to an obligatory evaluation by a third expert. For members of the Executive Board, this also applies to all research project funding applications submitted by their own institutions.

The expert reports provide a substantial basis for the Foundation's funding decisions. The DSF Executive Board decides on acceptance for funding after reviewing all of the relevant evaluation criteria.

DSF also sees the evaluation procedure as an opportunity for applicants to further qualify their research projects. If an application for funding is rejected, the Foundation gives the applicant a single possibility to submit a revised version of the research project as a new application.

The Foundation seeks to ensure the greatest possible transparency in its funding decisions. Applicants are given an anonymised version of the expert opinions following the completion of the decision-making process.

## **Applications**

DSF provides application guidelines for each individual funding format. These contain information on the requirements for the funding formats, the basic design of applications, submission deadlines and the evaluation criteria. These guidelines are available on the DSF website.

Further information can be obtained from the DSF Office in Osnabrueck.

## **Review**

The Foundation Council periodically reviews the DSF Funding Concept.

Osnabrueck, October 2020