

Funding Area 2: Network Formation and Knowledge Transfer

RESEARCH NETWORK | INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM | NETWORKING PROJECT | TRANSFER PROJECT

International Symposium - Guidelines for Applications

These guidelines are intended as a guide for preparing an application for funding an international symposium. They provide information on the different ways of interpreting the funding format, and explain the basic requirements to be met when submitting an application. These guidelines are based on the DSF funding objectives and criteria, which are set out in the Funding Concept “*Research Innovation, Network Formation and Knowledge Transfer. Bringing new impetus to peace and conflict research*”¹ and are the determining factors for the evaluation and decision-making process.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Funding amount: €20,000

Applications for funding of international symposia can be submitted to DSF without a deadline. They should be submitted at least six months before the planned start of the project.

The aim of the funding offer is to initiate international symposia addressing disciplinary or interdisciplinary topics in the field of peace and conflict research. With this funding format, the DSF supports international academic cooperation and the international visibility of German peace and conflict research. The projects are intended to give impetus to the establishment of new research networks and cooperations, especially in as yet underdeveloped subject areas. The proportion of international speakers should be at least 40 percent. The DSF also recommends examining the possibility of actively involving young academics in the conferences.

The call is thematically open, and is aimed at researchers from different stages of their career, and from different disciplines and specialisations. International symposia offer design flexibility. This also includes conference concepts based on a call for contributions. The DSF supports face-to-face, hybrid and online formats.

¹ The DSF Funding Concept is available at <https://bundesstiftung-friedensforschung.de/foerderkonzept/>

Application requirements

Applications for funding can only be submitted by researchers who belong to or are directly affiliated with a higher education institution, a non-university research institution or a scientific institution recognised as a non-profit organisation². It is not possible to provide direct financial funding to private individuals.

The minimum requirement for submitting an application is having completed a doctorate. Exceptions can only be made for researchers who can demonstrate that they have been engaged in scientific activities for many years and have published relevant articles in the field of research.

The Foundation only accepts applications for project funding submitted by scientific institutions within Germany. It generally only approves funding to domestic institutions. However, this does not exclude the possibility of using funding for international scientific cooperation.

Institutions that receive DSF funding are required to ensure that the funding is administered professionally.

Basic requirements

DSF only funds international symposia that are thematically related to the research field of peace and conflict research. Relevance shall be adequately substantiated in the application for project funding.

To be considered as a promising application, a structured and comprehensible conference concept must be submitted to the Foundation, providing a clear and adequate basis for the reviewers to expertly assess the project. Care must be taken to ensure that the presentation of the objectives, the classification in the state of research, the information on the conference agenda and on selected speakers³ are all given appropriate consideration. In addition, proposals should be presented as to how the results of the conference should be made available for research discussion and, if necessary, for the transfer of knowledge.

In the case of funding, the Foundation assumes that the organisation receiving funding will provide the infrastructure and basic equipment required to implement the proposed conference. Overhead costs may not be claimed.

Co-funding of the conference is generally possible. Corresponding applications and commitments are to be included in the application to the DSF, stating the amount of funding. The cost items for which DSF funding is requested must be clearly identified in the overall cost plan.

The organisation receiving funding assumes the role of employer for the duration of the project; it is therefore responsible for the proper management of labour costs.

² Where applicable, relevant supporting documents shall be enclosed with the application.

³ Project applications for which the Call for Contributions has not been completed at the time of application must include information on the target groups and the selection procedure in addition to the call text.

Funding criteria

When assessing applications for funding of an international symposium, the Foundation distinguishes between four core criteria and four additional criteria⁴:

Adequate consideration must be given to the *core criteria* – scientific relevance, quality of the project design, specialist qualifications of the project team, and potential for knowledge transfer – in all project proposals. Their fulfilment is a prerequisite for a positive funding decision.

Not all of the four *additional criteria* – promotion of early career researchers, national and international research collaboration, interdisciplinary orientation, and diversity – have to be met, depending on the project design. However, the applicant should assess how significant the additional criteria may be to the project when preparing the conference concept.

The Foundation expects applications to contain statements on the relevance or non-relevance of each criteria. The fulfilment of additional criteria has an impact on the overall assessment of applications for funding.

Costs eligible for funding

DSF provides funding for project-related labour and material costs.

Personnel funds can be used for the organisational support of the preparation, follow-up and implementation of the international symposia. This includes in particular the expenses for student assistants and other work services (e.g. translations). As a rule, labour costs should not exceed 10 to 15 percent of the requested funding amount. Exceptions are hybrid and online formats.

The payment of lecture fees or expense allowances from DSF funding is not possible. Exceptions are lecture fees for freelance speakers. The appropriateness and the awarding of lecture fees must be justified in the application.

Material costs include expenses for flights/travel and accommodation (overnight stays, hospitality) of the speakers, the moderators and those actively involved in the organisation of the meeting. The current rates of the Federal Travel Expenses Act (BRKG) shall apply to the calculation of travel expenses.

For the calculation of hospitality costs, the rates of the DSF listed in *Appendix 1* of this guide shall apply.

The DSF grants subsidies for material costs incurred directly in the preparation and implementation of the international symposium and which do not constitute a reasonable contribution by the participants themselves. These include e.g. consumables, conference documents, in justified cases also room rentals and the rental of technical equipment as well as specific expenses for hybrid and online conferences (e.g. licences for online tools), provided that these can be assessed as proportionate.

⁴ See the conceptual definitions in the Funding Concept.

€1,000 in funding can be included in the project budget for the production of project publications and materials⁵ for knowledge transfer. This amount is available exclusively for editorial work. Publishing grants are excluded.

The budget items must be adequately justified in the application's accompanying text. Funding requirements shall be calculated according to the principle of proportionality. The Foundation reserves the right to adjust cost estimates.

The overviews in *Appendices 1a/b* provide information on possible uses and the underlying cost estimates.

Application documents

The Foundation requires documents in order to process applications for project funding. These should be either entered directly into the DSF digital funding portal or uploaded as attachments. Please note that the system does NOT have a footnote function. Therefore, the Harvard citation style must be used. The bibliography can be added at the end in the text field:

Application documents that are entered directly into the system include:

- COVER LETTER | A letter from the applicants to the Foundation
- SUMMARY/ABSTRACT | A separate one-page summary of the project
- LONG VERSION | A presentation of the conference concept (Topic and objectives, state of research, structure of the conference, information about the contributors, remarks regarding cost plan, list of references⁶) with approx. 10 pages (max. 20,000 characters including spaces)
- COST PLAN | An additional cost breakdown

Supplementary attachments to be uploaded to the system as PDF files:

- If available, graphics, tables, or similar elements to supplement the project's content
- CVs of the applicants and project team members (max. 2 pages each)⁷
- List of project-relevant publications by the applicant (max. 2 pages)⁸
- Cost estimates for third-party services, cooperation agreements, etc.

A suggested outline is included as Appendix 2 to these guidelines.

The application must be submitted to the Foundation exclusively via the DSF funding portal.

The evaluation and decision-making process

Applications for funding international symposia are assessed on the basis of at least two external expert opinions.

⁵ In print or digital versions.

⁶ The reference list of research literature can also optionally be added as an appendix (maximum of 2 pages).

⁷ The two-page CV should contain only information directly relevant to the application regarding professional expertise. A list of presentations, memberships, etc., is not required.

⁸ A complete list of the applicant's publications must not be attached to the application.

The decision on the funding of requested international symposia is made by the DSF Executive Board.

In the event of a positive decision on the award of funding, the Foundation reserves the right to issue a final approval only after a written statement has been submitted on the points of criticism and follow-up questions in the expert opinions.

Post-qualification of an international symposium in the current application process is not possible.

A rejected application for project funding may be resubmitted once in a revised version as a new application.

As a matter of principle, the Foundation only makes the expert opinions available in anonymised form.

DSF approves funding to the applicant's research institution. This entails the compulsory recognition of the Foundation's approval regulations by the management of the institution and the project owner. Further details can be found in the approval regulations for *International Symposia*.

Osnabrück, March 2026

APPENDIX 1A | International symposium: Information on drawing up a cost plan

When drawing up the cost plan, the following points must be observed:

- DSF does not assume any overhead costs of the organisation receiving funding. It assumes that the infrastructure (e.g. Conference rooms and technology, access to software licences) is provided by the organisation receiving funding as its own contribution. For this reason, any material costs listed that count as part of a re-search institution's basic equipment require special justification.
- If labour and material costs have been calculated incorrectly, the Foundation will not allocate additional funding.
- Lump sums with no mention of a specific intended use will not be granted.
- Individual cost items should be rounded up to the nearest €10.
- Please note that a cost plan with the necessary explanations must be included in the long version of the application.

Rates for hospitality expenses:

- The Foundation will cover the costs of hospitality for
 - speakers,
 - presenters and
 - those directly involved in the organisation (e.g. student assistants).
- The following grants can be applied for per day towards the costs of hospitality:
 - For one meal (half day)
 - maximum of €25 per person and day
 - additional: maximum of €5 per person and day for conference drinks
 - For two meals (whole day):
 - maximum of €50 per person and day
 - additional: maximum of €10 per person and day for conference drinks

Alternatively, an evening conference dinner can be requested for a selected conference day. The Foundation provides a maximum of 35 euros per person.

APPENDIX 1B | International symposium: Information on drawing up a cost plan

COST ITEM	INFORMATION	REMARKS
LABOUR COSTS		
Student assistants	Hourly rate (including ancillary wage costs) Duration of employment Monthly working hours	
Contracts for work and services with third parties	Scope, remuneration and basis of assessment	Justify the appropriateness of awarding the contract. Attach tenders if applicable
Fee contracts	Basis of assessment	Attach tenders if applicable
TRAVEL COSTS		
Flight and travel costs for speakers and presenters	Target number of participants Breakdown into expected individual items (travel/accommodation costs) Local transport costs	
Accommodation costs for speakers and presenters	Type of accommodation, Hospitality costs	The applicable rates of the BRKG apply. Hospitality costs are based on the <i>rates for hospitality expenses</i> .
MATERIAL COSTS		
Conference rooms and technology, access to software licences (hybrid and online formats)	Justification why not available through the basic equipment of the funded institution	
Consumables and conference materials, communication	Lump-sum amount	
Grant for project publications (maximum of €1,000)	Details of the expected purpose of use, e.g. editorial work on publications (digital and print), proofreading in foreign languages, knowledge transfer publications	Subsidies for publishing costs are excluded.

APPENDIX 2 | International symposium: List of possible bullet points in the long and short version of the application⁹

Short version (summary of the project), a separate 1-page

- Topic and scientific relevance of the project
- State of research and originality
- Objectives and expected conference results
- Concept and structure of the conference
- Selection of participants
- Application volume

Long version of the application for project funding

(approx 10 pages; max. 20,000 characters including spaces)

a. Detailed presentation of the research project

- Topic, objectives and expected outcomes
- Originality and integration in the international state of research
- Concept and structure of the conference
- Selection and listing of speakers
- Expertise of the project team and own preparatory work
- Exploitation of results and intended publication format
- Potential for knowledge transfer (possible target groups and transfer formats)
- Schedule and work plan
- List of relevant research literature
- Detailed cost plan (see also Excel file as a download) stating information about the institution's own contribution / justification of individual items in the application text, Excel file with numerical values additional
- Declaration that the application, or a similar application, has not been submitted to any other funding body (date and signature)

b. Appendices

⁹ This list is a non-binding outline suggestion. The order and choice of points may vary depending on the application.

- Information on the applicants in the form of a CV and a list of own publications relevant to the project (maximum 4 pages)
- Draft for the conference programme
- Other documents such as short biographies of speakers, call for contributions
Cost offers for third-party services (please keep to the essentials)