

## Funding Area 2: Network Formation and Knowledge Transfer

RESEARCH NETWORK | INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM | NETWORKING PROJECT | TRANSFER PROJECT

### Research network – Guidelines for Applications

These guidelines are intended as a guide for preparing an application for funding a research network. 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*”<sup>1</sup> and are the determining factors for the evaluation and decision-making process.

#### RESEARCH NETWORK

Funding amount:	€25,000
Standard duration:	24 months

Applications for funding of research networks 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 research networks addressing disciplinary or interdisciplinary topics in the field of peace and conflict research. Funded networks should open up perspectives for the further development of a research field by bringing together research on the topic at national and/or international level and bringing it into a structured exchange. The conception is to be oriented towards concrete goals, which may, for example, consist in the establishment of further research cooperations, in the development of new research projects as well as in science-based cooperation with fields of practice. The results of the network project should be made publicly accessible in a suitable form.

The call is thematically open, and is aimed at researchers from different stages of their career, and from different disciplines and specialisations. Research networks offer design flexibility.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 organisation<sup>2</sup>. 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.

The Foundation supports research activities for a limited funding period. Institutional funding measures are not envisaged.

## **Basic requirements**

DSF only funds research networks 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 network 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 intended members and network structures as well as on the working methods of the network are all given appropriate consideration.

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 project. Overhead costs may not be claimed. 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.

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<sup>2</sup> Where applicable, relevant supporting documents shall be enclosed with the application.

## Funding criteria

When assessing applications for project funding, the Foundation distinguishes between four core criteria and four additional criteria<sup>3</sup>:

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 network project. 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

Funding for project-related labour and material costs can be requested from DSF. Such funding must be used within the specified funding period.

Personnel funds can be used for organisational support of the network. This includes, in particular, expenses for student assistants, for work contracts with third parties and other work services (e.g. translations). The appropriateness of awarding work contracts to third parties must be justified in the application.

Material costs include expenses for the working formats of the network (e.g. workshops), project-related travel as well as for working materials, communication media and software licences that are not available through the basic equipment of the funded institutions. The current rates of the Federal Travel Expenses Act shall apply to the calculation of travel expenses.

€1,000 in funding can be included in the project budget for the production of project publications and materials<sup>4</sup> for knowledge transfer. This amount is available exclusively for editorial work.

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.

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<sup>3</sup> See the conceptual definitions in the Funding Concept.

<sup>4</sup> In print or digital versions.

## Application documents

To process applications for project funding, the Foundation requires texts and documents in German or English. These must be either entered directly into the system or uploaded as attachments via the DSF's digital funding portal. 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 are:

- COVER LETTER | A cover letter from the applicants to the Foundation
- SUMMARY | A separate summary of the project, approximately one page in length
- LONG VERSION | A presentation of the research network (topic and objectives, state of research, conception and mode of operation of the network structures, remarks regarding cost plan, list of references<sup>5</sup>) 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 presentation
- CVs of the applicants and project team members (max. 2 pages each)<sup>6</sup>
- List of project-relevant publications by the applicant (publications, max. 2 pages)<sup>7</sup>
- 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 research networks are assessed on the basis of at least two external expert opinions.

The decision on the funding of requested research networks 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 a research network 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.

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<sup>5</sup> The reference list of research literature can also optionally be added as an appendix (maximum of 2 pages).

<sup>6</sup> The two-page CV should contain only information directly relevant to the application regarding your professional expertise. A list of presentations, memberships, etc., is not required.

<sup>7</sup> A complete list of your publications may not be attached to the application.

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 Funding Area 2.

Osnabrück, March 2026

## APPENDIX 1A | Research network: 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. work rooms, office and computer equipment, access to software licences, libraries and databases) is provided by the organisation receiving funding as its own contribution. For this reason, any material costs listed that count as part of a research institution's basic equipment require special justification.
- If labour and material costs have been calculated incorrectly, the Foundation will not allocate additional funding. It is recommended to add a 5% safety margin to the labour costs in order to compensate for progressive collectively agreed wage rises.
- 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

## APPENDIX 1B | Research network: Information on drawing up a cost plan

COST ITEM	INFORMATION	REMARKS
<b>LABOUR COSTS</b>		
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
<b>TRAVEL COSTS</b>		
Costs for project workshops (presence, hybrid and online formats)	Target number of participants Breakdown into expected individual items (travel/accommodation costs)	The applicable rates of the BRKG apply. Hospitality costs are based on the <i>rates for hospitality expenses</i> .
Flight and travel costs for network-related travel activities	Destinations, means of transport and ticket costs (incl. transfer)	The applicable rates of the BRKG apply.
Accommodation costs for network-related travel activities	Type of accommodation and costs Number of days (daily allowance rates)	The applicable rates of the BRKG apply.
<b>MATERIAL COSTS</b>		
Communication media and software licences	Justification why not available through the basic equipment of the funded institution	
Working and Consumables	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	Subsidies for publishing costs are excluded.

## APPENDIX 2 | Research network: List of possible bullet points in the long and short version of the application<sup>8</sup>

**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 research results
- Network conception
- Project duration
- 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 of the network (structures, working methods)
- Information on members of the network, planned extensions if applicable
- Expertise of the project team and own preparatory work
- Utilisation of results and publication strategy
- Potential for knowledge transfer (possible target groups and transfer formats)
- Work plan and schedule for network activities
- 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)

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<sup>8</sup> This list is a non-binding outline suggestion. The order and choice of points may vary depending on the application.

c. *Appendices*

- Information on the applicants in the form of a CV and a list of own publications relevant to the project (maximum 4 pages)
- Other documents such as cost estimates for third-party services, supporting documents for research collaboration, etc. (please keep to the essentials)