

Application Information for the Research Group Linkage Programme

- a) As a rule, a research group linkage involves one institute or research group abroad and one institute or research group in Germany. In a – generally bilateral – research group linkage, alumni from developing and emerging countries or certain other countries (see [list](#)) collaborate with academics from Germany. In trilateral research group linkages, alumni from developing and emerging countries (see [list](#)) cooperate with researchers from Germany and another technologically advanced country (see current [list of technologically advanced countries](#)). The maximum number of institutes that may be involved in a collaboration is two abroad and two in Germany.
- b) The Research Group Linkage Programme is an alumni support tool. Therefore, only alumni of Alexander von Humboldt Foundation fellowships and award programmes (“Humboldtians”) at institutes **abroad** are eligible to apply. In a – generally bilateral – research group linkage, the alumni must be working at an institute in a country on the current [list](#) and reside in that country for the duration of the research group linkage. In trilateral research group linkages, one alumnus or alumna should be working at a research institute in a developing or emerging country (see [list](#)) and a second alumnus or alumna as collaborative partner in a technologically advanced country (see [list](#)). Alumni at German research institutions abroad are not eligible to apply.
- c) The collaborative partner **in Germany** must work at a research institute in Germany. This activity must be guaranteed to last for the duration of the research group linkage, both in Germany and abroad. The minimum qualification is a doctorate, followed by proven academic activity.
- d) **Concurrent** funding of the collaborative partners as part of a research fellowship, or parallel funding in a Humboldt Foundation alumni programme (e.g. funding of a further research stay in Germany, return fellowships, equipment subsidies, book donations), is not possible.
- e) **Junior researchers:** In the Research Group Linkage Programme, particular importance is attached to the reciprocal academic exchange of junior researchers (i.e. doctoral candidates and post-docs up to twelve years after the award of their doctorate). As a rule, junior researchers should be working at the respective applicants’ own institutes. It is possible to involve junior researchers from other departments at the same research institution if this makes sense from an academic point of view. Junior researchers from other research institutions cannot be considered.

I. Application procedure

- a) **Applicants:** Applications must always be submitted as a **joint application by all collaborative partners**, with **roles** within the research group linkage assigned as follows:
- The **collaborative partner from a country on the current [list of eligible countries](#)** (hereinafter: **applying collaborative partner**) must submit the application using the application form on the [website of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation](#). In trilateral research group linkages, the collaborative partner from a country on the current [list of eligible countries](#) for trilateral research group linkages must submit the application.
 - If the application is granted, the home institute of the **collaborative partner from Germany** will be responsible for managing the awarded funds.
 - **A second collaborative partner from abroad**, from either a country on the [list of eligible countries](#) or, in a trilateral research group linkage, a country on the [list of technologically advanced countries](#), may be included in the cooperation.
 - **A second collaborative partner from Germany** may participate in the research group linkage.
- b) **Application deadlines:** Applications can be submitted **at any time**. The selection meetings take place twice a year (usually in April and October).
- c) **Procedure:** The applications are checked in terms of formal correctness by the Humboldt Foundation headquarters and are then forwarded to several external independent peer reviewers, who, as experts, assess their academic quality. To do this, the Foundation draws on a pool of approximately 3,000 researchers based in Germany and in other European countries. It is therefore recommended that the joint application is drafted in a manner that is clear and comprehensible for academics in the immediate subject area.
- d) **Decision-making criteria:** When reviewing individual applications from a variety of different disciplines, the Humboldt Foundation makes every effort to ensure the greatest possible comparability. In addition to the applicants' expertise and the scientific relevance/originality of the project, the essential criteria used in the assessment of all applications are how well the project promotes long-term collaboration, the possibility of integrating junior researchers, and the extent to which the individual activities to be funded are conducive to realising the research project. Further criteria include the project's potential to effectively strengthen research in emerging and developing countries, and discernible mobility from developing and emerging countries and to developing and emerging countries. An internal selection committee of the Humboldt Foundation decides which projects are to be funded.
- e) **Provision of resources:** The award letter will be sent to the German collaborative partner as soon as possible, usually within two to three weeks after the decision has been made. Experience has shown that the funding amount will be made available approximately two months after selection in accordance with the financial plan.

II. Required documents:

a) Application form

The **applying collaborative partner** must attach the following documents to the application form:

b) Financial plan

c) Budget plan

d) Quotations for equipment, if applicable

e) Detailed research plan

f) Curriculum vitae in tabular format

g) List of publications covering the last five years

h) Declarations of the (junior) researchers

i) Agreement from the directors of the participating institutes to carry out the planned collaborative project

The **collaborative partner in Germany** and (where applicable) further collaborative partners each has to upload the following documents:

j) The Declaration of the Cooperation Partner regarding the Joint Application

k) Curriculum vitae in tabular format

l) List of publications for the period of the last five years

All documents must be submitted **in German or English**.

Re: a) Application form

Point 2.1: To ensure a realistic start date for the funding of the proposed research group linkage, please note that it takes four to six months to process an application. The internal selection committee meets twice a year to decide on applications, usually in April and October. The funding of a research group linkage may begin approx. two months after the selection decision (at the earliest on 1 January or on 1 July, depending on selection date).

The relevant codes from the Humboldt Foundation's [Research Area Index](#) must be stated for the subject area of the planned research project.

Point 2.3: Please list here all collaborative partners (no more than four in total; a maximum of two from each partner institute), along with the nature of their collaboration.

Point 2.4: Please enter here the number of junior researchers involved (generally at least doctoral candidates) and of other personnel. As a rule, the junior researchers should be working at the respective collaborative partner's own institute.

Point 3.1: In the event that the funding application for the proposed research group linkage is approved, the funding is to be administered by the home institute of the collaborative partner in Germany.

Re: b) Financial plan

The financial plan sets out when funds are needed and for what purpose. The financial plan is binding and is required in order to prove later how the funds have been used. The budget plan (see under c) explains the amounts entered in the financial plan.

As the Research Group Linkage Programme aims to support long-term collaborations by combining alumni activities, the sole funding of a single activity (e.g. only workshops or

reciprocal research stays) cannot be applied for under this programme. Entries should be made only in the fields marked in yellow. The budget must be split into calendar years and show the funds that are expected to be needed for each year. Maximum amounts and maximum shares of the total amount must be taken into account. The financial plan must be dated and signed by all applicants.

Re: c) Budget plan

The funds requested and their use must be explained and justified clearly and in a way that the selection committee will understand, based on the financial plan. The following must be observed:

1. Human resources

Up to 20% of the funding amount can be earmarked for auxiliary staff, e.g. for support in interviews, literature research and excavation work, but also for the preparation of conferences and workshops. It is important that the tasks to be performed by the auxiliary staff as part of the joint activities are described and delimited in detail. The funding amount must not be used to cover the personal income of the collaborative partners or their staff.

2. Material resources

2.1 Expenses relating to travel to the partner institute and for reciprocal research stays

This section summarises the expenses associated with the reciprocal research stays undertaken by collaborative partners and their staff. These are mainly travel and accommodation expenses. Both the collaborative partners and the junior researchers should participate in research visits. Travel expenses for visits to the partner institute by auxiliary staff cannot be covered.

The following information is required in the budget plan:

- Names of persons travelling and their respective own institute (who is travelling where)
- Duration of the planned stay (from–until)
- Estimated expenses per stay

The duration of the reciprocal research stays can be up to three months per person per calendar year.

As a rule, the travel and accommodation expenses for the research stays are reimbursed according to the standard legal general conditions governing the use of public funds at the home institution in Germany (e.g. Bundesreisekostengesetz).

Alternatively, the collaborative partner in Germany may earmark funds for their home institution to use for granting fellowships to cover the accommodation expenses for reciprocal research stays. The rates paid by the German Academic Exchange Service and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation to graduate and post-doc fellows respectively should be used as a guideline for calculating the fellowship amounts in Germany. Abroad, the customary local rates should be used. It must be observed that the funding amount cannot be used to grant fellowships for other purposes than reciprocal research stays.

2.2 Joint specialist conferences/workshops

Up to 20% of the funding amount can be approved for planned conferences, meetings and workshops. This may cover, for example, travel and accommodation expenses, room hire, and technical equipment. Expenses relating to auxiliary staff involved in the preparation of conferences and workshops must be indicated under Point 1 Human resources.

Workshops and conferences can only be funded if they are held in the countries where the collaborative partners' home institutions are located.

The following information is required in the budget plan:

- Content and aim of the event
- Planned date and estimated duration of the event
- Title of the event (if already known)
- Proposed location of event
- Number of participants from partner institutes (including names, if known) and expected total number of participants
- Details of individual costs (travel and accommodation expenses, organisation, etc.)

2.3 Equipment

Scientific equipment may only be purchased for the collaborative partner's home institution abroad, not however for institutes in technologically advanced countries. Applications must be accompanied by cost estimates (in German or English), preferably in the form of quotations. Please note that scientific equipment can only be approved up to a maximum of €20,000. When purchasing equipment from Germany or another country, it is advisable to check customs formalities in advance.

2.4 Printing costs

These include, for example, the costs of publications resulting from the collaboration. The publications must be directly related to the research group linkage's research results.

2.5 Consumables/other

The consumables normally used in the respective research institution (paper, chemicals, etc.) should be indicated here.

In individual cases, specific additional costs may arise as part of the collaboration project, e.g. through necessary external services. Therefore, the costs indicated here should be described in detail.

3. Administrative flat-rate

The collaborative partner's home institution in Germany is eligible to receive an administrative flat-rate of up to a total of 15% **of the funding amount granted**. For example, if a total funding amount of €55,000 is applied for, the administrative flat-rate (as part of the total funding amount) can be calculated as max. €8,250. This may be used to cover all costs resulting from the use of existing and/or specifically-acquired material or specifically-created personnel infrastructure. The administrative flat-rate may only be requested for the collaborative partner's home institution in Germany.

Information on own contributions, if applicable

Applicants – particularly institutions in technologically advanced countries – are generally expected to make their own contributions; these may also be in the form of the provision of permanent staff and infrastructure.

Re: d) Quotations for equipment

See c) 2.3.

Re: e) Detailed research plan

The description of the subject of the joint research and the planned collaboration may cover up to ten pages. The research plan will be assessed by specialists in the respective field and should contain detailed information on the methodology, a time and work schedule, and a bibliography. The work schedule should also explain which tasks will be undertaken by the individual academics participating in the collaboration, including junior researchers. Experience has shown that the following aspects have an impact on the selection decision:

- What is the special significance of the research project, and what objectives will be pursued?
- What are the central questions to be addressed? How does the planned project fit into the current research landscape?
- Why are the academics involved particularly qualified to participate in the project? What preparatory work has contributed to this?
- What types of collaboration are planned? How will the collaboration be organised?
What gains are expected from the collaboration?
- How will junior researchers be integrated into the collaboration?
- What key results are expected within the time frame planned for the collaboration? Are there any plans for further collaboration? Will the collaboration help to build lasting structures?

Re: f) Tabular curricula vitae

A curriculum vitae in tabular format must be submitted for each collaborative partner involved in the proposed collaboration. This must also indicate which languages they speak. The applying collaborative partner must upload his/her curriculum vitae to the application. Please see point k) for instructions regarding the other collaborative partners.

Re: g) Lists of publications from the last five years

Please submit a list of publications for each of the collaborative partners involved in the planned collaboration. The applying collaborative partner must upload a list of his/her publications to the application. Please see point l) for instructions regarding the other collaborative partners.

Re: h) Declarations of the (junior) researchers

The applying collaborative partner must upload to the application the Declaration of the (Junior) Researcher forms that have been completed and signed by the respective (junior) researcher. The application form contains the link to this form and instructions.

Re: i) Agreement from the directors of the participating institutes to carry out the planned collaborative project

If the collaborative partners themselves are not the directors of the participating institutes, the application must be accompanied by a confirmation from the directors that the planned collaborative project can be carried out. There are no specific requirements as regards the form of this confirmation. The institutes should address the proposed research collaboration and its viability. They should support the project and make all necessary resources (e.g. equipment, library) available to the participants.

Re j) to l) Documents to be uploaded by the collaborative partner

The collaborative partner in Germany and (where applicable) other collaborative partners in Germany and abroad must each upload to the application the Declaration of the Collaborative Partner regarding the Joint Application form, their curriculum vitae in tabular format (see point f) and a list of their publications for the last five years (see point g). The application form contains the link to this form and instructions.