



Priority Programme / Schwerpunktprogramm (SPP)

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Priority Programme

Brief Overview

- ▶ Strategic research funding scheme
- ▶ Promotes work on topics that are expected to have a formative impact on a field of science or the humanities
- ▶ **Establishment phase:** groups of scientists can submit annually establishment proposals for new Priority Programmes
- ▶ **Funding Phase:** (if a Priority Programme gets established)
 - Budget available for six years of project funding (two funding periods of 3 years)
 - Open call for research proposals for each funding period
 - Open to applicants from universities and non-universities
 - Evaluation of the research proposals by review panel in a colloquium setting
 - Does not prohibit funding of proposals in the topic area also in other funding schemes



Priority Programme

Definition in detail (see DFG leaflet 50.05)

- ▶ The Priority Programme is a form of strategic research funding involving an open call for proposals. The aim of the programme is to promote work on topics that can be expected to have a **formative impact** on a field of science or the humanities. **This impact can be achieved both by discovering new areas of research and also by rethinking known areas, working on them from a new perspective or based on a new approach**, and providing momentum for this to happen. Interdisciplinary proposals offer particular potential here. Under the Priority Programme, individual research projects are funded that contribute to the network as a whole achieving the objectives formulated in the establishment proposal with regard to knowledge gain.
- ▶ Another particular feature of the Priority Programme is that it promotes collaboration between researchers across different locations. Measures tailored specifically to the Priority Programme are pursued in order to promote researchers in early career phases and also equity.



Priority Programme

Establishment Proposal

► Content

- Merits of the suggested Priority Programme with respect to the programme objectives
- Defines (one!) coordinator and (up to four) further programme committee members
- List of potential applicants (non binding)
- Requested funding in €
 - DFG Personnel Rates: leaflet 60.12
 - consider interest for “own position” and interest from non-university institutions
- Target Group: Members of Fachkollegien, Members of Senate of DFG

► Format

- Template 53.11, Guidelines Priority Programmes 50.05
- Maximum 25 pages; Language: English
- Appendix: CVs of programme committee members (as one combined file)
- Submission: via elan
- Deadline: see next slide



Priority Programme Establishment Proposal

► Deadline

- Usually Oct 15th each year

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
Informationen für die Wissenschaft

Allgemeine Information

Nr. 12

13. Februar 2025

**Infolge von Inflationsentwicklung und Kostensteigerungen:
DFG ergreift Maßnahmen zur Ausgabenstabilisierung**

Ausschreibung zur Einrichtung neuer Schwerpunktprogramme einmalig für ein Jahr ausgesetzt

- Next deadline: 15.10.2026



Priority Programme

Establishment Proposal Evaluation

► Evaluation by „ad-hoc review boards“

- The establishment proposals are grouped into (often) interdisciplinary bundles
 - e.g. Physics + Mathematics, Chemistry + Physics, ...
- Participants:
 - Fachkollegiat*innen (Review Board Members)
 - Chair: member of Senate from an unrelated subject area
- Rating & Ranking of the establishment proposals
- Evaluation of the budget (possibly reduced)

► Selection in Senate (March session)

- Decision which Priority Programmes get established
- Evaluation of the budget (possibly reduced)

► Feedback to coordinator



Priority Programme

Evaluation Criteria (see DFG leaflet 10.212)

- ▶ Topic: originality, formative effect on the field of science
- ▶ Coherent and achievable research objectives
- ▶ Interdisciplinary and multi-location collaboration / networking
- ▶ Qualification of the Coordinator
- ▶ Support for early-career researchers and equity
- ▶ Handling of research data
- ▶ Integration into the international research system
- ▶ Distinction from other programmes (DFG/other organizations)



Priority Programme – Timeline Overview

Phase	When	What
ESTAB- LISHMENT PHASE	Now	Community designs establishment proposal, roundtable discussion
	15.10.2026	Deadline for submission of the establishment proposal to DFG via elan
	Winter 2026/2027	Evaluation of all establishment proposals by interdisciplinary „ad hoc“ review boards of Fachkollegiat*innen
	March 2027	Senate of DFG decides which Priority Programmes are established (and budget)
If Priority Programme is established:		
FIRST FUNDING PERIOD (3 years)	Summer/Fall 2027	DFG publishes call for individual research proposals for first three-year funding period
	Summer/Fall 2027	Recommended: Workshop for interested applicants (Rundgespräch paid by DFG)
	Winter/Spring 2027/2028	Deadline for proposals for first three-year funding period N project proposals, 1 coordination budget proposal from coordinator
	Spring/Summer 2028	Evaluation of the proposals by an international review panel (with colloquium)
	Summer/Fall 2028	DFG sends out decision letters
	2028 – 2031	Project work - Cooperation - Networking
SECOND FUNDING PERIOD (3 years)	Summer/Fall 2030	DFG publishes call for individual research proposals for second three-year funding period
	Winter/Spring 2030/2031	Deadline for proposals for second three-year funding period N project proposals (continuation / new), 1 coordination budget proposal from coordinator
	Spring/Summer 2031	Evaluation of the proposals by an international review panel (with colloquium)
	Summer/Fall 2031	DFG sends out decision letters
	2031 – 2034	Project work – Cooperation – Networking
Reporting	2034/2035	Final reporting submitted to DFG, typically also Final Colloquium

Priority Programme

Statistics

Phase		2018 – 2023 (year of Senate decision)
ESTAB- LISHMENT PHASE	Submitted establishment proposals p.a.	29 – 53
	Established Priority Programmes p.a.	6 – 14
	Success rate establishment proposals (N)	18% – 29%
ESTABLISHED SPPs	Running Priority Programmes	89 – 99
	Budget of a Priority Programme	5,1 - 8,2 M€ for three years (average 6,4M€) [data: new SPPs 2022 + 2023 only]

Phase		
PROJECT FUNDING WITHIN A SPP	Submitted Project Proposals	21 – 80
	Funded Project Proposals	12 – 37
	Success rate (N)	40 – 70%
	Success rate (€)	35 – 70%

Priority Programme

Role of Coordinator

- ▶ guiding role for the programme as a whole
- ▶ fosters collaborations within the SPP, creates scientific momentum in the SPP
- ▶ qualified to manage a major interdisciplinary and multi-location research group
- ▶ committed for nine years
- ▶ submits and administrates coordination budget proposal
- ▶ organizes SPP meetings, schedules guests, runs the homepage of the SPP
- ▶ organizes the review colloquia (with respect to the applicants)
- ▶ compiles the final report
- ▶ has no influence on the proposals the review panel selects
- ▶ previous coordinators in Astrophysics: Peter Schneider, Andreas Burkert, Heike Rauer



Priority Programme

Considerations

Subject Scope:

- ▶ Definition of scope important for applicants, for reviewers, for the coordinator
- ▶ Should be well defined and well focused
- ▶ Text for call for proposals comes from establishment proposal (mostly from the summary)
- ▶ What is not included?





Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit

Weitere Informationen

- ▶ zur DFG: **<http://www.dfg.de>**
- ▶ zum Förderatlas: **<http://www.dfg.de/foerderatlas>**
- ▶ zu allen geförderten Projekten: **<http://www.dfg.de/gepris>**
- ▶ zu den deutschen Forschungseinrichtungen: **<http://gerit.org>**