

Call for applications to the Leibniz Collaborative Excellence funding programme

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1. Purpose of the funding

The objective of this funding line is to deepen and broaden the specific research mode of the Leibniz Association in a strategic manner and based on diversity and decentralisation. The Leibniz Association represents a special type of collaborative, mission-orientated academia across a broad range of networks. It stands for academic vigilance in the face of social and international developments, and for the interplay between excellent basic research and great practical relevance. Due to its make-up and overarching networks, the Leibniz Association features great systematic expertise in academia. Here universities are not exclusive, but certainly primary, partners.

As part of the Leibniz Collaborative Excellence funding programme, projects that are particularly innovative, and which require collaborative networking within and outside of the Leibniz Association in order to succeed, are to be funded. In this way, already established Leibniz topics are to be further consolidated, new fields of research explored, and collaborations in terms of developing academic sites and regions promoted further. The programme continues to focus on expanding both interdisciplinary and international collaborations for solving complex challenges, as well as on the promotion of research in participative structures such as Citizen Science.

2. Target of the funding

Funding will go to projects whose academic excellence is precisely the result of their intended collaborations, and which thus bring to bear the abilities of the Leibniz Association as a collaborative research organisation. The planned collaborations should be a logical necessity dictated by the project's academic content.

The funded collaborative projects stand out due to their particular academic originality. They also combine academic excellence with great social relevance.

Leibniz Research Alliances¹ and Leibniz ScienceCampi are expressly invited – via one of their institutes – to submit an application.

Duration of funding: Up to three years

3. Eligibility criteria

At least two academic partners must be involved in a collaborative project; at least one of these partners must be a member of the Leibniz Association.

4. Applications

Applications must be directed to the Senate Competition Committee (SAW). The application text and all documents must be submitted in English. The chairperson of the SAW will decide on any potential exceptions. The head office of the Leibniz Association will provide every application initiative with an application template.

The application as part of the Leibniz Collaborative Excellence programme must meet the following requirements: It encompasses a work programme lasting three years. The detailed project proposal (according to the template provided) should not exceed a total length of 12 pages (excluding bibliography). Administrative information and the financial plan are submitted directly via the electronic application system. This results in a total volume of approximately 20 pages (excluding all appendices). The application has the following structure:

A) Quality and innovativeness of the research project (weighting: 40%)

- An introduction to the academic field
- Summary of the planned project, including its research question and methods
- A work programme with milestones and work packages
- A rationale for the originality and innovativeness of the research project
- An explanation of the research project's relevance in terms of its contribution to solving current academic and social, ecological or economic problems

B) Quality of the network/partners (weighting: 40%)

- Presentation of the partners'/institutions' track record in the respective field
- Brief CVs of the project leaders including the ten most relevant publications (one document, max 2 pages)
- Explanation of the involvement of national and international partners and disciplines relevant to the project's success
- Presentation of the synergies and academic added value resulting from networking

¹ The projects in the Leibniz Collaborative Excellence funding programme must differ from the Leibniz Research Alliances and Leibniz ScienceCampi in the following ways: Projects in this funding programme are geared towards a result or product which is created collaboratively. Leibniz Research Alliances illuminate and structure a topic, i.a. resulting in specific research questions which can be proposed as a project within the Leibniz Collaborative Excellence funding programme by one of the institutes participating in the Research Alliance. Leibniz ScienceCampi, which for their part develop the reputation of an academic field at a single site by promoting cooperation between Leibniz institutes and universities, will also be given the opportunity for their respective lead Leibniz Institute to submit specific projects from the ScienceCampus to the funding programme for consideration.

The aim is to optimally combine the various strategic tools of the Leibniz Association with one another and effectively implement them to achieve the qualitative strategic objectives.

- Presentation of the participating partners' previous collaboration
- C) Strategic efficacy of the proposed research project (weighting: 10%)
- Contribution to consolidating already established Leibniz topics, e.g. through incorporating the proposed research project in existing Leibniz ScienceCampi and Leibniz Research Alliances or other collaborative projects
 - Contribution to developing a new field of research
 - Consideration of the Leibniz career guidelines²
 - Supporting measures in line with the Leibniz equality standards and the Leibniz diversity objectives³
 - Contribution to the development of the scientific environment
- D) Finances (weighting: 10%)
- Presentation of the intended usage of the funding in a finance plan which encompasses the direct and indirect project-related costs over the duration of the funding period, including indication of the annual staff costs, material costs (including travel costs) and investments and briefly justifies their necessity

For additional general information, please see the applicant guidelines for the Leibniz Competition.

5. Criteria for assessing applications

Academic excellence is the necessary criterion for funding.

The assessments should be guided by the following criteria, which the SAW bases its evaluation on.

Assessment of the project:

- Academic and methodological excellence when compared internationally
- The research project's chances of success: Maturity of the project, specificity of the work programme and feasibility of the project
- Originality and innovativeness
- Relevance: Contributions to solving current academic and social, ecological or economic problems

Assessment of the quality of the network/partners:

- Academic excellence and proven international record of the project leaders⁴ and/or the institutions working in the respective field
- Synergies in the collaboration and added value through networking
- Involvement of relevant national and international partners and disciplines

Assessment of the strategic efficacy:

- Consolidation of already established Leibniz topics

² [Career Guidelines of the Leibniz Association](#)

³ [Leibniz Equality Standards](#)

⁴ The project leaders are the managers of the individual subprojects as well as the spokesperson of the collaborative project.

- Development of new fields of research
- Supporting measures in line with the Leibniz equality standards and the Leibniz diversity objectives
- Consideration of the Leibniz career guidelines
- Contribution to the development of the scientific environment

Assessment of the financial planning:

- Appropriateness of the cost and finance plan

6. Reporting and quality assurance

After two years, the funded projects will provide the SAW with an interim report (of no more than five pages in length, excluding all appendices), which particularly engages with the extent to which the milestones formulated in the application have been achieved. The SAW will take this report into account and, where required, provide recommendations for the project. After the end of the funding phase, the SAW will be provided with a final report. All researchers involved in the project commit to conduct their research in compliance with the rules of good scientific practice.⁵

7. Contact for questions and advice on applying

Leibniz Association

Dr Karin Effertz

Division Leibniz Competition

E-mail: effertz@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de

Chausseestraße 111, D-10115 Berlin

Tel.: +49 30 206049 39

Fax: +49 30 206049 55

⁵ [Guidelines of the Leibniz Association on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice](#)