

ANNOUNCEMENT
OF
THE GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
FOR
FUNDING RESEARCH PROJECTS
FOR
FOSTERING INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS IN MENA COUNTRIES

1 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this funding announcement is to support research projects in the BMBF's partner countries in the region which focus on **practice-based solutions for research and innovation challenges** and closely involve experts from the region. The funded projects are expected to propose practical concepts for improving the governance of research and innovation as well as the interface between science and industry. The projects will therefore involve intermediaries in particular such as associations, chambers, transfer networks and technology and start-up centres.

The funded projects must address the following two tasks:

- 1) Drafting practical recommendations for action to improve the conditions and governance structures relevant to research and innovation
- 2) Identifying and implementing measures to strengthen the application and market orientation of research institutions

Further objectives of the funding measure are to:

- Strengthen expertise in providing research and innovation advice in Germany and the partner countries
- Support young researchers in Germany and the partner countries in the field of science studies. It is suggested in particular that foreign doctoral students or post-docs be integrated into the projects and that participating German doctoral students or post-docs spend research periods at a foreign research institution.

2 PARTNER COUNTRIES

The partner countries of this announcement are **Morocco**, **Tunisia** and **Egypt** in Northern Africa as well as **Jordan** and the **Palestinian territories** in the Middle East. The BMBF's partner ministries have been informed about the objective, purpose and form of the funding announcement.

3 OBJECT OF FUNDING

Funding takes place in two consecutive phases involving two separate application procedures:

1. Preparatory phase
2. Implementation phase

3.1 PREPARATORY PHASE

Funding in the preparatory phase is provided for individual projects. Applications are submitted by the German project coordinator. During the preparatory phase, the implementation of the project will be planned in terms of content and organization. The results of the preparatory phase will be presented in a concept for the realization of the proposed project idea during the implementation phase.

The following work is to be carried out during the preparatory phase:

- (1) Check on the feasibility of the proposed research approach
- (2) Organization of at least one workshop in at least one partner country
- (3) Composition of the consortium
- (4) Development of the research idea together with all partners (including stakeholders in the partner country) and joint drafting of the proposal for the implementation phase
- (5) Drafting the concept for the implementation phase including the following:

The concept for the implementation phase must provide proof (in the LoI, MoU) that

- a) at least part of the project activities of the foreign project partners are co-financed. This may include in-kind and cash contributions.
- b) the political bodies relevant to project implementation in the partner country (such as Research or Industry Ministry) are involved in the project consortium for the implementation phase.

A positive evaluation is the prerequisite for the continued funding of the project in the implementation phase (see 5.2 below).

3.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

The research activities are conducted in collaborative projects. The prerequisites for continued funding in the implementation phase are

- 1) A positive evaluation of the activities carried out in the preparatory phase and of the presented results as well as
- 2) A positive evaluation of the application for the implementation phase (see 5.2 below).

In order to achieve the objectives of this announcement set out in section 1 above, the projects must pursue a consistent approach and address two tasks which are described in the following.

Task 1) Drafting recommendations for action to improve the conditions and governance structures relevant to research and innovation.

Proposals for action are to be developed describing, for example, how existing institutional and regulatory conditions can be improved and international standards and successful models adapted to the region and how general challenges regarding practice-oriented teaching, the relevance of research to application, the exploitation of the delivered results and the orientation of research to industrial and societal needs can be solved.

Applicants can receive funding for the following activities among others to tackle this task:

- Potential and systems analyses from a national, regional, sectoral or technological perspective
- Analyses of regional innovation networks and clusters
- Study of general conditions for innovation-oriented entrepreneurial action
- Technological and sector-specific foresight analyses
- Analyses of research potential in sectoral value chains
- Development of strategies to exploit specific sectoral, regional or technological innovation potential
- Evaluation of existing property rights systems (trademarks, copyright and patents)
- Development of open access strategies
- Evaluation of the funding landscapes for research and innovation
- Development of funding instruments to strengthen the interfaces between industry, research and society

Task 2) Identifying and implementing measures to strengthen the application and market orientation of research institutions.

The aim is to encourage capacity-building particularly in institutions working in the fields of research, transfer and innovation in the target countries of this funding announcement (see 1 above).

Applicants can receive funding for the following activities among others to tackle this task:

- Active scouting for research approaches with commercialization potential, taking particular account of regional companies and societal demand,
- Development and implementation of qualification measures for students or employees in order to prepare them for entrepreneurship,

- Training for employees to enhance their knowledge management skills and their capacity to develop and steer cooperation with companies including for example
 - o Advanced training on the structure of licensing and cooperation agreements,
 - o Considering the project management and quality assurance requirements of industrial partners (GxP),
 - o Considering internationally applicable norms and standards
- Development of strategies for
 - o Research institutions,
 - o Technology transfer centres,
 - o Incubators
 - o Clusters, competence networks, regional innovation networks

Furthermore, it is desirable that the projects carry out high-profile measures to stimulate a discourse between the political and research communities, society and industry on research and innovation issues.

4 PROJECT CONSORTIA: INVOLVEMENT OF PARTNERS FROM MENA COUNTRIES

4.1 PREPARATORY PHASE

It is necessary that foreign project partners from the partner countries of this funding announcement (see 1 above) become involved during the preparatory phase.

Interested institutions from the areas of science, research, politics, society and industry in the partner countries can use the web-based PT-Partnering platform (<http://partnering.pt-dlr.de/NAN-INNO-17>) to express their interest in project cooperation during the application period under this funding announcement.

4.2 IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

It is imperative that project partners from the target countries of this funding announcement (see 1 above) are involved in the implementation phase.

Foreign project partners must participate on an equal basis in the project activities of the implementation phase in every respect (expertise, work sharing, exploitation of property rights, etc.).

Care must be taken to ensure that the participating foreign partners will co-finance at least part of their project activities, for example with support of the respective national funding organisation. This may include in-kind and cash contributions.

The foreign partners involved in the project consortium may receive additional federal funds under transfer contracts or subcontracts (see sec. 4 below).

In the case of transfer contracts, foreign partners receive their grants from the German project coordinator. The foreign partners will conclude a contract with the German project coordinator concerning the transfer of their grants in accordance with No. 12 of the administrative regulations pertaining to Section 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO).

5 SCOPE AND AMOUNT OF FUNDING

For the preparatory phase:

- As a rule up to €100,000 per project for a maximum duration of 12 months.

For the implementation phase:

- As a rule up to €460,000 per collaborative project for a maximum duration of 36 months.

The following expenditures are eligible for funding.

The funds for foreign project partners will be granted by the German project coordinator through subcontracting or the transfer of the grants.

- a) Staff for conducting scientific activities or research
- b) Project-related non-cash resources and equipment
- c) Travel and research periods
- d) Workshops

6 PROCEDURE

6.1 APPLICATION FOR THE PREPARATORY PHASE

The application procedure consists of two steps.

In the first step of application for the preparatory phase, the prospective project coordinator must submit to the DLR Project Management Agency a project outline for the preparatory phase in English by

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at the latest using the PT-Outline tool (https://secure.pt-dlr.de/ptoutline/app/NAN_INNO_17).

The project outlines submitted will be evaluated involving a panel of external experts and representatives of the foreign partner ministries.

In the second step of the application procedure for the preparatory phase, those coordinators whose project outlines have been evaluated positively will be invited to submit full formal proposals.

6.2 CONTACT PERSON AT DLR PROJECT MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Mr. Stephan Epe

Fon: +49 2 28/38 21-19 04

Fax: +49 2 28/38 21-14 90

E-Mail: stephan.epe@dlr.de

7 DURATION

The complete funding regulations were published in German in the German Federal Gazette (*Bundesanzeiger*) on June, 21st 2017.

The German announcement is available online under:

<https://www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/bekanntmachung-1380.html>

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