



# EPSRC-DFG Lead Agency Opportunity Guidance for Applicants

## 1. Introduction

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), as part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) work in partnership to encourage and support research applications that involve international collaborative teams. We have in place a Lead Agency Agreement which aims to reduce barriers to working internationally that researchers in the UK and Germany encounter.

Through a single main proposal and single external review process, the EPSRC and DFG aim to simplify the submission and selection procedures for joint UK-German research applications. Decisions are taken separately by both funding agencies and funding will be granted to projects which are successful through either DFG's or EPSRC's respective decision making processes.

The agreement enables collaboration between UK and German researchers in a key area of common interest and will be structured so that successful researchers in each country are supported by their respective country's funding agency.

Applications can be submitted continuously under this Lead Agency Agreement. The intention is that this is an open-ended arrangement between EPSRC and DFG,

however the arrangement will be periodically reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

Please note that there are no separate funds available for this joint initiative. These opportunities follow the general funding lines and budget processes of EPSRC and DFG. Applications must succeed on the strengths of their intellectual merit and teams in comparison with other proposals.

## 2. Scope of the Collaboration

Applicants should demonstrate how bringing together researchers based in Germany and the UK will add value and advance research. It is expected that each partner substantially contributes to the joint project.

The division of responsibilities should be reflected in the amount of funds requested by each partner. Projects should be integrated but do not have to be symmetrical. Neither the sums requested nor the items requested need to be identical on the German and UK sides. Teams should ensure that there is a plan for the effective delivery and coordination of research across the partners.

This lead agency opportunity is open to all themes within EPSRC, through the Working with Overseas Scientists Opportunity (<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/epsrc-working-with-overseas-scientists-nov-2023-responsive-mode/>) on the UKRI Funding Finder which is part of the responsive mode standard grant funding route. All applications must be within the remits of both EPSRC and DFG.

Within the DFG subject area structure (<https://www.dfg.de/resource/blob/175336/46d0a8c5c14d0f6530da28b4d25bf589/fac>

hsystematik-2020-2024-en-grafik-data.pdf), proposals may be submitted to the “Research Grant Programme” in the following subject areas:

- Chemistry (Review Boards 3.11-3.17)
- Physics (Review Boards 3.21-3.23) excluding 3.24 Particles, Nuclei and Fields and 3.25 Astrophysics and Astronomy
- Mathematics (Review Board 3.31)
- Engineering Sciences (Review Boards 4.11-4.51)

At EPSRC, this opportunity is only open to research applications aligned with the Standard Research Responsive Mode funding route only.

Each agency has its own funding parameters and principles that will be followed when reviewing and deciding on proposals. Proposals are expected to adhere to the typical proposal sizes for the DFG and EPSRC programme(s) from which funding is sought.

Proposals submitted to this opportunity should have a maximum duration of 3 years.

### 3. Eligibility

Only joint German-UK proposals will be eligible under this opportunity. Each joint research project must consist of researchers based in Germany and in the UK.

Applicants in the UK must meet the EPSRC eligibility requirements (<https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/>).

Applicants in Germany must meet the eligibility requirements of the DFG's Research Grants Programme (DFG form 50.01). Please note that the rules for funding eligibility apply to all applicants from Germany, including the duty to cooperate for non-university researchers. Any duty to cooperate for DFG applicants at non-university research institutions can only be fulfilled through cooperation with a partner at a German university/higher education institution (see DFG form 55.01).

Applications that contain unnecessary duplicate requests for the same costs and resources from both DFG and EPSRC may be returned without review.

## 4. Submission Process

Before applying, applicants should identify a prospective lead agency (either DFG or EPSRC).

The lead agency can be chosen freely by the applicants. It is recommended that applicants discuss the proposed project with the lead agency prior to submission.

The application should indicate that it is to be considered under this Lead Agency Agreement by prefacing the title with "EPSRC-DFG".

The duration of the projects must not exceed 36 months. Proposals must be written in English.

### 4.1 EPSRC is the Lead Agency

Applicants must comply with the application preparation requirements outlined in the "Working with Overseas Scientists" opportunity on UKRI's Funding Finder

(<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/epsrc-working-with-overseas-scientists-nov-2023-responsive-mode/>).

The German collaborating research organisations should be included as project partners on the application. The funding totals by German research organisations should be included as Direct Contributions in the project partner section.

Do not include German collaborators as 'Project Co-Leads International'. This role should only be used for collaborators under the RCN agreement (<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/collaborate-with-researchers-in-norway/>) or based at IIASA. Your application will be rejected and you will be asked to resubmit if you use this role for your German collaborators.

The resources and cost justification section should include a clear summary and justification of the German costs sought from DFG as well as the funding sought from EPSRC. The German costs must adhere to the DFG rules and regulation (please refer to DFG form 50.01).

The cost breakdown form on TFS should only include UK expenses for institutions based in the UK, which will be supported by EPSRC. Do not include your costs to be funded by DFG in this form or your application will be rejected and you will be asked to resubmit.

A detailed breakdown of funding requested from DFG should be submitted to EPSRC as an attachment under the 'International Requirements' section on TFS.

In parallel, a copy of the application must be submitted by the German project partner to DFG a maximum of a week after the submission to EPSRC (otherwise the proposal may be rejected):

1. In the DFG's elan portal, the German project partner should select "EPSRC-DFG XXX \_DFG non Lead" under "Proposal Data".
2. Enter a project acronym for your proposal.
3. For each module, please only enter the funds requested from the DFG in the elan portal. Note that only Germany-based applicants should be entered as "applicants". UK partners (and potential further international partners) should be entered as "cooperation partners" (please select "participating individuals", "cooperation partners"). At least one cooperation partner from the UK must be specified.
4. A CV for each of the applying individuals should be provided (Germany and UK-based). Please note that the CVs of each of the Germany-based applying individuals should be formatted according to the DFG guidelines (see DFG template 53.200, link provided below). Please upload the CVs of all applying individuals combined in one PDF document.
5. Please upload a full copy of the proposal that was submitted to EPSRC as one file (including any appendices, etc.) in elan. You can download your application from TFS by printing to PDF and combine this application form with a PDF of your vision and approach document, project partner letters of support, and any other attached PDFs to create one document.
6. It is compulsory to submit the "project data form". Please upload the form in elan under "Other Attachments".

## 4.2 DFG is the Lead Agency

Please prepare the joint proposal according to the guidelines for the Research Grants Programme via DFG form 50.01.

The proposal must include a description of the full proposed research programme and research team and the total resources for the joint project (meaning the funds requested for the UK and German side including the justifications).

Proposals must be submitted by the principal investigator of the German team via elan, the DFG's electronic proposal processing system. Please select "EPSRC-DFG Opportunity xxx\_DFG Lead" under "Proposal Data".

Enter a project acronym for your proposal. For each module, please only enter the funds requested from the DFG in the elan portal. Note that only Germany-based applicants should be entered as "applicants". UK partners (and potential further international partners) should be entered as "cooperation partners".

A CV for each of the applying individuals should be provided, formatted according to the DFG guidelines (see DFG template 53.200, link provided below). Please upload the CVs of all PIs combined in one PDF document.

A separate document should include a summary and justification of the funds to be requested from EPSRC.

In parallel, a copy of the proposal must be submitted by the UK project partner to EPSRC a maximum of a week after submission to DFG (otherwise the proposal may be rejected for formal reasons).

Applications should be submitted via the UKRI Funding Service through the "OPP676:EPSRC working with overseas scientists: non-lead agency" (<https://funding-service.ukri.org/OPP676/apply/705>) opportunity. Please note, that this is a portal to enable funding if your application is successful through DFG's decision making processes and your application will not be assessed by EPSRC.

1. Applicants should select that this is an EPSRC-DFG non lead application.
2. Please upload a full copy of the application that was submitted to DFG as one file (including any appendices, etc.)
3. The cost breakdown should only include UK expenses, costs for partners

based in the UK, which will be supported by EPSRC.

4. Complete the sections as requested and detailed on the funding service portal.
5. Include your German partners as project partners and DFG's contribution as a 'direct' contribution. As it is not a UK led application, you do not need a project partner letter of support from your German project partner.
6. If successful through DFG's peer review processes, your application will be subject to standard EPSRC post decision checks pre-award to ensure your UK costs adhere to UKRI policy.

## 5. Peer review

Applications submitted to this Lead Agency Agreement will not undergo a special review process, they will be reviewed in competition with other EPSRC responsive mode standard mode or equivalent DFG proposals if DFG led.

Applications received by EPSRC via UKRI's Funding Service (TFS) will be managed following EPSRC's internal processes and review criteria. Applications received by DFG will be managed following DFG's internal processes.

All submitted proposals are subject to EPSRC's and DFG's processes (including eligibility checks and peer review) for their respective standard research grants. After scope and eligibility checks by the respective agency, every submitted application will be peer reviewed in accordance with the lead agency's review criteria.

Whilst the assessment criteria are not identical, DFG and EPSRC ask reviewers to evaluate research on its scientific or intellectual merit.



The lead agency will share reviews and project lead responses, where applicable, with the non-lead agency in accordance with the lead agency's confidentiality regulations.

Proposers should note that all documents submitted to DFG or EPSRC may be shared by secure electronic means between the funding agencies if necessary.

## 6. Funding decisions

The lead agency and the non-lead agency will use their standard internal procedures to make their funding decision. The non-lead agency's funding decision will be informed by the lead agency's panel recommendation and funding decision. Successful applications at led by both DFG and EPSRC will have their recommendation confirmed by DFG's joint committee before funding is awarded.

### 6.1. DFG

When DFG is the lead agency, the Review Board (Fachkollegium) gives a funding recommendation based on the reviews which must be confirmed by the Joint Committee.

When DFG is the non-lead agency, the Review Board (Fachkollegium) gives a funding recommendation based on the evaluation and outcome of the lead agency which must be confirmed by the Joint Committee.

### 6.2. EPSRC

When EPSRC is the lead agency, the Head of Programme will make a decision on funding based on the panel rank order and the available budget.

When EPSRC is the non-lead agency, the Head of Programme will review and approve the overall evaluations provided by the lead agency and the recommended

outcomes, taking into account availability of funds.

EPSRC's funding recommendation must then be confirmed by DFG's Joint Committee before an award is made.

### 6.3. For EPSRC and DFG

Agreement by DFG and EPSRC to fund an application will be contingent upon sufficient funding being available on both sides and projects can only be funded if both organisations arrive at a positive decision.

As the participating organisations have different funding cycles, it is possible that some projects will have delayed start dates to ensure that sufficient funds are available.

Should an application be declined for funding, researchers should refer to each participating agency's individual resubmission policies.

## 7. Post Award

Awardees must comply with the award conditions and reporting requirements of the agencies from which they receive funding.

Grant holders are requested, where possible, to keep their project components synchronous and initiate their grants in a timely manner.

Awardees will be required to acknowledge EPSRC and DFG in any publications arising from the grant.

Requests for no cost extensions will be considered by the corresponding agencies using their standard procedures and any changes to awards will be discussed with the other funding agency before a mutual decision is reached.

EPSRC and DFG requirements for data management apply to researchers funded by the respective agencies.

## 7. Further information

If EPSRC is lead agency:

- General information on EPSRC's research areas: Our research portfolio and priorities – UKRI (<https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/remit-programmes-and-priorities/our-research-portfolio-and-priorities/>)
- Eligibility guidelines: Check if you're eligible for funding – EPSRC – UKRI
- Guidance for applicants – EPSRC – UKRI (<https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/>)
- How applicants use the UKRI Funding Service – UKRI (<https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply/how-to-use-our-funding-application-services/how-applicants-use-the-ukri-funding-service/>)
- The funding service submission system: Sign in - UKRI Funding Service (<https://funding-service.ukri.org/signIn>)
- Data protection policy – UKRI (<https://www.ukri.org/publications/data-protection-policy/>)
- Information about EPSRC's International Agreements: International agreements – UKRI (<https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/epsrc/relationships/international-agreements/>)

If DFG is lead agency:

- General Information on the DFG's Individual Grants Programme:  
[www.dfg.de/research\\_grants](http://www.dfg.de/research_grants)
- Guidelines Research Grants Programme (DFG form 50.01) – includes eligibility requirements: [www.dfg.de/formulare/50\\_01/50\\_01\\_en.pdf](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/50_01/50_01_en.pdf)
- Template for the project proposal: Project Description – Project Proposal [09/22]  
[www.dfg.de/formulare/53\\_01\\_elan](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/53_01_elan)
- CV template – DFG form 53.200: [www.dfg.de/formulare/53\\_200\\_elan](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/53_200_elan)
- The DFG's elan submission system can be accessed at: <https://elan.dfg.de/en>
- Information on the review, evaluation and decision processes in the DFG's individual grants programmes:  
[www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/proposal\\_funding\\_process/individual\\_grants\\_programmes/arriving\\_decision](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/proposal_funding_process/individual_grants_programmes/arriving_decision)
- Please note the DFG's data protection notice on research funding, which can be viewed and downloaded at [www.dfg.de/privacy\\_policy](http://www.dfg.de/privacy_policy). If necessary, please also forward this information to those individuals whose data will be processed by the DFG due to their involvement in your project.
- Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice – Code of Conduct:  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3923601>

## 9. Contacts

EPSRC International Team

- [International@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:International@epsrc.ukri.org)

DFG Head Office:

Scientific questions:

- Markus Behnke (<https://www.dfg.de/en/about-us/head-office/dfg-contacts/dr-markus-behnke-165178>) (3.11-3.17)
- Michael Mößle (<https://www.dfg.de/en/about-us/head-office/dfg-contacts/dr->

michael-moessle-166058) (3.21-3.24)

- Bastian Mohr (<https://www.dfg.de/en/about-us/head-office/dfg-contacts/dr-ing-bastian-mohr-166042>) (3.31, 4.41-4.43)
- Christiane Richter (<https://www.dfg.de/en/about-us/head-office/dfg-contacts/dr-ing-christiane-richter-166258>) (4.11-4.32, 4.51)

Administrative questions:

Simone Junior

E-Mail: [Simone.Junior@dfg.de](mailto:Simone.Junior@dfg.de)

## 10. Subject Areas

### 10.1. DFG subject areas

3.11 Molecular Chemistry

3.12 Chemical Solid State and Surface Research

3.13 Physical Chemistry

3.14 Analytical Chemistry

3.15 Biological Chemistry and Food Chemistry

3.16 Polymer Research

3.17 Theoretical Chemistry

3.21 Condensed Matter Physics

3.22 Statistical Physics, Nonlinear Dynamics, Complex Systems, Soft and Fluid Matter, Biological Physics

3.23 Optics, Quantum Optics and Physics of Atoms, Molecules and Plasmas

3.31 Mathematics

4.11 Production Technology

4.12 Mechanics and Constructive Mechanical Engineering

4.13 Process Engineering, Technical Chemistry

4.14 Fluid Mechanics, Technical Thermodynamics and Thermal Energy Engineering

4.31 Materials Engineering

4.32 Materials Science

4.41 Systems Engineering

4.42 Electrical Engineering and Information Technology

4.43 Computer Science

4.51 Construction Engineering and Architecture

Not included: 3.24 Particles, Nuclei and Fields and 3.25 Astrophysics and Astronomy

## 10.2. EPSRC subject areas

This opportunity is open across all EPSRC's research areas. We support high quality research in:

- artificial intelligence (AI)
- digital security and resilience
- energy and decarbonisation
- engineering
- healthcare technologies
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- manufacturing and circular economy
- mathematical sciences
- physical sciences and advanced materials
- quantum technologies

If you are unsure as to whether your application will fit EPSRC's remit, then you can request a remit check here: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/epsrc-remit/>