

*This is a machine generated translation of the Funding Announcement "[Richtlinie zur Förderung von Vorhaben der wissenschaftlich-technologischen Zusammenarbeit mit der Sozialistischen Republik Vietnam](#)" by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). This document is a courtesy translation for informative purposes only and not legally binding.*

## **Federal Ministry of Education and Research**

### **Announcement as part of the Federal Government's strategy for the internationalisation of education, science and research**

Directive on the promotion of scientific and technological cooperation projects with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

From 08.01.2024

#### **1 Funding objective, funding purpose, legal basis**

##### **1.1. Funding objective**

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (hereinafter referred to as "Vietnam") is an important research and innovation partner for Germany with its numerous internationally connected universities, rapid economic development and the great potential that Vietnam offers as an investment location for German companies. Based on the agreement on scientific and technological cooperation (STC) with Vietnam from 2015 and the second meeting on STC between the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Vietnamese Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) in 2021, cooperation in the fields of research, technology and innovation is to be further intensified.

This funding measure is part of the Federal Government's strategy for the internationalisation of education, science and research. It complements the national BMBF funding programmes "Regional Information for Climate Action (RegIKlim)" and "Climate Adaptation, Floods, Resilience (KAHR)", which are part of the "Research for Sustainable Development" strategy (FONA<sup>3</sup>), as well as the international SURE funding priority "Sustainable Development of Urban Regions" in the FONA strategy.

The funding programme also contributes to the Federal Government's Future Strategy for Research and Innovation, the German Strategy for Strengthening Resilience to Disasters and the BMBF's Sustainability Strategy. Furthermore, the funding measure contributes to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the National Security Strategy and the realisation of the goals of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN Sustainable Development Goal 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" is central to the risk management of extreme natural hazards in cities and urban regions.

Both Germany and Vietnam are exposed to a variety of natural hazards, which are exacerbated by climate change. Extreme temperatures, floods and storms have also caused human and economic losses in Germany. In some regions of Germany, the risk of natural hazards is expected to increase if efficient risk management is not implemented. In Vietnam, natural hazards such as floods, tsunamis, typhoons, landslides and droughts pose the greatest challenges. In addition,

climate change threatens to jeopardise the goal of sustainable development and poverty reduction in Vietnam. Losses and damage will continue to increase in both countries, especially in densely populated areas with highly developed public infrastructure that require better disaster risk management.

Science, spatial planning, municipalities, authorities, business and the local population are therefore called upon to develop integrated solutions for the sustainable risk management of extreme natural hazards. These must be developed and implemented in line with requirements and adapted to the specific local conditions.

The aim of this directive is to intensify the STC between Germany and Vietnam in risk management in the event of extreme natural hazards.

Specifically, the call for funding is intended on the one hand to contribute to the priority topics listed in point 2 in cooperation with relevant governmental, semi-governmental or municipal organisations in disaster management and climate change as well as other thematically involved specialist authorities. Secondly, the complementary pooling of knowledge, experience, research infrastructures and other resources should generate significant added value for the participating grant recipients and the disaster management organisations involved. Added value is to be created in the form of an improved knowledge base and transdisciplinary development of innovative products and services on the priority topics, which are integrated into existing risk management systems as pilot applications.

The integration of research results into existing systems and the close networking of stakeholders from science and application with the involvement of the population should create the basis for sustainable scientific and economic cooperation in the long term. Through science communication and public participation in research, this funding guideline supports the implementation of the German government's 2021 coalition agreement.

In addition, this funding measure aims to promote cooperation between German and Vietnamese institutions of mutual interest, in particular between existing (e.g. from the RegiKlim, KAHR and SURE funding guidelines) and/or newly established research, development or innovation networks in Germany and Vietnam, which form the basis for a research, development or innovation partnership that lasts beyond the project duration. In this way, the funding programme contributes to the intensification of S&T cooperation with Vietnam.

The achievement of objectives is documented, among other things, by the publication of results, for example in scientific journals or conference papers.

## 1.2 Purpose of the grant

The purpose of the grant is to promote German-Vietnamese research and development projects<sup>1</sup> that are of mutual interest.

In order to achieve the objectives described in section 1.1, German-Vietnamese research projects of a pilot nature are to be funded, which combine the complementary expertise and knowledge of other specialist actors and the population in order to achieve decisive progress in scientific issues through the mutual transfer of information and knowledge.

To this end, existing collaborations are to be expanded and new project collaborations initiated. In the joint projects, particular emphasis is placed on the scientific excellence of the Vietnamese

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<sup>1</sup> R&D = research and development

and German partners. The participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is welcomed.

The grants are intended to enable scientists - especially young scientists - to achieve new findings and research results in the agreed subject areas that can be used sustainably.

The funded projects should also serve to prepare applications for follow-up projects, for example to the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection (BMWK), the European Union (EU) or funding organisations such as the German Research Foundation (DFG).

This funding guideline is embedded in Vietnam's science, technology and innovation strategy. On the Vietnamese side, a corresponding announcement on the funding of Vietnamese partners is published by the MoST (<https://www.most.gov.vn/vn/Pages/Trangchu.aspx>).

The results of the funded project may only be used in the Federal Republic of Germany, the EEA<sup>2</sup> and Switzerland as well as in Vietnam.

### 1.3 Legal basis

The Federal Government will award grants in accordance with these funding guidelines, Sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the administrative regulations issued in this regard as well as the "Guidelines for Grant Applications on an Expenditure Basis (AZA/AZAP/AZV)" and/or - the "Guidelines for Grant Applications on a Cost Basis by Commercial Enterprises (AZK)" of the BMBF. There is no entitlement to the grant. Rather, the granting authority decides on the basis of its dutiful discretion within the framework of the available budget funds.

According to these funding guidelines, state aid is granted on the basis of Article 25(1) and (2)(b) industrial research and (c) experimental research of the EU Commission's General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)<sup>3</sup>. Funding is granted in compliance with the common provisions laid down in Chapter I of the GBER, in particular taking into account the definitions set out in Article 2 of the Regulation (see the Annex on State aid requirements for the funding guideline).

## 2 Object of the funding

This funding guideline supports R&D projects as German-Vietnamese collaborative projects that address the following natural hazards in accordance with the funding purpose described above: Floods (e.g. caused by heavy and persistent rainfall), extreme droughts, storms and storm surges. To this end, one or more of the following topics with one or more of the associated research needs must be addressed:

<sup>2</sup> EEA = European Economic Area

<sup>3</sup> Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 187, 26.6.2014, p. 1), as amended by Regulation (EU) 2017/1084 of 14 June 2017 (OJ L 156, 20.6.2017, p. 1). June 2017, (OJ L 156, 20.6.2017, p. 1), Regulation (EU) 2020/972 of 2 July 2020 amending Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 as regards its extension and amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards its extension and relevant adaptations (OJ L 215, 7.7.2020, p. 3) and Regulation (EU) 2020/972 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 July 2020 amending Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 as regards its extension and relevant adaptations (OJ L 215, 7.7.2020, p. 3).2020, p. 3) and Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 270, 29.7.2021, p. 39). 39) and Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 167, 30 June 2023, p.1).

## Topic 1: Digital technologies in risk communication and risk management

### Research needs:

- Digital twins, artificial intelligence (AI) and explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) in risk management
- Simulation of cascading or mutually reinforcing hazards in the event of extreme natural events
- Detection of extreme natural hazards and analysis of natural hazard scenarios and their potential damage
- (Further) development of decision support systems
- Needs-based information and communication of risks, adaptation strategies and recommendations for action that takes cultural diversity into account, with structured impact analysis of the chosen approach, e.g. in the form of so-called serious games
- Investigation of the suitability of new and sustainably accessible data sources, e.g. from social media and publicly accessible street maps, or development of new data acquisition methods for AI-based transferable risk prediction, emergency communication and policy advice
- Development of collaborative, robust methods for processing data for use in risk management, e.g. through neural networks or federated learning of AI using training data from Germany and Vietnam without sharing sensitive data

## Topic 2: Resilience through risk management

### Research needs:

- Early warning, prevention and monitoring systems in risk management
- Harmonisation of interests/conflicts of different user types, e.g. between settlement, transport, natural space, economy, tourism through sustainable urban-rural spatial development, adaptation to changes, long-term system transformations
- Development of completely new solution strategies to increase resilience to various natural hazards that do not yet exist in this form in Germany or Vietnam.

### The projects should

- a. include study areas in both Germany and Vietnam. The same or different natural hazards from the list above should be investigated
- b. either jointly develop a technology that can be used equally in both countries or jointly develop two partially different technologies that are used in the respective countries
- c. be carried out in successful cooperation between the German and Vietnamese partners. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are to be identified and operationalised in the following areas:
  - Efficient governance for coordination, cooperation and task sharing
  - Professional project management
  - Joint utilisation of established research infrastructures
  - Development and consolidation of complementary expertise
  - Sharpening/strategic orientation/optimisation of scientific excellence
  - Increasing competitiveness
  - Internationalisation
  - Impact
 (compare [https://projektraeger.dlr.de/media/gesundheits/GF/Papier\\_AG\\_Kooperation.pdf](https://projektraeger.dlr.de/media/gesundheits/GF/Papier_AG_Kooperation.pdf))
- d. have a high practical relevance and actively involve different scientific disciplines and non-scientific actors in a transdisciplinary cooperation process. Networking with ongoing or recently completed research projects and programmes in the thematic context in Vietnam

and Germany is desired; effective communication and dissemination of the results and recommendations from the developed methods and technologies to the stakeholders should be taken into account

- e. Identify strategies for implementing the research results in politics, society and the economy. Furthermore, the solutions developed are to be implemented by the stakeholders in the selected cities and metropolitan regions in Germany and Vietnam as a pilot project directly during the term of the project or put into practice shortly after the end of the project. The methods and concepts developed should be applicable to various natural hazards, particularly in the areas of data collection and processing, early warning and communication

New findings from research should be translated into application-ready pilot projects in the funding priorities mentioned in number 2. It is expected that these developments will be protected accordingly, e.g. by patents or publication of the results in relevant specialist journals.

Projects applied for under this call should document the potential for long-term and sustainable cooperation with Vietnam. The benefits in terms of scientific and economic objectives should be balanced for Germany and Vietnam.

### **3 Recipients of grants**

Universities, non-university research institutions, commercial enterprises and SMEs in particular are eligible to apply. The existence of a permanent establishment or branch (company) or other facility serving the activities of the grant recipient (university, non-university research institution) in Germany is required at the time of payment of a grant.

Associated partners, such as organisations from politics, administration, planning and civil society from Germany and Vietnam, are expressly welcome to discuss, support and implement the research in practice.

Research institutions that receive basic funding from the federal and/or state governments can only receive project funding for their additional project-related expenses or costs in addition to their institutional funding under certain conditions.

Please refer to the R&D&I Framework<sup>4</sup> for information on the conditions under which state aid is or is not present and the extent to which it can be subsidised without aid.

Small and medium-sized enterprises or SMEs within the meaning of these funding guidelines are companies that fulfil the requirements of the SME definition of the EU<sup>5</sup>. The applicant declares its categorisation in accordance with Annex I of the GBER to the granting authority as part of the application.

### **4 Special conditions for funding**

The projects should have a high degree of practical relevance and be expected to produce findings and usable research results that lead to new technologies, products, processes and/or services. These can be both process and product innovations. In order to be able to achieve these

<sup>4</sup> Communication from the EU Commission (2022/C 414/01) of 28 October 2022 (OJ C 414, 28.10.2022, p. 1).

<sup>5</sup> See Annex I of the GBER and Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, published under document number C (2003) 1422 (2003/361/EC) (OJ L 124, 20.5.2003, p. 36):

[<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-con-tent/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=DE>].

innovations within the project duration, project proposals are requested that have already reached a corresponding level of technological maturity (so-called Technology Readiness Level - at least TRL 3)

([http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2016\\_2017/annexes/h2020-wp1617-annex-g-trl\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2016_2017/annexes/h2020-wp1617-annex-g-trl_en.pdf)).

At least one partner from Germany and one partner from Vietnam must be involved in each project. Each project is headed by a project manager on the German and Vietnamese side; this also applies if more than one research group or research-orientated SME is involved in a country.

The above-mentioned joint projects also support measures for

- International networking in the aforementioned thematic focus areas, e.g. workshops or guest residencies
- Preparation of follow-up activities (e.g. with the German Research Foundation (DFG) or Horizon Europe)
- Promotion of young academics (where appropriate), e.g. through guest residencies, doctorates.

The partners in a collaborative project regulate their cooperation in a written cooperation agreement. All collaborative partners, including research organisations within the meaning of Article 2 (point 83) of the GBER, must ensure that no indirect aid is granted to companies within the framework of the collaborative project. To this end, the provisions of point 2.2 of the R&D&I Framework must be observed. Before a funding decision is made on a collaborative project, a basic agreement on further criteria specified by the BMBF must be demonstrated (see BMBF form no. 0110<sup>6</sup>).

Funding is provided by the BMBF for the German project partners and by the MoST for the Vietnamese project partners. Project partners from other countries are eligible for the network, but cannot receive funding.

## **5 Type and scope, amount of the grant**

The grants are awarded by way of project funding as a non-repayable subsidy and generally up to EUR 350,000 per joint project for the German side (up to EUR 300,000 for the Vietnamese side) and generally for a term of 36 to 48 months.

The basis of assessment for grants to commercial enterprises and for projects of research institutions that fall within the scope of economic activities<sup>7</sup> are the eligible project-related costs. These can be financed on a pro rata basis, taking into account the requirements of state aid law (see appendix). According to BMBF principles, an appropriate own contribution to the eligible costs incurred is required.

The basis of assessment for grants to universities, research and scientific institutions and comparable institutions that do not fall within the scope of economic activities is the eligible project-related expenditure (for Helmholtz Centres and the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft the eligible project-related costs), which can be funded individually up to 100%, taking into account the requirements of state aid law.

<sup>6</sup> [https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy\\_index.php?auswahl=easy\\_formulare](https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare), BMBF Division General forms and templates for reports.

<sup>7</sup> For the definition of economic activity, see the information under point 2 of the Communication from the European Commission on the concept of State aid (OJ 2016 C262, 19.7.2016, p. 1) and point 2 of the R&D&I Framework.

For non-commercial research projects at universities and university hospitals, a project allowance of 20% is granted in addition to the eligible expenditure financed by the BMBF. It should be noted that the project allowance is already included in the maximum possible funding amount stated above.

Eligible for funding are expenses/costs that serve to make the planned research process or results accessible to the public during the funding period and to enter into dialogue with society through these. Science communication is the generally understandable, dialogue-oriented communication and communication of research and scientific content to target groups outside the scientific community.<sup>8</sup>

CO<sub>2</sub> compensation payments for business trips can be recognised as eligible expenditure or costs in accordance with the "Guidelines for grant applications on an expenditure basis (AZA/AZAP/AZAV)" or the "Guidelines for grant applications on a cost basis from commercial enterprises (AZK)".

In principle, applications can be made for:

- I. Funds for project-related staff
- II. Project-related material funds and funds for equipment (see guidelines for applicants) to a limited extent (generally up to a maximum of 20% of the total funding volume)
- III. In justified cases also funds for orders to third parties
- IV. Trips and visits by researchers and experts from Germany and Vietnam.  
The following applies to the funding of trips and visits by scientists and experts from the German side:  
In principle, travel within Germany and to the partner country is intended.  
Travel costs/expenses to and from the destination in the partner country, including the necessary visas, accommodation costs/expenses and the costs of travelling within Germany will be covered in accordance with the applicable regulations of the institution or company (in the case of flight tickets: if applicable, only economy class, in deviation from the regulations of the institution).  
The following applies to trips and visits by scientists and experts from Vietnam:  
Funding for travel costs/expenses and stays of project researchers and experts from the Vietnamese side is provided by the sending country
- V. Travel funds for international events  
Travelling expenses for international collaborations, e.g. for participation in international conferences in Germany and abroad related to a specialist project, can only be subsidised in justified exceptional cases. However, conference participation fees are generally not covered
- VI. Workshops  
Workshops with already known partners or for the development of new co-operation potential can be supported in Germany and in the partner country as follows:  
Various expenses and costs can be covered for the organisation of workshops. For example, the accommodation of guests, transfers, the provision of workshop documents, appropriate catering and, if necessary, the rental of premises can be subsidised. The amount of the grant depends on the size of the event and the number of foreign guests.  
In these cases, no daily allowance (see letter d) will be paid
- VII. Resources for science communication.

In principle, the usual basic equipment of the participating facilities is not covered or subsidised.

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<sup>8</sup> See also the BMBF's FAQ on science communication.

The GBER must be taken into account when determining the respective eligible costs (see Annex).

## **6 Other grant provisions**

The "Ancillary provisions for grants on a cost basis from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to commercial enterprises for research and development projects" (NKBF 2017) generally form part of a grant notification on a cost basis.

The "Ancillary Provisions for Grants on an Expenditure Basis of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research for Project Funding" (NABF) always form part of a grant award notice on an expenditure basis.

In order to carry out performance reviews within the meaning of Administrative Regulation No. 11a of Section 44 BHO, the funding recipients are obliged to provide the BMBF or the institutions commissioned to do so with the data required for the performance review in a timely manner. The information will be used exclusively in the context of the accompanying research and any subsequent evaluation, treated confidentially and published anonymously so that it is not possible to draw conclusions about individual persons or organisations.

If the grant recipient publishes the results of the research project as an article in a scientific journal, this should be done in such a way that the public can access the article electronically free of charge (so-called open access). This can be achieved by publishing the article in an electronic journal that is accessible to the public free of charge. If the article is not initially published in a journal that is electronically accessible to the public free of charge, the article should be made electronically accessible to the public free of charge (secondary publication), if necessary after a reasonable period of time (embargo period). In the case of secondary publication, the embargo period should not exceed twelve months. The BMBF expressly welcomes the open access secondary publication of scientific monographs resulting from the project.

Funding recipients are required to plan and present suitable measures for science communication in connection with their research process and research results.

In collaborative projects, the partners should develop a joint strategy for science communication.

Companies in the commercial sector (including start-ups and SMEs) are also encouraged to implement science communication measures without this being taken into account as a criterion in the funding decision of the funding body.

## **7 Procedure**

### **7.1 Involvement of a project organiser, application documents, other documents and use of the electronic application system**

The BMBF has currently commissioned the following project management organisation to handle the funding measure:

DLR Project Management Organisation  
European and international co-operation  
Heinrich-Konen-Strasse 1  
53227 Bonn  
Internet: <http://www.internationales-buero.de>

Contact persons are:

Specialist contact person:

Dr Gerd Rücker

Phone: +49 228 3821 1180

Fax: +49 228 3821 1444

E-mail: [gerd.ruecker@dlr.de](mailto:gerd.ruecker@dlr.de)

Administrative contact:

Paria Yousefi

Phone: +49 228 3821 2041

Fax: +49 228 3821 1444

E-mail: [paria.yousefi@dlr.de](mailto:paria.yousefi@dlr.de)

Procedure in the partner country:

The Vietnamese partners must submit complementary applications to the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST).

Contact person at MoST:

Mr Dinh Viet Dzung

Phone (mobile): +84 913 266 851

E-mail: [dungdv@most.gov.vn](mailto:dungdv@most.gov.vn)

Any changes to this will be announced in the Federal Gazette or in another suitable manner.

It is recommended that you contact the project organiser for application advice. Further information and explanations are also available here:

[https://www.internationales-buero.de/de/download\\_center.php](https://www.internationales-buero.de/de/download_center.php).

Forms for funding applications, guidelines, information sheets, instructions and ancillary provisions can be downloaded from the Internet at:

[https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy\\_index.php?auswahl=easy\\_formulare&formularschrank=bmbf](https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare&formularschrank=bmbf).

The electronic sketch tool "easy Skizze" (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline/reflink.jsf?m=IB-ASIEN&b=VNM23WTZZ1&t=SKI>) must be used to create English-language project outlines and the electronic application system "easy-Online" (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>) must be used for formal German funding applications. It is possible to submit the application in electronic form via this portal using the TAN procedure or with a qualified electronic signature. In addition, it is still possible to submit applications in paper form.

## 7.2 Two-stage application procedure

The application procedure for German applicants is organised in two stages.

### 7.2.1 Submission and selection of project outlines

In the first stage of the procedure, project outlines must be submitted to the DLR Project Management Agency in written or electronic form by **22 March 2024** at the latest.

The project outline must be submitted by the German applicant together with a cooperation partner from Vietnam. In the case of collaborative projects from Germany, the project outlines must be submitted in consultation with the intended collaborative coordinator.

The submission deadline is not a cut-off deadline. However, project outlines received after the above deadline may no longer be considered. The project outline should not exceed twelve pages.

The following aspects of the project are to be presented in the outline:

- I. Information on the project coordinator and the German and Vietnamese project partners
- II. Meaningful summary (objectives, research focus, utilisation of results)
- III. Technical framework of the project
  - a. planned measures to realise the objectives of the funding measure mentioned under points 1 and 2 and relating to one or more of the objects of the funding measure mentioned under point 2
  - b. Presentation of the scientific objective of the project and the intended innovation
  - c. Information on the state of the art in science and technology and on existing industrial property rights (own and third-party)
- IV. International co-operation within the framework of the project
  - a. Added value of international cooperation
  - b. Contributions from Vietnamese partners, access to resources in Vietnam
- V. Sustainability of the measure/utilisation plan
  - a. Scientific, technical and economic prospects of success and utilisation
  - b. Rough draft concept for science communication<sup>8</sup>
- VI. Rough description of the planned work steps of the cooperation project (work packages, preliminary milestones, KPIs)
- VII. Estimated expenses/costs.

For the exact structure of the project outline, please refer to the template under "easy outline": <https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline/reflink.jsf?m=IB-ASIEN&b=VNM23WTZZ1&t=SKI> (see menu item "Additional information about this funding area" under "Help"). The outline must clearly show how all partners will participate equally in the tasks and results of the project. In this context, the protection of intellectual property (intellectual property protection) also plays an important role. For better coordination with the Vietnamese partners, the project outline can be submitted in English. If an English project outline is submitted, a one-page German summary is mandatory.

The project outlines received will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- I. Fulfilment of the formal funding requirements
- II. Compliance with the funding objectives of the call for proposals mentioned under points 1 and 2 and the objects of funding mentioned under point 2
- III. Professional criteria
  - a. Technical quality and originality of the project
  - b. Relation of the selected research question to the programmes described under 1, in particular to the programmes of the BMBF and the Federal Government
  - c. Qualifications of the applicant and the German and Vietnamese partners involved
  - d. Scientific benefit and usability of the expected results
  - e. Measures for science communication in connection with the research process and the research results and/or the planned participation of the interested and general public through mediation, dialogue and participation formats
  - f. Quality of the concept for science communication
- IV. Criteria for international co-operation
  - a. Initiating/establishing new international partnerships
  - b. Experience of the applicant in international co-operation
  - c. Consolidation of bilateral/international partnerships
  - d. Quality of cooperation and added value for the partner organisations
  - e. Involvement of young scientists (where appropriate)

#### V. Plausibility and feasibility of the project (financing, work steps, time frame, KPIs)

The project outlines suitable for funding are selected according to the above criteria and assessments. Interested parties will be informed of the selection result in writing.

The project outline submitted as part of this stage of the procedure and any other documents submitted will not be returned.

#### 7.2.2 Submission of formal funding applications and decision-making procedures

In the second stage of the procedure, the authors of the positively assessed project outlines are invited to submit a formal funding application.

An application for funding is only complete if at least the requirements of Article 6(2) of the GBER (see Annex) are met.

The electronic application system "easy-Online" (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>) must be used to prepare formal funding applications (in compliance with the requirements specified in the Annex) It is possible to submit the application in electronic form via this portal using the TAN procedure or with a qualified electronic signature. In addition, it is still possible to submit the application in paper form.

For collaborative projects on the German side, funding applications must be submitted in consultation with the intended collaborative coordinator.

Formal applications for funding must include

- I. a detailed (partial) project description with categorisation and development of the technology readiness level
- II. a detailed work plan and schedule with a detailed description of the KPIs
  - a. Realisability of the work plan
  - b. Plausibility of the schedule and the achievement of milestones, KPIs, project goals
  - c. Detailed description of the utilisation
  - d. Detailed presentation of the measures for integrating other specialised stakeholders and the general public in the context of science communication
- III. Detailed information on the financing of the project
  - a. Appropriateness and necessity of the requested funding
  - b. Securing the overall financing of the project over the full term

The work and financing plans are evaluated in particular according to the criteria listed in section 7.2.2 (II) and (III):

- Eligibility of the requested funds (also taking into account point 5 of these funding guidelines)
- Necessity and appropriateness of the requested funds
- Comprehensibility of the explanations of the financing plan
- Implementation of any conditions from the first stage
- Quality and informative value of the utilisation plan, also with regard to the funding policy objectives of this funding guideline
- Justification of the need for state funding, presentation of scientific-technical and, if applicable, economic risks
- Organisation of cooperation within the network
- Definition of milestone targets with quantitative and verifiable criteria.

Content-related or funding-related conditions or recommendations from the evaluation regarding the implementation of the project must be observed and implemented in the formal funding applications.

The formal funding application must be accompanied by a project description in German. This should not exceed twenty pages. A letter of intent from all partners involved must also be attached to the project description.

In accordance with the above criteria and assessments, a decision on funding will be made after the final application review based on the available budget.

The BMBF reserves the right to seek advice from experts when making the final funding decision.

The application documents and any other documents submitted will not be returned.

### 7.3 Regulations to be observed

Sections 48 to 49a of the Administrative Procedure Act, sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the general administrative regulations issued for this purpose shall apply to the approval, disbursement and accounting of the grant as well as to the verification and review of its use and any necessary cancellation of the grant notification and the reclaiming of the grant awarded, unless deviations from the general administrative regulations have been permitted in these funding guidelines. The Federal Audit Office is authorised to audit in accordance with Section 91 BHO.

## **8 Period of validity**

This Directive shall enter into force on the day following its publication in the Federal Gazette.

The term of this funding guideline is limited until the date of expiry of its basis under state aid law, the GBER, plus an adjustment period of six months, i.e. until 30 June 2028. Should the application period of the GBER be extended without any relevant changes to the content of the aid scheme, the term of these funding guidelines will be extended accordingly, but not beyond 30 June 2031. If the GBER is not extended and is replaced by a new GBER, or if relevant changes are made to the content of the current GBER, a successor funding guideline corresponding to the then applicable exemption provisions will come into force until at least 30 June 2031.

Berlin, 8 January 2024

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

On behalf of

Kathrin Meyer

## Attachment

The following state aid regulations apply to this funding guideline:

### 1 General conditions for funding

The legality of the aid is only given if, in accordance with Article 3 GBER, all the conditions of Chapter I GBER and the conditions of Chapter III applicable to the specific category of aid are fulfilled. It should be noted that, according to the case law of the European Union Courts, national courts are obliged to order recovery if State aid has been granted unlawfully.

State aid on the basis of the GBER will not be granted if there is a reason for exclusion under Article 1(2) to (6) of the GBER. This applies in particular if the company has not complied with a recovery order based on an earlier Commission decision declaring an aid inadmissible and incompatible with the internal market.

The same applies to the granting of aid to companies in difficulty as defined in Article 2(18) GBER. Only companies that were not already in difficulty on 31 December 2019 but became companies in difficulty in the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021 in accordance with Article 1(4)(c) GBER are exempt from this prohibition.

This notice applies only in relation to aid having an incentive effect under Article 6 GBER. The aid application required in this context must contain at least the following information:

- a. Name and size of the company
- b. Description of the project with details of the start and completion dates and the location of the project
- c. Location of the project
- d. The costs of the project and
- e. The type of aid (e.g. grant, loan, guarantee, repayable advance or capital injection) and the amount of public funding required for the project.

By applying for funding under this funding guideline, the applicant declares his/her willingness:

- to cooperate in complying with the requirements of state aid law
- to submit requested information and/or supporting documents to prove creditworthiness and compliance with state aid law
- for co-operation in the case of proceedings (with) the European Commission.<sup>9</sup>

The Recipient further agrees that:

- the BMBF will retain all documents relating to the aid granted that prove compliance with the above-mentioned conditions for 10 years after the aid has been granted and will hand them over to the European Commission on request
- The BMBF publishes grants exceeding 100,000 euros on the European Commission's transparency database.<sup>10</sup>

Under these funding guidelines, state aid is granted in the form of subsidies in accordance with Article 5(1) and (2) of the GBER.

<sup>9</sup> For example, as part of a case-by-case assessment by the European Commission in accordance with Article 12 of the GBER.

<sup>10</sup> (The EU Commission's transparency database can be accessed at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/competition/transparency/public?lang=de>). The information required under Annex III of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 is relevant for this publication. This includes, among other things, the name or company name of the aid recipient and the amount of the aid.

The GBER limits the granting of state aid for economic activities in the following areas to the following maximum amounts:

- 35 million euros per company and project for industrial research (Article 4(1)(i)(ii) GBER)
- 25 million euros per company and project for experimental development (Article 4(1)(i)(iii) GBER)

When checking whether these maximum amounts (notification thresholds) have been complied with, the cumulation rules under Article 8 GBER must be observed. The maximum amounts may not be circumvented by artificially splitting up substantively related projects. Partial authorisation up to the notification threshold of aid subject to notification is not permitted.

## **2 Scope/amount of grants; cumulation**

The following provisions of the GBER apply to this funding guideline, in particular with regard to eligible costs and aid intensities; the eligible costs and aid intensities listed below indicate the maximum framework within which eligible costs and funding quotas for projects with economic activity can be granted.

### **Article 25 GBER - Aid for research and development projects**

The funded part of the research project must be allocated entirely to one or more of the following categories:

- Industrial research
- Experimental development

(see Article 25(2) GBER; definitions in accordance with Article 2(84) et seq. GBER).

For the categorisation of research into basic research, industrial research and experimental development, please refer to the relevant information in recital 79 and footnotes 59, 60 and 61 of the R&D&I Framework.

The eligible costs of the respective research and development project must be allocated to the relevant research and development categories.

Eligible costs are

- a. Personnel costs: costs for researchers, technicians and other personnel, insofar as they are deployed for the project (Article 25(3)(a) GBER)
- b. Costs of instruments and equipment to the extent and for as long as they are used for the project. If these instruments and equipment are not used for the project during their entire lifetime, only the depreciation in value during the duration of the project, calculated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, is considered eligible (Article 25(3)(b) GBER)
- c. Costs for contract research, knowledge and patents acquired directly or under licence from third parties in compliance with the arm's length principle, as well as costs for consultancy and equivalent services used exclusively for the project (Article 25(3)(d) GBER)
- d. Additional overheads and other operating costs (including materials, supplies and the like) incurred directly as a result of the project (Article 25(3)(e) GBER).

The aid intensity per aid recipient may not exceed the following rates:

- 50 % of the eligible costs for industrial research (Article 25(5)(b) GBER)
- 25 % of the eligible costs for experimental development (Article 25(5)(c) GBER).

The aid intensities for industrial research and experimental development may be increased up to 80 % of the eligible costs in accordance with Article 25(6)(a) to (d), but points (b), (c) and (d) may not be combined:

- a. by 10 percentage points for medium-sized companies and by 20 percentage points for small companies
- b. by 15 percentage points if one of the following conditions is met:
  - i. the project involves effective cooperation
    - between undertakings, at least one of which is an SME, or is carried out in at least two Member States or a Member State and a Contracting Party to the EEA Agreement, with no single undertaking contributing more than 70 % of the eligible costs, or
    - between an undertaking and one or more research and knowledge dissemination organisations which bear at least 10 % of the eligible costs and have the right to publish their own research results
  - ii. the results of the project are widely disseminated through conferences, publications, open access repositories or free or open source software.

In accordance with Article 7(1) GBER, eligible costs must be supported by written documentation that is clear, specific and up-to-date.

The amounts before deduction of taxes and other charges are used to calculate the aid intensity and the eligible costs.

### **3 Accumulation**

When complying with the maximum permissible aid intensity, the cumulation rules in Article 8 GBER must also be observed in particular. The cumulation of several grants of aid for the same eligible costs/expenditure is only permitted within the framework of the following regulations or exceptions:

Where Union funds that are centrally managed by Union institutions, bodies, agencies, joint undertakings or other entities and that are not directly or indirectly under the control of Member States are combined with State aid, only State aid shall be taken into account for the purpose of determining whether the notification thresholds and maximum aid intensities or maximum aid amounts are respected, provided that the total amount of public funding granted for the same eligible costs does not exceed the most favourable funding rate laid down in the relevant provisions of Union law.

Aid exempted under the GBER for which the eligible costs can be determined can be cumulated with:

1. Other State aid, provided that these measures concern different identifiable eligible costs
2. Other State aid for the same partially or fully overlapping eligible costs, but only if this cumulation does not exceed the maximum aid intensity or aid amount applicable to such aid under this Regulation.

Aid for which the eligible costs cannot be determined may be cumulated with other State aid for which the eligible costs also cannot be determined, up to the relevant limit for the overall financing in the specific case, as laid down in the GBER or in a decision of the European Commission.

State aid exempted under the GBER may not be cumulated with de minimis aid for the same eligible costs if such cumulation exceeds the aid intensities or aid limits laid down in Chapter III GBER.