

Call for applications for project funding under the “Research Forum” funding line

With its “Research Forum” funding line, the Daimler and Benz Foundation is making up to €150,000 available for research projects in the disciplines of computer science, applied mathematics, and biosciences. The projects should be characterized by scientific originality and practical relevance and should in the short term be capable of making an effective contribution to solving pressing issues in society.

1. Motivation

With the “Forum Research” funding line, in its current call for proposals the Daimler and Benz Foundation is exclusively supporting scientific projects that are situated at the interfaces and boundaries of the disciplines of computer science, applied mathematics, and biosciences and are characterized by interdisciplinarity. The funds are intended to rapidly enable researchers to initiate innovative scientific projects with relevance to society or to put existing findings to practical use. Funding is provided for application-oriented research projects.

This funding line is not primarily intended for the provision of personnel funding for hiring doctoral candidates for a period of typically three years. Rather, the applicant is to be given the opportunity to use the funding as freely as possible in order to strategically meet the specific needs of the research project.

2. Focus of call for applications

For a research project, independent research group leaders who are in permanent or temporary employment at a university or non-profit non-university research institution in Germany for the entire duration of a project can apply for funding of up to €150,000. In addition to professors, junior professors and “Habilitanden” (candidates for lecturing positions), applications can also be made by scientists who have completed their doctorates and have experience in leadership. In particular, this group includes postdoctoral researchers who are at an advanced stage of their scientific careers and already lead their own research groups. The application must clearly indicate the current status of the applicant and explicitly state his or her leadership role – for example as it appears on the website of the applicant’s institution of employment.

Only one application may be submitted per applicant. However, an applicant may collaborate in further projects. Applications from research institutions that do not conduct research themselves (e.g. associations or other such alliances) cannot be taken into consideration. The project applied for should be completed within a period of at least one and at most three years. Several institutions and companies (also from abroad) may be involved in the project; however, the Foundation only provides funding to non-profit scientific institutions.

Funding may be requested for a clearly defined research project with a central research question. However, this call for applications does not focus on applications

- a) for projects located entirely in the field of basic research,
- b) for clinical trials,
- c) in which the financing of equipment is the main focus (more than 30 % of the total requested costs),
- d) which focus on establishing research, training, or advanced education structures, or on capacity-building (more than 10 % of total costs),
- e) which serve solely to promote young researchers,
- f) for which a significant portion of the funding is to cover travel expenses (more than 10 % of total costs),
- g) which in terms of content are similar to projects currently supported by the Foundation under other funding lines (e.g. promotion of cooperation between German and African research institutions),
- h) for research projects of entirely local significance that are not transferable to other regions.

3. Use and accounting of the funds applied for

Funding may be requested for personnel and material resources and to cover travel expenses. Personnel costs must be calculated according to the rates of the German Research Foundation (DFG) or the collective agreements applying to the federal or state civil service. “Vollkostensätze” (full cost rates) or lump sums cannot be granted. The Foundation bases its approval of the positions applied for on the “Hinweise zur Bezahlung von Promovierenden” (Guidelines for the Payment of Doctoral Candidates; in German only) of the DFG and reserves the right to reduce funding in the event of deviation.

Remuneration cannot be provided for an applicant’s own position; likewise, overhead costs, costs for exemption from teaching duties, bench fees, fees for permanently employed scientists, or costs for outlay typical of a research institution (publication costs, or consumables such as basic chemicals and office equipment etc.) cannot be covered.

In view of the Foundation’s non-profit status, the total funds may only be transferred and accounted for via the third-party funding office of the German research institution where the applicant is employed. This institution must possess its own legal capacity.

4. Applications

Applications may be submitted twice a year; please refer to the Foundation’s website for the exact deadlines. Please submit your application online via the application portal on the Foundation’s website. The Foundation does not provide a template for this purpose, but the following formal requirements must be strictly adhered to:

- a) The application may be submitted in German or English.
- b) The page margins must be at least 2 cm wide throughout.

- c) A readily legible font and type size (e.g. Arial, at least 11 pt) and justified alignment must be used.
- d) Illustrations such as charts and photos must be of high resolution (no blurring) and of a clearly legible size. They must either be self-explanatory or accompanied by captions, which must likewise have a font size of at least 11 pt.

The application may only contain the information as set out in sections 4.1 to 4.4 below, in the specified order, and with the numbers of pages indicated:

4.1 Name, institution, and contact details of the applicant (one person only) and of any further scientists or institutions involved in the research project (max. 3 A4 pages):

- a) Details of further scientists participating in the research project must be provided in the form of a list.
- b) If space allows, brief information may be added about the applicant or the other researchers participating in the project. Detailed CVs must not be attached under any circumstances.

4.2 Project title and description (max. 4 A4 pages):

- a) The topic of the research project should be clearly evident from the project title; please do not use acronyms.
- b) The project description must be preceded by an abstract of no more than half an A4 page stating the research question, while adhering to the four-page limit. The abstract should summarize the content of the research project and, in particular, outline its practical relevance.
- c) The description of the research project must be written in language comprehensible to readers without specific knowledge of the subject matter.
- d) References may be listed on additional pages.

4.3 Requested budget (max. 2 A4 pages):

- a) Please provide a detailed list in tabular form of the expected costs for personnel, travel, and materials.
- b) Please specify the total sum requested.

4.4 Further documents:

- a) If the applicant institution is not a university or a state research establishment, the application must be accompanied by a valid certificate of exemption from corporate income tax, specifying the purpose as “Förderung von Wissenschaft und Forschung” (promotion of science and research) in accordance with the German Tax Code. Institutions that do not possess this certification are not eligible to apply.
- b) Declarations of intent may be attached to the application.
- c) No further documents such as cover letters, CVs, publication lists, or tables of contents may be attached to the application.

5. Selection

Following submission, all applicants will receive prompt confirmation of receipt, which will be sent to the email address provided in the application. Applications will be assessed in comparison with the other project proposals submitted; where appropriate, the Foundation will have individual applications reviewed externally. The decisions as to the award of funding will be made by the Executive Board and the management of the Foundation.

The Foundation endeavors to decide on the applications that are to receive funding as early as possible after the deadline. Depending on the number of applications submitted, however, this timeframe cannot be specified with any certainty.

6. Contact

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Marion Hartmann at the Foundation office:

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Email: info@daimler-benz-stiftung.de