

# The Leibniz Association Strategy Fund – Concept and guidelines for the application process

## 1. Aims of the Strategy Fund

The Strategy Fund is an important tool that the Executive Board of the Leibniz Association can use to initiate and support strategic activities and projects up to a financial limit (currently €2 million per year).<sup>1</sup> The strategic activities and projects make a contribution to the strategic further development of the Leibniz Association and to implementing its commitments within the framework of the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation.<sup>2</sup>

It funds projects that bring added value to the Leibniz Association as a whole, are set up across multiple institutes and sections, or have relevance at association level. They increase the national and international visibility of the Leibniz Association and make a lasting contribution to strengthening its identity.

The Strategy Fund has action lines for projects, each with a different orientation. The Leibniz Executive Board decides on the action lines and the funds available for them every two years. The action lines are:

**Leibniz Strategy Fund action line A:** Central projects for implementing strategic goals of the association, with medium- and longer-term financing. Current examples:

- Leibniz Leadership Academy
- Leibniz PhD Network / Leibniz Postdoc Network
- Leibniz Mentoring Programme to support outstanding female researchers
- Leibniz leadership lectures
- International collaborations, presence and activities
- Leibniz Association prizes
- Participation in and membership contributions to cross-organisational activities
- Strategy workshops of the Leibniz sections and the Administrative Committee

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gwk-bonn.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Dokumente/Papers/WGL-Beschluesse.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Bilder\\_und\\_Downloads/%C3%9Cber\\_uns/Strategie-\\_und\\_Wissenschaftspolitik/Erkla%CC%88rung\\_der\\_Leibniz-Gemeinschaft\\_im\\_PFI\\_IV\\_2019\\_03\\_26.pdf](https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Bilder_und_Downloads/%C3%9Cber_uns/Strategie-_und_Wissenschaftspolitik/Erkla%CC%88rung_der_Leibniz-Gemeinschaft_im_PFI_IV_2019_03_26.pdf)

Leibniz Strategy Fund action line B: Seed funding for pilot or catalyst projects of high strategic relevance and visibility. Current examples:

- Leibniz Research Networks
- Leibniz Strategy Forums
- Communication activities on current focus topics
- Pilot projects on new forms of collaboration and focus topics
- Strategic exchange formats of current relevance and high visibility
- President's initiatives

## 2. Strategy Fund funding criteria

The Executive Board uses the following criteria to assess Strategy Fund applications and make funding decisions:

Projects in action line A

- make a contribution to the Leibniz Association's strategic further development through medium- to longer-term activities,
- are supported by multiple institutes and/or are available to multiple institutes,
- increase the visibility and strengthen the identity of the Leibniz Association in the longer term.

Projects in action line B

- act as a showcase for the Leibniz Association as pilot projects in strategically important topic areas and make their findings accessible over the long term,
- require a contribution from at least three Leibniz institutes and, where possible, are designed to involve more than one section,
- have the potential to initiate new collaborations, partnerships and/or third-party funding activities,
- are well placed to strengthen the Leibniz Association's visibility in a strategically relevant, current topic area.<sup>3</sup>

Ad-hoc measures that do not fall within the criteria and requirements listed here are also possible in response to specific, unforeseeable situations (e.g. the Ukraine matching fund).

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<sup>3</sup> Particularly with regard to the Leibniz commitments within the framework of the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation and the topic areas covered by Leibniz Research Alliances, ScienceCampi and Research Networks and by the section profiles.

### 3. Rules of procedure: Application procedure, selection and approval

Proposals may be submitted by member institutes funded on the basis of the Leibniz Association Implementing Agreement, and also by Leibniz Headquarters. Applications for project funding should, where possible, be made six months before the planned start of the activities and submitted via the members of the Executive Board at least six weeks before the Executive Board meeting. A fully completed application must be provided, including an explanation of the strategic added value for the Leibniz Association and a detailed financial plan. As a rule, own funds should be contributed for all activities, especially when applying for personnel costs.

For applications with a total funding amount that exceeds €20,000, the decision rests with the Executive Board. Applications below this threshold are decided on by the President, who informs the Executive Board. The President decides on the President's initiatives and informs the Executive Board of these at least once a year.

Every application, including the financial plan, is assessed ahead of the Executive Board meeting by a Board member against the criteria listed under point 2, and is then presented at the Executive Board meeting by a different member of the Executive Board. A discussion of the project follows, and a decision on funding is taken in the plenary session on the basis of the criteria listed under point 2. The Leibniz Association rules on dealing with apparent bias and conflict of interest apply (see General Rules of Procedure of the Leibniz Association). If a funding application is approved, the Leibniz Association signs a private-law agreement with the relevant institute (an agreement on the transfer of funds).

For projects run by Leibniz Headquarters, the Executive Board's decision in favour of the application constitutes approval for the appropriate use of funds. Leibniz Headquarters sets up a suitable cost centre for each project.

Further details on project implementation and the application of funds, financial management and reporting are governed by the Guidelines for the Use of Leibniz Competition Funds, which form part of the above agreement. The report is structured along the criteria listed under point 2. If funds are not drawn down in line with the annual financial management plan, they expire and are returned to the Strategy Fund. In justified exceptional cases, funds may be carried over to the following year.

The Leibniz Association funding must be acknowledged when promoting activities or producing publications in association with the funded projects ("Supported by Leibniz Association funds") and the Leibniz Association logo should be used.