

Applicant guidelines: General information on applying for the Leibniz Competition

Last updated: 20 May 2022

1. Eligibility and funding capacity

Every institute within the Leibniz Association can submit applications.

Each institute can submit one application for funding (up to 1 million EUR) or two applications, as long as their combined funding volume does not exceed 1 million EUR. The minimum funding threshold per application is EUR 250,000. Applying institutions may choose to finance funds transfers over EUR 250,000 to cooperating Leibniz Institutes from their own budget or opt for the transfers to be charged to the co-partner's budget. The maximum funding limit of EUR 1 million per institute and application still stands.

Each institute can also make an additional application twice a year for the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors. This programme can usually support up to five projects per year. The Senate Competition Committee (SAW) selects in its summer session in May up to three projects in the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors for funding recommendations to the senate.

An annual sum of approx. EUR 24 million is available to fund projects as part of the Leibniz Competition.

2. How the procedure is implemented

The procedure for applying, for assessing applications and for deciding which projects to fund encompasses the following stages:

- Drawing up and submitting an expression of interest, including a short summary of the proposal, a complete list of cooperation partners as well as the nomination of four potential assessors
- Drawing up and submitting a completed application
- The administration office assesses whether the applications are complete and meet the formal criteria
- The administration office procures two written, academic assessments by external, internationally accredited academic experts
- Suitable candidates in the Leibniz Junior Research Groups programme are invited to present their project in person as part of a pre-selection process
- The Senate Competition Committee (SAW) decides which funding recommendations to make to the senate
- The senate of the Leibniz Association decides which projects to fund

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When submitting their expression of interest, the institutes nominate four potential assessors. Only such persons may be nominated who can assess the project without any risk of bias. The criteria for potential bias can be found in the separate [information leaflet](#). The persons nominated by the institutes should not be informed about their nomination. There must be no consultation between the Leibniz Institutes and potential assessors.

The administration office will procure two pertinent academic assessments per application. Applications and all accompanying documents should be written and submitted in English in order to enable international assessors to participate in the assessment process. The chairperson of the SAW will decide on any potential exceptions.

Applicants whose application has been denied can submit a revised application in the next application round, i.e. generally after half a year at the earliest.

The president of the Leibniz Association and the chairperson of the SAW declare the approval of the senate. They inform the responsible government departments, both nationally and in the state in which the successful institute is located, that funding has been approved. The Leibniz Association's head office provides the projects with the funds in accordance with the decisions of the senate. The usage guidelines¹ of the Leibniz Competition procedure regulate the use of funds in more detail. In April, the Leibniz Association submits an annual report to the Joint Science Conference (GWK) on the competition's implementation and the approved projects. The head office of the Leibniz Association is responsible for documenting and evaluating all the stages in the procedure.

¹ [Usage guidelines of the Leibniz Competition procedure \(Verwendungsrichtlinie\)](#)

3. Application schedule for the Leibniz Competition 2024

Applications are submitted electronically via a dedicated portal, and are only deemed to be complete upon the head office's receipt of the signed application form. In terms of deadline adherence, receipt of the application via the electronic application system will be deemed sufficient.

Publication of the call for applications for the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors (first round)	May 2022
Publication of the calls for applications for the Leibniz Junior Research Groups, Collaborative Excellence, Transfer and Programme for Women Professors (second round)	September 2022
Selection for Leibniz Programme for Women Professors (1st round)	
Expression of interest in applying with nomination of four potential assessors	30 September 2022
Submissions deadline for submitting the completed applications ²	30 October 2022
Summer session of the SAW (Selection for Programme for Women Professors; 1 st round)	25 May 2023
Senate session	4 July 2023
Funding of the approved projects begins (1 st round)	from 1 August 2023
Selection for Leibniz-Junior Research Groups, projects of Collaborative Excellence, Leibniz-Transfer and Programme for Women Professors (2nd round)	
Expression of interest in applying with nomination of four potential assessors	30 March 2023
Submissions deadline for submitting the completed applications ²	30 April 2023
Preselection of the Leibniz Junior Research Groups	Summer 2023
Selection session of the SAW	21/22 September 2023
Senate session	November 2023
Funding of the approved projects begins	from 1 January 2024

² We here stress that expression of interest and submission of an application does not represent a two-stage assessment procedure. Expression of interest in applying merely serves the purpose of facilitating a speedy implementation of the procedure, i.a. by being able to select assessors in good time.

4. Information regarding the expression of interest

The expression of interest must be submitted via the electronic application system. The expression of interest comprises information regarding the applying institute, the project leaders and the project (including the estimated requested funding), a brief summary of the proposal (max 2,000 characters), a complete listing of cooperation partners, and the nomination of potential as well as to be excluded reviewers. The listed cooperation partners must include all subproject leaders. Please note that the summary submitted with the expression of interest will be the final version and may not be changed when submitting the completed application.

5. Information regarding the application form

- a) The detailed project proposal (according to the template provided) should not exceed a total length of 12 pages (excluding title page and bibliography). The page limit for resubmitted applications is 12.5 pages as these applications may comment on changes made in the application in the addendum. Administrative information and the financial plan are to be submitted separately via the electronic application system.

To ensure comparability of the submitted documents, the Leibniz Association provides a template for the application text.³

- b) The following documents must be submitted with each application:

- For institutional cooperation partners within Germany whose scientists will conduct their own research within the project (close academic partners): Letters of support are required to be in possession of the applicant institute⁴.
- For institutional cooperation partners outside Germany whose scientists will conduct their own research within the project (close academic partners): Letters of support including confirmations that no funding from the Leibniz Competition will be transferred to the partners and, if applicable, statement on contribution to project costs. Please note that it is expected that international cooperation partners contribute their own cost to the project. If the transfer of funds to a non-commercial institution outside Germany is essential to the success of the project, please provide the details and justification for such a transfer in a separate document. The SAW will assess each case individually.
- For close cooperations with commercial partners: Cooperation agreement based on the model agreement provided by the DFG (DFG Vordruck 41.026).
- Supporting documents to be submitted are listed in [this overview](#). Submission of supporting documents for collaboration partners taking on advisory and supporting functions (associated cooperation partners) is optional.
- Declaration (via legally binding signature on the automatically generated application form) that the application in this or a similar format has not been funded by any other funding body (DFG, BMBF, EU, etc.) or been registered as a specific special case (a so-called 'Sondertatbestand'). Applications submitted to alternative funding bodies have to be mentioned in the application.

³ The templates are available [here](#).

⁴ Please be aware that you must have a declaration of participation from the legal (not: natural) person which meets the minimum formal requirements (in particular, it must contain a letterhead and signature) and contains a binding memorandum of understanding. The declarations of participation must be provided to the Leibniz Association at any time upon request.

Applicant guidelines

- Please see the respective calls for applications for documents required by the specific funding programme. This information is also available via the electronic application system.
 - If one or several mandatory documents are missing, or if you submit applications which feature substantial formal errors or fail to meet the formal standards, this may lead to your application being excluded from the competition procedure.
 - Surplus documents or ones which have not been requested will not be taken into account in the procedure.
- c) Applications should be composed and written in English. If individual documents are submitted in another language, they must be accompanied by a translation. The chairperson of the SAW will decide on any potential exceptions.

The application and all necessary documentation must be submitted electronically.

6. Information on the presentation of the cost and finance plan

- In the application, a lump sum of up to 20 percent of the entire funding requested can be listed for indirect costs.
- The finance plan must be completed in such a way that it provides information about how the requested funds will be allocated to the different institutes involved.

7. Measures to promote equal opportunity

The Leibniz Association is strongly committed to promoting gender equality which is anchored in its statutes as a goal. It is therefore possible to submit applications for targeted measures to combine family life with an academic career in the framework of the Leibniz Competition. The measures financed in this way should contribute to reinforcing family-friendly working conditions in research.

For childcare measures the following applies: Primary childcare must already be in place. Financial support for childcare is usually only available for additional offers that fall outside the normal opening hours of day care facilities and where the parents themselves are unable to care for their children for project-related reasons.

No money may be paid to the parents directly. The so-called Besserstellungsverbot must be observed. This regulation, which is anchored in budgetary law, states that individuals supported in the framework of the Leibniz Competition may not be better paid than individuals paid according to the locally valid collective bargaining law, including collectively-agreed bonuses.

The costs for childcare may not exceed four percent of the total amount stated in the respective application.

8. Reporting and quality assurance

After two years, the funded projects will provide the SAW with an interim report (of no more than five pages in length, excluding all appendices), which particularly engages with the extent to which the milestones formulated in the application have been achieved. The SAW will take these reports into account and, where required, provide recommendations for the project. After three or five years, as applicable, the SAW will be provided with a final report. The reporting process will also take place via an electronic project management system.

9. Publication of results and data management

It is expected that the results generated within the funding framework of Leibniz Competition will be disseminated, digitally published wherever possible, and made freely available online (open access). The framework for this is provided in the current version of the “Open Access Policy of the Leibniz Association”.⁵

If systematic data have been generated as part of the project, these – as equally valuable research results – should be stored for posterity and made available for future use to the greatest extent possible. Where available, the standards of the respective field and the offerings of existing, sustainably managed data repositories should be taken into account. The “Guidelines on the

⁵ [Open Access Policy of the Leibniz Association](#)

Handling of Research Data within the Leibniz Association” adopted by the General Assembly provide guidance on safeguarding and reusing scientific data.⁶

10. Contact for further questions and advice on applying

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⁶ [Guidelines on the Handling of Research Data within the Leibniz Association](#)