

Frequency Asked Questions

Franco-German Fellowship Programme on Climate, Energy and Earth System Research Make Our Planet Great Again – German Research Initiative (MOPGA-GRI)

I GENERAL QUESTIONS

- **What is the general set-up of the programme?**

Based on the French initiative “Make Our Planet Great Again” (MOPGA), the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) offers a similar programme to support innovative research in various climate-related fields (MOPGA-GRI). The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) has been commissioned to implement the programme. After two phases of a selection process (Phase 1: international researchers fill in a Lime Survey to express their interest; Phase 2: researchers who were selected in Phase 1 team up with a German host institution to submit a joint project proposal), DAAD and the German host institution will enter a contract to support the selected project. The international researcher will be employed by the host institution and take the position of the research group leader. Supported research groups are expected and invited to do active networking, and they will participate in an annual Franco-German conference to enhance exchange with MOPGA research groups in France.

- **Where can I find further information about the programme?**

*Information about the programme can be obtained at DAAD’s website:
<http://www.daad.de/mopga-gri>*

*and at the FONA website (FONA is a programme in support of research for sustainable development. The programme is set up and financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research):
<http://www.fona.de>.*

In case of additional questions, please contact us via email (MOPGA-GRI@daad.de).

- **Where can I find information about the German research landscape and working in Germany as a researcher?**

*Information about the German research landscape and working in Germany as a researcher can be found at:
<http://www.research-in-germany.org/en>
<http://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en>*

- **Where can I find information about climate research in Germany?**

*Information about climate research in Germany can be found at:
<http://www.deutsches-klima-konsortium.de/en/startseite.html>*

- **Where can I find information about energy research in Germany?**

*Information about energy research in Germany can be found at:
<https://www.helmholtz.de/en/research/energy/>
<https://www.energie.fraunhofer.de/en.html>
<https://www.mpg.de/institutes>
<http://www.fvee.de/en/>
<https://www.kopernikus-projekte.de/>
<https://www.fona.de/en/flagship-initiative-energiewende-19691.html>
<https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/EN/Artikel/Energy/research-for-an-ecological-reliable-and-affordable-power-supply.html>*

- **Where can I find information about earth system research in Germany?**

Information about earth system research in Germany can be found at:
<http://www.deutsche-meeresforschung.de/en/>
https://www.helmholtz.de/en/research/earth_and_environment/

– **Is there an age limit for the Franco-German Fellowship Programme?**

There is no fixed age limit.

– **What are your criteria in distinguishing Junior from Senior Researchers?**

In general terms, a Junior Researcher would have a minimum of 2 years of professional experience since completion of his/her PhD, while a Senior Researcher would have a record of substantial professional experience since completion of his/her PhD, being qualified and entitled to take the full responsibilities of a chair. However, depending on the particular field of research, the assessment of junior or senior status may deviate according to specific criteria. We therefore suggest that you apply either as a Junior or as a Senior Researcher according to your own judgment. Ultimately, the selection committee of experts will decide whether a proposal qualifies as a Junior or as a Senior research project.

– **Will it be possible to conduct the research project abroad?**

No, fellows of the programme must set up their research group at a German university or research institution. Residency in Germany is mandatory during the course of the project.

– **Which research areas will be considered as priorities?**

Priority should be given to the following research areas:

Research on climate change:

- *Enhanced observation of the Earth system and the attribution of environmental and climate changes.*
- *Further understanding of processes, interaction scales, risks and thresholds.*
- *Improved modelling of complex earth systems, data assimilation and predictability.*
- *Improved understanding and estimation of the extent of future extreme events.*
- *Mitigation and social consequences.*

Research on energy transition:

- *New materials for the efficient generation, storage, distribution and use of renewable energy. Focus areas are solid-state batteries, hydrogen carriers, gas separation membranes, compound semiconductors, high-temperature superconductors.*
- *Highly innovative concepts and technical solutions for a sustainable supply of renewable energy integrating different sectors and industries (mobility, industry, households, electricity). Focus areas are energy storage and distribution (e.g. Power-to-X, high-voltage direct current technologies).*
- *Systemic analysis and scenarios for the energy transition including economic, ecological and social challenges both on a global scale and in different parts of the world.*
- *Digital solutions for the smart sustainable energy system of the future; soft- and hardware for the digital transformation of energy services und markets.*

Research to understand the Earth system:

- *Development of interdisciplinary standards for long-term data and assessment systems (especially in geo-modelling).*
- *Improved understanding of climate-related changes in mass and energy flows in the Earth system.*
- *Monitoring and early warning systems for the identification of natural and anthropogenically induced natural risks.*
- *Assessment of human-use claims in coastal areas with the objective of designing sustainable development concepts for the effective management of natural resources.*
- *Development of innovative measurement methods and techniques for automatic and autonomous monitoring within the framework of maritime observation systems.*

– **What language skills do I need to apply for the programme? Do I need to speak German?**

Excellent proficiency in English is mandatory. German language skills are welcome, but not necessary. The full project proposal must be submitted in English.

- **Can I simultaneously apply to the French international research call “Make our Planet Great Again”?**

Yes. However, in case of selection in both the French and the German initiative, the applicants must decide in which of the two initiatives he or she will carry out the project. Double funding under both initiatives will not be possible.

II FULL APPLICATION (RESEARCHER AND GERMAN HOST INSTITUTION)

- **How to apply?**

After you have been invited by DAAD to submit a project proposal, your first step will consist in identifying a suitable German host institution. Together with the German host institution, you will then prepare a full project proposal in which you will take the function of the research group leader.

- **Who should submit the full project proposal?**

The German host institution will submit the project proposal via the DAAD application portal.

- **What is the deadline to submit project proposals?**

The deadline (closing date of the DAAD application portal) is 15 February 2018. Please note, that incomplete applications will be excluded from the review process.

- **Do my supplied certificates need to be officially authenticated?**

No. Application documents that are not in German or English must be translated into one of these two languages. The translations do not need to be authenticated for the application procedure, and the translations can be self-made.

- **Which research institution in Germany can I choose?**

You can choose any German research institution: universities or non-university research institutions (e.g. Max Planck Society, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, etc.). More information about the German research landscape and working in Germany as a researcher can be found at: <https://www.research-in-germany.org/en>
<http://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en>

- **Will there be assistance in identifying a German host institution?**

Yes, such assistance can be obtained from the managing agencies (“Projektträger”). It will consist in providing information about institutions which work in the requested field of research. However, the support will not include any programme-related briefings of potential host institutions nor any specific recommendations (e. g. which institution will be most likely to respond favourably to collaboration requests).

Contact persons are:

Contact details for area “Energy Transition”:

Dr.-Ing. Gesine Arends

Projektträger Jülich

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Contact details for area “Earth Systems Research”:

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- **I have found a host institution in Germany for my research project. Which documents must be included in our joint proposal?**

Please include the following documents:

- *Your research background and motivation (including a brief description of your past performance);*
- *Project description (The main focus of the research; the scientific relevance of the project; project objectives; profile and particular suitability of the collaborating German host institution);*
- *Finance Plan;*
- *Time schedule.*

- **What to do in case of technical problems with the DAAD portal occur?**

If technical problems occur, send an e-mail to portal@daad.de

- **When will my host institution receive information about the result of our project proposal?**

Final results will be announced in March 2018.

III SELECTION

– **Who decides about my application?**

Decisions are made by a selection committee appointed by the DAAD and composed of professors and scientists from relevant disciplines. The selection committee is supported by representatives of the BMBF, relevant project management agencies, and the DAAD.

– **Which are the main selection criteria of the committee?**

Major selection criteria include the relevance and feasibility of the research projects (quality, originality, impact on the research field, implementation and work plan) as well as the applicant's research performance in recent years (quality and number of publications and other achievements – patents, conference invitations, prizes, successful grant applications, etc.). The career stage will be given adequate consideration.

IV WHAT WILL BE FUNDED

– **What funding will be provided for the establishment of the research group under the leadership of a successful applicant?**

Junior researchers: The research project will receive up to 1 million euros for 4 years (combined value of contributions from the DAAD and the German host institution).

Senior researchers: The research project will receive up to 1.5 million euros for 4 years (combined value of contributions from the DAAD and the German host institution).

Upon request, an annual lump sum of EUR 5,000 will be supplied out of the BMBF budget funding to the Research Group Leader in his/her capacity as a natural person. The lump sum is intended to facilitate smaller project-related expenditures without the necessity of administrative processes at the host institution.

– **What are the expected contributions by the German host institutions?**

*German institutions of higher education and institutes of the Leibniz Community (WGL):
Contributions can either consist of actual and assignable expenditures or be "in kind" (e.g. supply of infrastructures and other resources) in which case individual expenditures are not assignable. There is no fixed minimal amount for the value of actual expenditures or in-kind contributions, but there is an understanding that the relation of the contributions and the funding should be "appropriate". (Type of funding: "Fehlbedarfsfinanzierung")*

Independent institutions of research (e.g. Max-Planck Society, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft):

In the case of independent research institutions, the project will be co-funded (Type of funding: "Anteil-Finanzierung").

Unlike the French initiative which has a 50/50 funding policy (every euro of project funds must be matched by a euro provided by the French host institution), the German initiative does not necessarily expect independent German research institutions to contribute 50% of the project budget. Rather, the contribution made by an independent German host institution is expected to be *adequate* ("angemessen"). In order to calculate which amount will be considered as an adequate minimal contribution in a specific project proposal, the German institution is requested to use the following table as a calculation aid ("Kalkulationshilfe").

Please note: The given percentages in this table are **only relevant** for the calculation of an expected minimal amount of co-funding on the part of the German institution. They are not to be misunderstood as rules for the actual budget calculation.

Type of Expenditure	Funding
Salary for Research Group Leader (up to TV-L 14, in exceptional cases up to TV-L E 15 for Seniors)	100% out of DAAD grant
Salary for Postdocs and PhD students (up to TV-L E 13 as required. Differentiation according to levels of professional experience)	50% out of DAAD grant, 50% by host institution
Salary for technical staff	
Awards of contract to third persons	
Expenditures for the use of special research infrastructures	
Infrastructure and administrative expenditures	100% by host institution
Official travelling	

Example: If the total budget of the proposed project would amount to 1,000,000 euros and the result of the calculation aid would present a minimum of 430,000 euros (= 43%) to be contributed by the host institution, the DAAD grant would be limited to 57% for each item of the calculated budget.

A detailed exemplary budget calculation ("Ausfüllhilfe") will be found on the website (see link at top of FAQ).

– **What will I earn as a researcher in Germany?**

Your salary will follow the federal states agreement about remuneration ("Tarifvertrag der Länder", TV-L). The exact amount will vary according to the federal state ("Tarifgebiet"), the pay scale ("Entgeltgruppe") and the pay grade ("Stufe").

Example: Salary scales of TV-L E13 and E14 will cover a range of 5,450 to 5,872 EUR per month (before taxes). The Employment is subject to social insurance, so the salary includes employer contributions to health and long-term care insurance, pension insurance, unemployment insurance and others.

The salary is non-negotiable. If you still have questions, please contact your German host institution.

– **For how long can I receive research funding?**

The funding of your research project can be provided until December 31, 2022 (max.).

– **Will I receive the entire sum of the fellowship from the beginning?**

No. Salaries will be paid by your host institution on a monthly basis. Other expenditures will be funded according to the time schedule and the needs of the project. Please contact your German host institution in the event of further questions.

V MISCELLANEOUS

– **Will I be allowed to apply for DFG projects (German Research Foundation) during my fellowship?**

Yes.

– **Do I need to reside in Germany during the course of my project?**

Yes.

– **Can I take my current research team from abroad with me to Germany?**

Yes, but please consult your German host institution.

– **Are there opportunities to network with researchers in other German and French funding organisations?**

The programme provides opportunities for networking. There will be an annual French-German conference to allow for exchanges between all members of the French and German research groups. In addition, DAAD will arrange for meetings in Germany during which further options (e.g. set-up of a Science Blog) can be discussed.

– **Will there be assistance or advice with regard to job opportunities for spouses or family matters?**

German host institutions usually offer assistance and advice through Postdoc Centres, Centres for Dual Career, or Centres for family support. Please contact your German host institution.

– **Will costs for international moving be remunerated?**

Costs for international moving will be remunerated for the research group leader (incl. spouse and children). The remuneration will be governed by regulations stated in the BUKG (Bundesumzugskostengesetz) and the AUV (Auslandsumzugskostenverordnung). The remuneration must not exceed the amounts stated in a reference list which is available in the submission portal.

– **Do I need a visa to stay in Germany?**

Germany is a member of the European Union. EU citizens do not need a permit to enter and stay in Germany. Citizens of all other countries require a visa for stays in Germany. There are exceptions for short stays by citizens of specific countries, i.e. Tourist Visas, but those do not entitle the holder to take up work or research.

As an international researcher, you should apply for a “scientific visa”, which is simultaneously issued with a residence document for research purposes. One prerequisite for this is the conclusion of a contract (or a hosting agreement) with a recognised research institution.

Visa requirements may vary depending on one’s country of origin. The German diplomatic mission in your country can provide precise information on this. You will find an overview of the visa regulations, answers to FAQs on the subject and a table of countries on the website of the German Federal Foreign Office: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/Uebersicht_node.html

– **What status do I have as a research fellow at the German host institution?**

As a fellow of the programme you will be hired at the German host institution and get a status of a research group leader.