

Procedure for awarding interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary networking projects (joint projects)

Preamble

The One Health Platform (OHP) is a statutory association of scientists from university and non-university research institutions in the field of One Health research and practitioners (public health services/veterinary services/environmental agencies) from all over Germany. The aim of the OHP is to promote interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scientific exchange in the One Health field, to link national and international initiatives, to provide impetus and to create space for identifying research gaps and needs. In addition, dialogue between science and practice is to be promoted.

The Münster office is responsible for the submission and organisation of the evaluation of interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary networking projects within the framework of the OHP. The funds required to carry out the projects are provided by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR)/Project Management Agency Health Research at the German Aerospace Centre (DLR), or, in the case of thematically suitable projects, by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (BMLEH), the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN), the Federal Ministry of Defence (BMVg), the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) or the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG).

Eligibility

All members of the OHP are eligible to submit project applications and to be applicants in networking projects. Persons with guest status are eligible to participate in projects as cooperation partners. The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) is eligible to initiate projects. Applications can be submitted by the deadlines announced by the administrative office. As a rule, grants can only be awarded within Germany. Foreign partners may be involved as subcontractors in justified exceptional cases.

Funding for personnel can be requested for various types of positions. The integration of young scientists into interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary networking projects is welcomed. For example, project managers can apply for funding for a doctoral student for three years if both the project managers and the doctoral student are/will become members of the One Health Platform. In this case, applicants must have a job offer or the prospect of one for the duration of the interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary networking project in order to ensure that the doctoral candidate is supervised for the duration of the project. The doctoral candidate must have a proven opportunity to pursue a doctorate at their home university or a partner university, as well as be enrolled in an existing graduate programme or a formalised doctoral structure (minimum requirement: doctoral committee with annual meetings).

Type of projects

Interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary networking projects are alliances involving at least two scientific partners from different disciplines and/or sectors with a defined financial framework. Partners may be employed at the same institution, provided they work in different

institutes/departments. They should establish structures or sustainable networks, etc., which can be used by more than just the applicant research locations at the latest after the funding phase. Networking projects are characterised by an interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approach involving various institutes, disciplines and/or representatives of the relevant authorities or practical partners.

The relevance to One Health research must be demonstrated. To this end, at least two disciplines (e.g. veterinary medicine, human medicine, biology, climate research, environmental research, social sciences, etc.) relevant to One Health research must work together on a joint research question. In order to rule out any accusations of double funding, the distinction from existing funding must be clarified.

The project duration should not exceed 36 months. Each project partner can apply for a maximum of €300,000 (the amount must be justified by the project structure and expenditure). The maximum funding amount per consortium is limited to €1.2 million. In addition, there may be a project flat rate.

Each of the partners applies for their own project on the joint research question of the consortium. The interaction of the sub-projects in terms of the One Health concept must be presented in a cover section of the consortium application. One of the partners takes on the coordination of the consortium and submits the application.

Please note that for each subproject, an informal, signed statement from the subproject leader regarding the use of artificial intelligence must be included with the application.

Please use the following template:

“I hereby declare that I have written this application on my own and that no generative artificial intelligence technologies were used to develop or present the research question. Generative artificial intelligence technologies were used—if at all—only for linguistic corrections to the application and must be appropriately identified.”

Application procedure

Project funding is applied for using the procedure described below.

1. Submission of the joint application to the Münster office

Joint applications must be submitted by the coordinator of the consortium to the One Health Platform office in Münster by the deadlines set by the office in consultation with the SAB. Submission in electronic form is mandatory. To facilitate comparison and evaluation of submitted project proposals, the OHP application documents are standardised for consortium applications. A template is available from the administrative office or on the website <https://onehealthplatform.net/forschungsfoerderung/projektfoerderung>.

The joint application should describe the planned approach in detail. It should outline the issue to be addressed by the consortium, the scientific novelty, the added value for One Health research, and the networking between the relevant disciplines and participants at different institutions. If a doctoral position is involved, the planned supervision concept must also be explained.

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The formal structure of the application can be found on the corresponding form, which is available [here](#). The assessment procedure is a two-stage process.

The administrative office checks the documents for formal correctness. If the formal requirements are not met, the applicant is given the opportunity to submit the relevant documents at short notice. The administrative office rejects applications that are not formally correct. The decision is made at its discretion.

After formal review, the administrative office sends all funding applications submitted by the deadline to the members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). The voting members of the SAB review the applications from a technical perspective and rank all applications of a given project type according to a set of criteria. Based on this ranking, the highest-ranked applications are admitted to the SAB meeting.

2. Review by the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)

The coordination team is invited by the administrative office to attend a meeting of the SAB at reasonable notice. At this meeting, the coordination team or a designated representative presents the joint application. The voting members of the SAB discuss and evaluate the joint application and the respective projects of the consortium. In justified exceptional cases, the SAB may also consult external experts to evaluate an application. External experts have an advisory role only and no voting rights.

The following evaluation criteria apply to interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary networking projects:

- Expertise of the applicants for the projects in the consortium with regard to the joint research question of the consortium, necessary prior knowledge beyond the project idea, and networking skills
- Scientific novelty and originality
- Existence of a coherent research question for the network, taking into account the One Health approach
- Feasibility of the project
- Added value and reusability of the consortium or the consortium's results for interdisciplinary One Health research
- Appropriateness of the proposed time frame and budget
- Networking between research institutions from different disciplines and inclusion of disciplines relevant to One Health research in the consortium
- In the case of the inclusion of a doctoral position: supervision concept, integration into doctoral structures, and the applicant's previous experience in supervising theses

After reviewing the content and form of the consortium application, the SAB may decide as follows:

- a) The joint application is generally evaluated positively and recommended for funding.
- b) The joint application is rejected.

A funding recommendation for a project application is approved or rejected by a simple majority of the voting members of the SAB. Bias must be ruled out.

Bias

If members of the SAB are biased, they must leave the room during the discussion and voting on the application. Bias is deemed to exist if a member of the SAB is financially or substantively involved in the planned project or if the member is employed in the same institute or working group as the applicant(s). Members of the SAB are also required to truthfully disclose any close cooperation with the applicant in thematically similar projects or competition and, if necessary, to declare their bias. Employment in the same parent institution alone is not grounds for bias. In addition, voting members of the SAB may abstain from voting, e.g. if they do not have sufficient expertise to assess an application.

3. Final review by the project management agency/funding ministries

For the final funding decision, the administrative office forwards the application documents and the minutes of the SAB's review to the funding ministry or its designated project management agency. The necessary formal application for each project in the consortium is completed and submitted by the respective applicant. A binding funding commitment can only be made after the documents have been finally reviewed by the respective project management agency/funding ministry. Funding is provided in the form of a grant notice issued directly by the funding ministry or its project management agency to the respective project managers or institutions.

4. Follow-up applications

Follow-up applications are not permitted.

5. Reporting obligation

There is a reporting obligation to the funding body, which can be found in the respective grant notification and is independent of the One Health Platform. The SAB is entitled to request written or oral interim or final reports on the projects. Short project reports can be presented at the annual One Health Symposium.