

Call for Pre-Proposals

State, Society, and Economy in Change – Multilateral-Co-operative Research Projects on the Arab World

Deadline for Pre-Proposals

June 15, 2013

Information**The International Team**

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1. Objectives

Since the beginning of 2011, transformation processes resulted in political and social changes in some North African countries. These developments led to changes in other parts of the Arab region which are still going on in some cases. In response to these processes the Volkswagen Foundation launched a call for accompanying cooperative research projects between German and Arab researchers in June 2011. The Foundation supported projects which were supposed to follow the current developments via field research in the Arab region. Since the need for research projects addressing the transformation processes as discussed during the international conference “Re-aligning Power Geometries in the Arab World” in Leipzig in February 2012 is still very high, the Foundation launches a second call as a follow-up. This time, a wider range of possible research topics and different research groups is offered.

With this call, the Foundation focuses on the current processes in the Arab region by concentrating on political, social, and economic changes in these countries. Since similar changes have already taken place in other regions such as Latin America as well as Eastern and Southern Europe and some parts of South-East-Asia, the Foundation welcomes research projects which will involve a broader comparative perspective, too.

By funding multilateral cooperative research projects in the social sciences with a thematic focus on the current processes in the Arab world, a special focus is on cooperation with scholars in the region based on a collaboration of equals. Therefore, this call also contributes to the development and sustainable reinforcement of research in the social sciences and humanities in the Arab region. This is to be achieved via cooperative projects developed and carried out by both junior and senior Arab researchers in cooperation with German partners, providing junior scholars in Germany as well as in the Arab world with an opportunity to enhance their skills and academic qualifications. In addition, this should support the development, enhancement, and extension of academic networks within the Arab world, also transcending existing language barriers.

2. Thematic Scope

The Foundation invites candidates to apply for multilateral research projects concentrating on the current political, social, and economic transformation processes in the Arab region and their effects on other parts of the world. This may also include historic perspectives if they are strongly linked to the current developments in the Arab world. Furthermore, projects with a comparative research perspective involving partners from other regions where similar processes have already taken place or are still going on are in the focus of this call as well (e. g. Latin America, Eastern, Central and Southern Europe, South East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa). Here, the Arab region should be related to the developments in other parts of the world. All projects have to deal with the ongoing transformation and/or transition processes in the Arab world or with the conflicts that have arisen from civil society movements in these countries. Moreover, projects are encouraged to contribute to empirical research as well as joint theory development and building shared methods and methodology. Apart from these requirements, the research groups are free to define their respective topics and specific research questions within the broad theme of the call.

Project partners from the Arab region should come either from North African countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt) or the so-called region of the Middle East (the Arabian Peninsula including the Mashreq; e.g. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel/Palestine. Researchers from Islamic countries in the region like Turkey and Iran may be included in the project if their involvement is justified by the respective project design. This also applies to the neighboring countries from sub-Saharan Africa (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, and South Sudan). Thematically, these projects should focus on common problems such as migration, trade, and security issues, or the political, social, and economic effects of the transformation and/or transition processes on the neighboring countries. Additional project partners from other parts of the world may be involved if a comparison of transformation processes worldwide or the question of repercussions is at the core of the call.

The Foundation first of all welcomes applications from the social sciences. This includes for example political science, sociology, geography, economics, law, social anthropology, communication and media studies. Perspectives from the humanities (e. g. history, literature studies, cultural studies, linguistics etc.) may be included into the project if justified by the project design and the topic. Interdisciplinary approaches are given preference.

Requirements for the project design

The international peer-review of the applications will adhere to the following criteria for the project design:

- The topic of the project has to be relevant for the thematic scope of the call.

- Preference will be given to highly original proposals which include contributions from various disciplines and which are innovative in covering new ground. It is up to the applicants to show why and how their proposals are feasible and why this particular research formation is appropriate for the research questions at hand.
- All scientists involved have to be linked to/based at research institutions (no individual funding).
- A German research partner has to be involved who will act as the main applicant of the project. All other research partners can be co-applicants.
- At least two Arab research partners from different countries in North Africa and/or the Arabian Peninsula/Mashreq region have to be involved. In addition to the two Arab project partners researchers from Israel can also be integrated into the project.
- The salaries for the project partners from the Arab region have to be calculated according to local standards.
- The involvement of German and Arab junior academics in these projects (M. A. and Ph. D. students and/or postdoctoral students) is mandatory. In order to guarantee a feasible coordination of the project, no more than 5 Ph. D. students should be included into the project. The senior researchers (co-applicants) of all project partners must have reached the postdoc level (lecturer/senior lecturer) or need to hold a professorship.
- All projects have to integrate a concept for the capacity development of the junior researchers (e. g. “soft skill training” – proposal writing, publications in peer-reviewed journals, language courses etc.). This should also be mentioned in the budget plan.

3. Funding Opportunities

Multilateral cooperative research projects with at least one German and research partners from two different Arab countries (see requirements for the project design) can be funded with **up to 400,000 EUR**. This includes the personnel expenditure (e. g. salaries or fellowships for M. A. and Ph. D. students and non-administrative staff) and recurring non-personnel costs (travel expenses, costs for publications, organization of workshops/conferences, equipment, consumables, soft skill training for the junior scientists etc.). As regards the German partner, it is possible to apply for a coordination position (TV-L 13/14), either as a part-time coordination employment of 50 % or a full employment for a German junior researcher who looks to the coordination and can use this employment for a further qualification at the same time (Ph.D. or postdoc researcher).

In the first phase, research projects can be funded for **a duration of up to three or four years**. The grantees may apply for a second phase of funding for up to another three years provided that the project has been successful (this has to be documented in an interim report). The application for the ex-

tension of the project can only be submitted upon receipt of an invitation by the Volkswagen Foundation.

Additional workshops, trainings, summer schools

Funding of workshops, trainings, symposia, and summer schools in addition to training courses which are part of the research projects can be applied for if a considerable number of participants of the respective project are involved. Given that the security is guaranteed, these events should take place in the Arab region and aim at a high visibility. By this means networking activities between Arab junior and senior researchers as well as European junior and senior researchers should be strengthened. Applicants are requested to provide the Volkswagen Foundation with draft proposals. If approved, the applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal which should be sent at least six months prior to the beginning of the envisaged activity. They can be submitted any time during the course of the projects.

4. Application Process

Stage 1

The application is organized as a three-stage process, and pre-proposals must be submitted in English by **June 15, 2013** via the electronic application system (<https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/vwsantrag/log-in.do?siteLanguage=en>). The pre-proposals will be reviewed by an international expert panel. The international experts will follow criteria which will include the academic potential and originality of the project as well as the qualifications of the applicants and envisaged group members. Decisions will be communicated by **autumn 2013**. In case of a positive evaluation, recommendations from the review panel for the full proposal will be sent. Please, see the attached check-list for pre-proposals for multilateral cooperative research projects in the Arab region.

Successful applicants of stage 1 may apply for the funding of a **preparatory meeting** of relevant project partners (**up to 10,000 EUR**). Date, venue, participants, and costs of this **preparatory workshop** have to be specified already in the pre-proposals. Grants for preparatory workshops are only made to those applicants who will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Please accept our apologies that due to the expected high number of applications the Foundation cannot provide detailed information if the pre-proposal is disapproved by the Volkswagen Foundation.

Stage 2

Successful applicants of stage 1 **will be invited to submit full proposals**. All full proposals will undergo an international review process. Details of the requirements for full proposals including the recommendations of the review committee will be forwarded to the successful applicants of stage 1. The

deadline for the submission of the full proposal will be communicated in the invitation letter of the Foundation for the submission of full proposals (it will be approximately four months after the selection meeting for the pre-proposals).

Stage 3

Successful applications of stage 2 **will be decided on** in the framework of a selection meeting to be held in Hanover, Germany, presumably in early spring 2014.

5. Notes for Applicants

The foundation does not consider applications which are pending at another funding institution, neither in the identical nor in a similar form. The Foundation is not able to allocate funding to cover commitments entered into prior to the receipt of a grant letter. Furthermore, it is not possible to fund projects for development aid or short-term applications.

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Check-list

Please, submit your pre-proposal using the Volkswagen Foundation's electronic application system. The following data and documents (pdf-files) are requested:

- Full name and office address of the applicant, intended grant administrator (German research institution), indication of whether this or a similar application has been submitted to any other funding institution,
- Brief informative title of the project, total budget,
- Summary of the proposal (up to 1,500 char.),
- Description of the proposed research project (up to 5 pages or 17,000 char.):
 - Aim of the project,
 - Research questions to be dealt with,
 - Significance for the research field,
 - Relation to the thematic scope of the call,
 - Policy relevance,
 - Theoretical base and methodological approach,
 - Participants and their tasks,
 - CV and publication list (only the five most important publications) of each applicant,
 - Organization of group and expected synergy,
 - Work plan.

Budget in Euro (up to 1 page) including:

- Research personnel,
- Other personnel,
- Travel and accommodation,
- Publication costs,
- Consumables,
- Equipment (only for the research partners from the Arab region),
- Acquisition of data and literature.

This call for applications refers only to pre-proposals. Closing date is June 15, 2013.

PLEASE NOTE:

Applications are only accepted if a preceding pre-proposal was evaluated positively. Deadlines will be communicated with the approval of the pre-proposal.

The Foundation can provide funds only to academic institutions.