

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

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:

<https://www.daad.de/hochschulen/ausschreibungen/projekte/de/11342-foerderprogramme-finden/?s=1&projektid=57401203>

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:

<https://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.

– **I am already in Germany. Am I eligible to apply?**

You are eligible to apply, if you have not been a resident in Germany in the two years prior to the application deadline (October 13, 2017). German nationals who have been working abroad for the last two years (minimum) can also apply.

– **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.

– **I am not currently living in my country of origin. Am I still eligible to apply?**

Yes, the programme is open to all nations. You can apply, if you have not been a resident in Germany in the two years prior to the application deadline (October 13, 2017). German nationals who have been working abroad for the last two years (minimum) can also apply.

– **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 semi-conductors, 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.

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

Yes. If applicable, please indicate in the Lime Survey (online form to submit expression of interest).

II INDIVIDUAL STATEMENT OF INTEREST (1st Step)

– **What is the use of the Lime Survey?**

The Lime Survey is an online form to submit an individual expression of interest. After October 13, 2017, all submissions will be reviewed by a selection committee. Selected submitters will be invited to team up with a German host institution to prepare a project proposal.

– **Which questions need to be answered in the Lime Survey?**

*All questions included in the Lime Survey can be previewed at:
<https://www.daad.de/downloads/foerderprogramm/file.php?id=3829>*

– **Do I need to have contacts to a German research institution at the time of completing the Lime Survey?**

No. Prior contact to a German host institution is not necessary at the time of submitting your expression of interest in the Lime Survey. As soon as you are invited to submit a project proposal (step 2 of the selection process), you are expected to identify a suitable German host institution as a partner in preparing the project proposal.

– **Do I have to apply in German?**

No, your application should be in English.

– **Which additional documents do I have to submit?**

At the first step of application (Statement of Interest) you are required to submit a list of your publications.

– **Do I have to complete the Lime Survey in one go?**

No, but since your progress can be saved only once before submission, we advise you to complete it in one go. You may find it helpful to preview the Lime Survey questions at the link stated above.

– **What is the deadline to submit expressions of interest in the Lime Survey?**

The deadline (closing date of the Lime Survey) is 13 October 2017, 12.00 (noon) CET. Please note, that incomplete applications will be excluded from the review process.

– **Will there be a confirmation to acknowledge that my application has been received?**

Yes, as soon as you have submitted your statement of interest, you will automatically receive a confirmation that your application has been successfully submitted.

- **How long will it take until I receive a decision on my statement of interest?**

Results will be announced at the end of November 2017.

III FULL APPLICATION (2nd Step): 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, 12.00 (noon) CET. 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, Leibniz Association, Academies of Sciences and Humanities). 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>

- **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; schedule and timetable);*
- *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.

IV 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.

V 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):

Independent research institutions are expected to contribute to the project funding according to the following schedule (Type of funding: “Anteilfinanzierung”).

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 project budget
Salary for Postdocs and PhD students (up to TV-L E 13 as required. Differentiation according to levels of professional experience) Salary for technical staff Awards of contract to third persons	50% out of project budget, 50% by host institution

Expenditures for the use of special research infrastructures	
Infrastructure and administrative expenditures	100% by host institution
Official travelling	

– **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.

VI 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.

– **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.