Federal Ministry
of Research, Technology and Space

Regulations
governing the funding of projects on the topic
"Climate Services for Risk Reduction in West Africa (CS4RRA)"

of 19 May 2025

1 Funding aim, purpose and legal basis

1.1 Funding aim

Africa accounts for less than ten percent of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide but suffers excessively from climate change. West African countries face similar challenges related to climate change. The consequences of climate change such as increasing heatwaves, droughts, floods, rising seawater temperatures and ever heavier storms are leading to a decline in agricultural yields and fish stocks, increasing hunger on the continent and jeopardizing the safety of people and goods. Ongoing climate change is thus influencing the environment and human well-being in many different ways. The impacts depend on natural circumstances, on societal, economic and political structures and conditions, particularly environmental policy, the knowledge of different players, and the ability to respond or adapt to changed and challenging new conditions. Strengthening climate resilience in this region is therefore one of the most pressing challenges. This requires sustainable and innovative solutions that use local knowledge and are adapted to local needs. Climate services are a useful approach to solving these challenges. They are of increasing importance for preserving and improving the resilience of society and the economy and for effectively reducing climate risks.

This call for proposals is part of the CS4RRA (Climate Services for Risk Reduction in Africa) initiative, and it is published and financed in cooperation with funding organizations from Côte d'Ivoire, France, Italy and Norway. CS4RRA builds on the achievements and findings of previous JPI Climate activities (for example Flagship Africa under the SINCERE project). It follows the main results of the European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) programmes to advance climate services including ERA4CS, the ERANET for climate services, the Copernicus Programme and the Climate KIC of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), as well as the provisions of the Treaty of Aachen signed between France and the Federal Republic of Germany in 2019. The overall strategic objective of the CS4RRA initiative is to develop pathways to climate resilience in West Africa and to contribute to long-term multinational cooperation in this field. This reflects the aims of the GMES4Africa initiative and of the Global Framework for Climate Services of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). CS4RRA focuses on three pillars, namely funding for

a) Research to enhance our understanding of climate change and its impact in West Africa

b) Innovative climate services

c) Capacity development.

This funding call also contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (in particular SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals, SDG 13 Climate Action and SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). It forms part of the BMFTR's Research for Sustainability (FONA) strategy and serves to meet its Goal 1 "Achieve the climate goals". Its funding for climate change adaptation with the help of data, information, models and tools and for the reduction of related risks contributes to Field of Action 2 "Improving adaptability and risk prevention (adaptation)". It also relates to Action 6 "Increasing the resilience of cities and regions". It furthermore contributes to the Federal Government Policy Guidelines for Africa by strengthening the exchange with African partners in particular in the area of innovation, technology and science.

The content of this funding call is based on the priorities that have been identified in four dialogues (2023-2024) and a stocktaking conference (2024) organized as part of the CS4RRA initiative and that are summarized in a White Paper and reports (see https://www.fona.de/de/massnahmen/internationales/cs4rra/CS4RRA.php)

The aims of funding are:

- Strengthening climate resilience and reducing climate-related risks in West Africa;
- Closing major gaps in knowledge about climate impact and climate risks, capacity building on the ground, and increasing the use of innovative, needs-based climate services;
- Strengthening African-European research cooperation.

1.2 Funding purpose

The provision of climate services to reduce the impact of climate change in West Africa is a complex challenge involving many sectors, disciplines, policy areas and players. At the same time, it is subject to dynamic developments at local, national, regional and global level. For these challenges to be addressed successfully, the aim is to promote innovation-

based change at various levels. In order to achieve this aim, funding will be provided under this multilateral call to support holistic and integrated approaches.

The proposals must

- address all three pillars of CS4RRA: knowledge, capacity development, and innovation;
- follow inter- and transdisciplinary approaches by encouraging a co-design of activities between academic and non-academic partners such as policy-makers, society and economy;
- address the needs of West African stakeholders for reducing climate risks;
- combine research with innovation (including social innovation) and achieve impact through scientific excellence.

The results from the funded project may only be used in the Federal Republic of Germany or the European Economic Area (EEA), in Africa and in Switzerland.

1.3 Legal basis

The Federal Government will award grants in accordance with these funding regulations, sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the administrative regulations adopted thereunder as well as the regulations governing applications for expenditure-based grants (AZA/AZAP/AZV) and/or the regulations governing applications by commercial companies for cost-based grants (AZK) of the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR). There is no legal entitlement to a grant. The granting authority will decide freely after due assessment of the circumstances within the framework of the budget funds available.

Under this call, government funding is granted on the basis of Article 25 (1) and (2) (a), (b) and (c) of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) of the European Commission.[1] Funding is provided in accordance with the Common Provisions set out in Chapter I GBER, in particular taking account of the definitions given in Article 2 of the Regulation (cf. Annex with regard to the requirements of state aid legislation applying to this call).

2 Object of funding

Funding under this call will be provided for collaborative projects with West African and European partners to strengthen the successful use of climate services in West Africa. The projects can build on initiatives that have already been successfully concluded or are ongoing (including services), aiming to expand the successful application of climate services. Approaches are also welcome which can easily be replicated after the project has ended and therefore have great potential to be effective. Furthermore, particular encouragement is given to applications by inter- and transdisciplinary consortia. In addition, projects are welcome that use combined and modern technologies or local knowledge (including citizen science) and thereby contribute to enhancing the data and information basis for reducing climate risks in West Africa.

Applicants must address at least one of the following individual topics:

A. Improvement of early-warning systems

West Africa has an extensive need for effective early warning systems in order to reduce the negative impact of extreme weather and climate conditions. Applying to various hazards, early warning systems comprise the following elements as defined by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO):

a) Disaster risk knowledge

b) Detection, monitoring, analysis and forecasting

c) Warning dissemination and communication, and

d) Preparedness and response capabilities.

The focus should be on particularly vulnerable people, sectors and regions, including urban areas. The use of combined or modern technologies (for example AI, Earth observation, etc.) are especially welcome in addressing challenges such as limited data availability and the lack of well-founded forecasts or the dissemination of warnings. Ideally, access to climate data and systems should be free. The evaluation of existing early warning systems can also be part of the activities so as to trigger learning processes and encourage greater use of improved systems.

B. Improvement of operational evaluation and prevention of climate-related security risks

Security risks related to climate change include its impact on food, water, land, health, transport and energy systems. The consequences include the loss of vital resources, increasing competition for natural resources, climate-related disasters and migration.

A better understanding of the spatial, temporal and socioeconomic impact of climate change is needed to improve the assessment and prevention of climate-related security risks. In this context, consideration must be given to the entire value chain ranging from risk assessment and anticipation to prevention and risk management and communication. In addition, effective insurance mechanisms or nature-based solutions can increase security. Key players should be involved in the identification of priorities, in conceptualization, risk analysis and the design of measures. The use of

[1] Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 187 of 26 June 2014, p. 1) in the version of Regulation (EU) 2017/1084 of 14 June 2017 (OJ L 156 of 20 June 2017, p. 1), Regulation (EU) 2020/972 of 2 July 2020 amending Regulation (EU) 1407/2013 as regards its prolongation and amending Regulation (EU) 651/2014 as regards its prolongation and relevant adjustments (OJ L 215 of 7 July 2020, p. 3) and Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 amending Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 270 of 29 July 2021, p. 39) and Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 167 of 30 June 2023, p. 1).

combined or modern technologies (for example AI, Earth observation) is welcome in addressing regional challenges such as insufficient data availability, risk prediction, risk communication or suitable prevention measures.

C. Improvement of financing mechanisms and institutional integration of climate services

In 2024, WMO noted a growing awareness and the commitment of nations to integrating climate services into National Adaptation Plans. For climate services to be able to support governments and decision-makers in the long term, suitable mechanisms for financing climate services are urgently needed. Knowledge about financial obstacles and solutions to secure possible long-term uses of climate services is therefore of great interest. This may, for example, include the development of suitable business models and tax systems. Innovative approaches that encourage growth in employment and develop economic prospects are also welcome. Close cooperation between researchers and the private and public sectors is therefore supported. In addition to financing climate services over the long term, it is also necessary to improve the integration of the services into decision-making processes (for example through better coordination with national or regional development plans).

3 Recipients of funding

Universities, non-university research institutions, commercial companies – in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – as well as societal NGOs (for example foundations, societies and associations) are eligible for funding.

Applicants are required to have a plant or branch (company) or another entity in Germany serving the non-commercial activities of the funding recipient (university, research institution, NGO) at the time of payment of the grant.

Research institutions which receive basic funding from the Federal Government and/or the *Länder* can be granted project funding supplementary to their institutional funding to cover additional project-related expenditure or costs if their funding application explicitly describes how the proposed project and the institutionally funded activities are related or distinguish themselves from each other.

For more information on the conditions for when state aid is or is not deemed to be involved, and the extent to which funding can be provided without constituting aid, please consult the Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (R&D&I State Aid Framework).[2]

SMEs within the meaning of this call are companies that meet the requirements of the EU definition of SMEs.[3] Applicants will declare vis-à-vis the granting authority their classification according to Annex I of the GBER or the Commission's recommendation concerning SMEs in their written application for funding.

4 Special prerequisites for funding

The partners in a collaborative project will set out the terms of their cooperation in a written agreement. Before a funding decision on a collaborative project is taken, the cooperation partners must prove that they have reached a basic consensus on further criteria stipulated by the BMFTR (cf. form No. 0110).[4]

In step 2 (see 7.2.1 below), a Letter of Intent (LoI) from each project partner must also be submitted.

All funding recipients, including research institutions within the meaning of Article 2 (83) GBER, must ensure that companies do not receive any form of indirect aid as part of the collaboration. The provisions of No. 2.2 of the EU's R&D&I State Aid Framework must be observed.

Prerequisites for funding:

- A consortium must consist of at least three eligible project partners: one German institution and two African institutions from two different West African countries (funding is provided for German partners as well as for partners from West Africa which, in accordance with the UN definition, includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte D'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, but excludes the UK overseas territories St. Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha).
- Applicants from the countries that contribute to the financing of the multilateral call (Côte d'Ivoire, France, Italy and Norway) will receive funding from their respective funding organizations. All partners of a consortium must be eligible for funding in accordance with the terms and conditions of their respective national funders. National regulations of the funding organizations participating in the CS4RRA call are set out in the annex concerning funding organizations' requirements (*Anlage Anforderungen Förderorganisationen* in pt-outline, https://ptoutline.eu/app/AFR-EU_Call_CS4RRA).
- Applicants from countries not contributing to the financing of the multilateral call can participate with their own funds.
- The consortium must be coordinated by a partner based in a West African country and reflect a good balance between West African and European project partners.
- The same person can serve as project coordinator for no more than one proposal.
- Individual partners of a consortium can be part of other consortia unless otherwise provided in national regulations (see

[2] Commission Communication (2022/C 414/01) of 28 October 2022 (OJ C 414 of 28 October 2022, p. 1).

[3] cf. Annex I of the GBER or the Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (notified under document number C (2003) 1422 (2003/361/EC) (OJ L 124 of 20 May 2003, p. 36): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=EN.

[4] https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare, Bereich BMFTR, Allgemeine Vordrucke und Vorlagen für Berichte.

annex *Anforderungen Förderorganisationen*, accessible via pt-outline)

- Consortia which submit proposals are required to give notice of any submission of the same or similar proposals with other funding programmes as well as of the grants received as a result of such submission. The Group of Funding Parties reserves the right to reconsider the award of funds if the respective project consortium fails to give notice of double submission or of the funding received as a result of such submission.
- The pre-proposals in step 1 and the full proposals in step 2 should preferably be submitted in English; proposals in French will also be accepted.

5 Type, scope and rates of funding

Funding will be awarded in the form of non-repayable project grants.

As a rule, the maximum duration of the projects to be funded is three years. The amount awarded per project in accordance with the available budget will depend on the requirements of the proposed project and must not exceed two million euros (not including possible flat rate per project).

Grants for commercial companies and for projects of research institutions which fall into the category of economic activities[5] will be calculated on the basis of the eligible project-related costs. Part of these costs can be covered, taking legislation on state aid into account (see Annex). The BMFTR's policy requires an adequate self-contribution towards the eligible costs incurred.

The basis for calculating the grants for higher education institutions, research and science institutions and similar establishments which do not fall into the category of economic activities is the eligible project-related expenditure (in the case of the Helmholtz centres and Fraunhofer, eligible project-related costs), which can receive up to 100% coverage in individual cases, taking into account state aid legislation.

In the case of non-commercial research projects at universities and teaching hospitals, a flat-rate grant amounting to 20% of total expenditure will be awarded in addition to the eligible expenditure funded by the BMFTR.

Expenditure/costs incurred during the funding period to provide the general public with access to the planned research process and/or its results and to discuss them with society are also eligible for funding. Science communication is the dialogue-oriented transmission of generally understandable information about scientific research to target groups outside the scientific community[6].

Eligible expenditure/costs are governed by the BMFTR's regulations governing applications for expenditure-based grants (AZA/AZAP/AZV) and/or the regulations governing applications by commercial companies for cost-based grants (AZK).

Carbon compensation payments for official travel can be recognized as eligible expenses or costs in accordance with the regulations governing applications for expenditure-based grants (AZA/AZAP/AZAV) and/or the regulations governing applications by commercial companies for cost-based grants (AZK).

The determination of the respective eligible costs and rates of funding must take account of the requirements stipulated in the GBER (see Annex).

6 Other terms and conditions

The *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Kostenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Forschung, Technologie und Raumfahrt an gewerbliche Unternehmen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsvorhaben* (NKBF 2017) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space to Commercial Companies for Research and Development Projects on a Cost Basis) will be part of the notification of award for grants on a cost basis.

Notification of award for grants on an expenditure basis will include the *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Ausgabenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Forschung, Technologie und Raumfahrt zur Projektförderung* (NABF) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space for the Promotion of Projects on an Expenditure Basis) and the *Besondere Nebenbestimmungen für den Abruf von Zuwendungen im mittelbaren Abrufverfahren im Geschäftsbereich des Bundesministeriums für Forschung, Technologie und Raumfahrt* (BNBest-mittelbarer Abruf-BMFTR) the latter in the case that the funding will be provided on a drawdown basis.

For the purpose of conducting progress reviews within the meaning of administrative regulation 11a pertaining to section 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO), funding recipients are required to provide the BMFTR or reviewing institutions with the data necessary for the progress review without delay. The information will be used exclusively for conducting supporting research and for any subsequent evaluation; it will be treated confidentially and published in anonymized form, making it impossible to trace it back to individual persons or organizations.

The BMFTR supports the reconciliation of family duties and advanced academic training in BMFTR projects. Modifications to BMFTR-funded projects at universities or institutionally funded research establishments that are reasonable and necessary due to periods of absence of early-career researchers for family-related reasons will be granted with little administrative effort. Possible modifications include extensions to the project period and, if so required, additional funding

[5] For the definition of 'economic activity' please refer to No. 2 of the Commission Notice on the notion of State aid (OJ C 262 of 19 July 2016, p. 1) and No. 2 of the R&D&I State Aid Framework.
[6] See also BMFTR guide (FAQ) on science communication.

for research time to make up for the family-related periods of absence. It will be sufficient for the project leader to send a relevant written request including a brief statement of reasons (by email) to the relevant BMFTR division or the responsible project management organization. The prerequisite for the project to be modified in this way is that the junior researcher contributes to the achievement of the project goal.

Funding recipients are expected to ensure open electronic access if they publish the results of the research project in a scientific journal. This can be done through publication in an electronic journal which is accessible to the public free of charge. If the results are not initially published in a journal which is electronically accessible to the public free of charge, they must be made publicly available free of charge by electronic means, following a reasonable embargo period where appropriate (secondary publication). Embargo periods for secondary publication must not exceed 12 months. The BMFTR expressly welcomes secondary open access publication of scientific monographs resulting from the project.

Funding recipients are required to design and describe suitable measures for science communication in the context of their research process and research results.

The partners in a collaborative project are expected to develop a joint strategy for science communication.

Commercial companies (including start-ups and SMEs) are encouraged to take measures for science communication without this being a criterion in decision-making by the funding provider.

The funding application must confirm the existence of a research data management plan which describes the life cycle of the data collected in the project. Whenever possible, the funding recipients should make available the data collected in the project, including information about the instruments and methods used, data anonymization and documentation after initial exploitation, for example by way of a scientific publication, in a reusable form to a suitable facility, such as a relevant research data repository or research data centre, in order to enable long-term data storage for replication or, if required, secondary analysis by other researchers in accordance with good scientific practice. Repositories should comply with current data publication standards (FAIR data principles) and support data description with metadata and vocabularies as well as persistent identifiers (for example DOI, EPIC Handle, ARK, URN). The repositories or research data centres will archive and document the data and make them available to the scientific community on request.

7 Procedure

7.1 Involvement of a project management organization, application documents, other documents and use of the electronic application system

The BMFTR has currently entrusted the following project management organization with implementing the

funding measure:

DLR Projektträger
Environment and Sustainability
Heinrich-Konen-Straße 1
53227 Bonn

Your contact persons regarding research matters are:

Dr Anne Pflug
Phone: +49 (0)228 3821-1539
Email: anne.pflug@dlr.de

Dr Julia Röhrig
Phone: +49 (0)228 3821-2324
Email: julia.roehrig@dlr.de

If you have administrative questions during the application process, please contact:

Ms Eva-Maria Pradel
Phone: +49 (0)228 3821-2152
Email: eva-maria.pradel@dlr.de

Any changes will be announced in the *Bundesanzeiger* (Federal Gazette) or in another suitable form.

7.2 Three-step application procedure

The application procedure consists of three steps.

During the application procedure, the pre-proposal (step 1), the full proposal (step 2) and the formal funding application (step 3) must have an identical thematic focus unless otherwise required by the experts' recommendations.

The following modifications between steps 1 and 2 are possible in exceptional cases but prior information (stating the reasons for modification) and approval by the funding organizaton are always required.

For example, this applies to

- Modification of the budget
- Modifications in the composition of a consortium, including the addition, removal and replacement of a partner. The new partners must comply with any applicable national provisions of the funders (see annex *Anforderungen Förderorganisationen*, accessible via pt-outline).

A change in project coordination (responsible person and organization) is not possible except in case of force majeure.

A full proposal (step 2) cannot be submitted before the funding organizations have given their written consent (by email) to the modifications.

The evaluation and selection of the pre-proposals in step 1 and of the full proposals in step 2 are based on an independent international peer review:

The quality of the submitted pre-proposals and full proposals is evaluated by a panel of independent international experts who sign a confidentiality agreement and confirm the absence of conflicting interests. The evaluation procedure is designed to identify the best pre-proposals and full proposals as regards their scientific excellence, impact, quality and efficient implementation. All the submitted pre-proposals/full proposals are evaluated in a fair and transparent standard procedure.

7.2.1 Submission and selection of pre-proposals and full proposals

In the first step, pre-proposals must be submitted to DLR Projektträger

by 11 September 2025, 12.00 CET at the latest

in written and/or electronic form using the pt-outline electronic application system

(https://ptoutline.eu/app/AFR-EU_Call_CS4RRA).

Pre-proposals for collaborative projects must be submitted in consultation with the proposed collaboration coordinator.

The deadline for submission is not a cut-off deadline. However, it may not be possible to consider pre-proposals received after the above date.

Information about the planned project and the consortium and a brief summary must be entered via the input screens in pt-outline. The templates provided in pt-outline must be used when submitting a proposal.

An English and French translation of the text of the call is provided in pt-outline for information purposes.

The African project coordinator must submit a pre-proposal in pt-outline before expiry of the specified deadline. Following submission, the African project coordinator will receive an email that confirms receipt and indicates the proposal's registration number. Modification of the pre-proposal is no longer possible after submission.

The pre-proposal must include:

- A brief description of the project and its goal;
- Description of the consortium, including information about the partners' latest work in science and technology;
- Assessment of potential for exploitation and application;
- Measures to involve relevant stakeholders;
- Relevant gender aspects;
- Estimated expenditure/costs.

A template specifying the requirements in terms of form and length of the pre-proposal is provided in pt-outline.

a) Eligibility check

First, the pre-proposal and the project partners and/or consortium are evaluated on the basis of the following admission criteria:

- Fulfilment of formal and thematic criteria;
- Fulfilment of requirements regarding the composition of the consortium;
- Compliance with maximum limits regarding admissible costs and duration;
- Formulation of the proposal in English or French;
- Compliance with deadline for submission.

All the funding organizations participating in multilateral funding will check the eligibility of the corresponding national partners in accordance with their national rules and regulations (see annex *Anforderungen Förderorganisationen*, accessible via pt-outline). Only those proposals will be evaluated which fulfil all the above-listed admission criteria and whose consortia have passed national reviews.

b) Evaluation step 1

The pre-proposals received will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

(I) Scientific excellence:

- Clarity and relevance for the general objectives of the call and for the selected topic(s) of the call;
- Scientific quality and innovativeness, contribution to knowledge, originality, progress beyond the state of the art;

- Soundness of the conceptual design and credibility of the proposed methods (if appropriate, use of advanced or combined technologies).

(II) Impact:

- Mobilization of the different communities, including the scientific communities (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, engineering as well as all their sub-disciplines);
- Societal relevance and impact (for example relevance for decision-making, contributions to climate resilience, political or economic impact, capacity- and community-building, network effects);
- Involvement and participation of stakeholders (joint development, joint implementation);
- Depending on need, development of new or improvement of existing climate services (information, tools, training or advice to support decision-making for greater climate resilience);
- Development of new or improvement of existing technological or non-technological products such as strategies for social innovation, enhanced capacities or conditions for research or improved instruments for social analysis and interpretation;
- If applicable, contribution to gender equity in societal development.

(III) Quality and efficiency of implementation:

- Qualification and (international) competitiveness of project coordination and consortium partners;
- Appropriate assignment of tasks which ensures that all partners have a valid role and adequate resources to deliver accordingly in the project (in particular fair distribution of roles between African and European partners);
- Integration of diversity and a gender perspective in the consortium;
- Feasibility of the proposed work and time schedule;
- Appropriateness of the requested funding with regard to the work plan and research goals.

Each of the three main criteria must be awarded at least three points (on a scale from 0 to 5). Furthermore, the overall total must be at least ten points. The funding organizations will select a choice of projects recommended for funding on the basis of the evaluation by the expert panel. The primary criterion for selection is the sum of points awarded in the evaluation (15 maximum) while the availability of funds will be the second most important criterion.

Suitable pre-proposals will be selected for potential funding on the basis of the above criteria and evaluation. Applicants will be informed in writing of the results of the selection procedure.

The pre-proposals and any other documents submitted in this step of the procedure will not be returned.

c) Evaluation step 2

Pre-proposals will only be admitted to the second step if they have been successful in the selection made at the first step and submission of full proposals for the second step has been requested. The letters inviting submission will specify the deadline for submission (approx. end of 2025).

A template specifying the requirements in terms of content and length of the full proposals is provided in pt-outline.

The evaluation of the full proposals in step 2 will involve a panel of external experts and be based on the following criteria:

(I) Scientific excellence: The criteria are the same as in step 1 (see section 7.2.1. b).

(II) Impact – see criteria for step 1 (see section 7.2.1. b); the following additional criteria apply to step 2:

- Contribution at European and African level to a roadmap for a joint AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE);
- Suitable plans for the communication, distribution and utilization of project results (including intellectual property rights management) and, if appropriate, for the management of research data;
- If appropriate, explanation of the project's potential for expansion or repetition;
- Diversity in terms of seniority within the consortium and the expected capacity development (including training for young researchers);
- Conditions for access to research results and tools (open access, open source).

(III) Quality and efficiency of implementation – see criteria for step 1 (see section 7.2.1. b); the following additional criteria apply to step 2:

- Integration of diversity and gender perspective in the project plan and the envisaged results, if relevant;
- Appropriateness of information and communication instruments (for example meetings, data exchange and joint working time);
- Appropriateness of technical resources (research, innovation, infrastructures for capacity-building) needed for carrying out the tasks;

- Appropriateness of management structures and processes, including risk and innovation management;
- Quality and complementarity of the participants' transnational activities and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary specialized knowledge;
- Effective cooperation and co-ownership of intellectual property by the partners in the consortium beyond the distribution of various tasks or work packages.

The projects eligible for funding in step 3 will be selected in accordance with the above criteria and thresholds while taking account of national funding conditions and the available budget.

7.2.2 Submission of formal funding applications and decision-making (step 3)

In the third step of the procedure, the applicants whose full proposals in step 2 have been given a positive evaluation will be invited to submit a formal funding application. The letters inviting submission will specify the deadline for submission (approx. mid 2026).

An application for funding is only considered complete if at least the requirements of Article 6 (2) GBER (cf. Annex) are fulfilled.

The "easy-Online" electronic application system must be used for drafting formal funding applications (taking into account the requirements set out in the Annex) (https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline/). This portal enables the electronic submission of the formal funding application using the TAN procedure or a qualified electronic signature. Submission of an application in paper form is also possible.

Forms for funding applications, guidelines, leaflets, information and auxiliary terms and conditions are available online at

https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare

or can be obtained directly from the above-mentioned project management organization.

Formal funding applications are submitted by the German project partner via "easy-Online". In the case of collaborative projects (that is, consortia with several German partners), funding applications must be submitted by the German collaboration coordinator yet to be determined.

Funding for the African partners will be provided via the WASCAL Regional Office in Accra, Ghana. The WASCAL Regional Office will invite the successful African partners whose proposals have been evaluated positively to submit a formal funding application. This procedure will be governed by the same standards as set out in this call for the funding of German applicants.

The formal funding applications will be reviewed and evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Fulfilment of any suggestions and requirements arising from the evaluation of the full proposals in step 2;
- Quality of the utilization plans of the individual partners and of the utilization plan of the collaboration (in the case of collaborative projects);
- Eligibility for the requested funding;
- Necessity and appropriateness of requested funding;
- Plausibility of the explanations regarding the financial plan

A funding decision will be taken after final consideration on the basis of the above criteria and evaluation.

7.3 Relevant regulations

The approval and payment of and accounting for the funds as well as the proof and examination of the proper use and, if necessary, the revocation of the award and the reclaiming of the funds awarded are governed by sections 48 to 49a of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVfG), sections 23 and 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO) and the related general administrative regulations, unless the present call allows deviation from the general administrative regulations. The *Bundesrechnungshof* is entitled to carry out audits in accordance with section 91 of the BHO.

8 Duration

These funding regulations will enter into force on the day of their publication in the Federal Gazette (*Bundesanzeiger*). They will be valid until the day of expiry of their legal basis for state aid, the GBER, to which a six-month adaptation period is added, that is, until 30 June 2027. If the period of the GBER is extended without relevant amendments concerning state aid rules, the duration of these funding regulations will be extended accordingly, though not beyond 31 December 2032. If the GBER is not extended but replaced by a new GBER or if relevant amendments are made to the content of the currently applicable GBER, follow-up funding regulations will be adopted which will comply with the exemption provisions applicable in that case and remain effective at least until 31 December 2032.

Bonn, 19 May 2025

Federal Ministry
of Research, Technology and Space

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Annex

The following requirements of state aid legislation apply to these funding regulations:

1 General prerequisites for funding

The aid is only lawful if all the prerequisites of Chapter I GBER and the prerequisites in Chapter III applicable to the designated category of state aid are fulfilled in line with Article 3 GBER. It should be noted that national courts are obliged to reclaim any state aid unlawfully awarded in accordance with the rulings of the European courts.

State aid on the basis of the GBER will not be granted if there are grounds for exclusion under Article 1 (2 to 6) GBER. This applies in particular if the undertaking is subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market.

The same applies to aid awarded to a company which is an "undertaking in difficulty" as defined in Article 2 (18) GBER. Only companies that were not already in difficulty on 31 December 2019, but which became undertakings in difficulty during the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021, are exempted from this restriction in accordance with Article 1 (4) (c) GBER.

This call is only applicable for state aid that has an incentive effect within the meaning of Article 6 GBER. The required application for state aid must contain at least the following information:

a) Name and size of the company,

b) Description of the project including its start and end dates,

c) Location of the project,

d) Costs of the project and

e) Type of aid (e.g. grant, loan, guarantee, repayable advance or capital injection) and the amount of public funding needed for the project.

In applying for funding under this call, applicants declare their willingness

- to cooperate in ensuring compliance with the requirements of state aid legislation;
- to provide the requested information and/or documentation as evidence of credit worthiness and conformity with state aid requirements;
- to cooperate in the event of procedures initiated at/by the European Commission.[7]

Furthermore, funding recipients consent to

- the BMFTR storing all records of granted aid documenting compliance with the above requirements, for a period of ten years after aid is granted and delivering them to the European Commission upon request;
- the BMFTR disclosing aid amounts in excess of 100,000 euros on the EU Commission's state aid transparency public search page.[8]

Under these funding regulations, state aid is awarded in the form of grants in accordance with Article 5 (1 and 2) GBER.

The GBER restricts the granting of state aid for economic activities in the following areas to the corresponding maximum amounts stated below:

- EUR 55 million per undertaking per project for basic research (Article 4 (1) (i) (i) GBER)
- EUR 35 million per undertaking per project for industrial research (Article 4 (1) (i) (ii) GBER)
- EUR 25 million per undertaking per project for experimental development (Article 4 (1) (i) (iii) GBER).

The rules concerning cumulation set out in Article 8 GBER must be observed when determining whether these maximum amounts (notification thresholds) are respected. The maximum amounts may not be circumvented by artificially splitting up projects with related content. Partial approval up to the maximum amount of aid subject to notification is not permitted.

2 Scope/rates of funding

The following provisions of the GBER apply to these funding regulations, in particular concerning eligible costs and state aid intensities. The following eligible costs and state aid intensities set out the overall thresholds within which eligible costs and rates of funding for projects involving economic activity can be granted.

The aided part of the research project must fall completely within one or more of the following categories:

- Basic research
- Industrial research
- Experimental development

(cf. Article 25 (2) GBER; definitions according to Article 2 (84 ff.) GBER)

[7] For example, the monitoring of individual cases by the European Commission in accordance with Article 12 GBER.
[8] The EU Commission's state aid transparency public search page is available at https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/competition/transparency/public?lang=en. Disclosure is governed by the provisions for the publication of information required in Annex III of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014. This information includes the name or firm of the beneficiary and the amount of aid received.

For the purpose of classifying research work as fundamental research, industrial research, and experimental development, please refer to the relevant information in no. 79 and footnotes 59, 60 and 61 of the R&D&I State Aid Framework.

The eligible costs of each research and development project must be allocated to the relevant research and development categories.

Eligible costs:

a) Staff costs: for researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the project (Article 25 (3) (a) GBER)

b) Costs of instruments and equipment to the extent and for the period used for the project. Where such instruments and equipment are not used for their full life for the project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the project, as calculated on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles are considered as eligible (Article 25 (3) (b) GBER).

c) Costs of contractual research, knowledge and patents bought or licensed from outside sources at arm's length conditions, as well as costs of consultancy and equivalent services used exclusively for the project (Article 25 (3) (d) GBER);

d) Additional overheads and other operating expenses (including costs of materials, supplies and similar products), incurred directly as a result of the project (Article 25 (3) (e) GBER)

The aid intensity for each beneficiary must not exceed the following rates:

- 100% of the eligible costs for fundamental research (Article 25 (5) (a) GBER);
- 50% of the eligible costs for industrial research (Article 25 (5) (b) GBER);
- 25% of the eligible costs for experimental development (Article 25 (5) (c) GBER).

The aid intensities for industrial research and experimental development may be increased up to a maximum 80% of the eligible costs in accordance with Article 25 (6) (a) to (d), but points (b), (c) and (d) must not be combined with each other:

a) by 10 percentage points for medium-sized enterprises and
20 percentage points for small enterprises;

b) by 15 percentage points if one of the following conditions is fulfilled:

   i. The project involves effective collaboration
      - between undertakings among which at least one is an SME, or is carried out in at least two EU Member States, or in a Member State and in a contracting party of the EEA Agreement, and no single undertaking bears more than 70% of the eligible costs, or
      - between an undertaking and one or more research and knowledge-dissemination organisations, where the latter bear at least 10% of the eligible costs and have the right to publish their own research results.

   ii. The results of the project are widely disseminated through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open source software.

   iii. The beneficiary undertakes to grant non-exclusive licences for research results of aided research and development projects that are protected by intellectual property rights at market prices and on a timely and non-discriminatory basis for use by third parties in the EEA.

   iv. The research and development project is carried out in an assisted region fulfilling the conditions of Article 107 (3) (a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

c) by 5 percentage points if the research and development project is carried out in an assisted region fulfilling the conditions of Article 107 (3) (c) of the TFEU;

d) by 25 percentage points if the research and development project

   i. has been selected by a Member State following an open call to form part of a project jointly designed by at least three Member States or contracting parties to the EEA Agreement; and

   ii. involves effective collaboration between undertakings in at least two Member States or contracting parties to the EEA Agreement when the beneficiary is an SME, or in at least three Member States or contracting parties to the EEA Agreement when the beneficiary is a large enterprise; and

   iii. if at least one the two following conditions is fulfilled:
      - The results of the research and development project are widely disseminated in at least three Member States or contracting parties to the EEA Agreement through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open source software or
      - the beneficiary undertakes to grant non-exclusive licences for research results of aided research and development projects that are protected by intellectual property rights at market prices and on a timely and non-discriminatory basis for use by third parties in the EEA.

In accordance with Article 7 (1) GBER, the eligible costs must be supported by documentary evidence which is clear, specific and contemporary.

The calculation of aid intensity and eligible costs is based on figures before deduction of tax or other charges.

3 Cumulation

For the purposes of complying with the maximum permissible aid intensity, the rules concerning cumulation set out in Article 8 GBER must be observed. The cumulation of several aid measures for the same eligible costs/expenditure is only allowed in exceptional cases as specified below.

Where European Union funding that is centrally managed by the institutions, agencies, joint undertakings or other bodies of the Union and is not directly or indirectly under the control of the Member States is combined with state aid, only the latter will be considered for determining whether notification thresholds and maximum aid intensities or maximum aid amounts are respected, provided that the total amount of public funding granted in relation to the same eligible costs does not exceed the most favourable funding rate laid down in the applicable rules of Union law.

Aid with identifiable eligible costs exempted by the GBER may be cumulated with:

a) any other state aid, as long as those measures concern different identifiable eligible costs,

b) any other state aid in relation to the same eligible costs, partly or fully overlapping, provided such cumulation does not result in exceeding the highest aid intensity or aid amount applicable to this aid under the GBER.

Aid without identifiable eligible costs may be cumulated with any other state aid without identifiable eligible costs, up to the highest relevant total financing threshold fixed in the specific circumstances of each case by a block exemption regulation or decision adopted by the Commission.

State aid exempted under the GBER may not be cumulated with any de minimis aid in respect of the same eligible costs if such cumulation would result in an aid intensity or aid amount exceeding those laid down in Chapter III of the GBER.