

Closed Call

Perspectives on Wealth – Ideas Competition for Knowledge Transfer

Profile Area: Societal Transformations

Deadline (last time): 14 September 2026 (11.59 pm)

Extreme inequality in income and wealth is a recurring cause of conflict and a persistent obstacle to human development. Scientific research into the phenomenon of wealth is therefore a key element in understanding processes of social transformation.

This call for proposals marks the conclusion of the funding initiative 'Perspectives on Wealth' and aims to promote teaching and knowledge transfer. Scholars who have received funding in this initiative are encouraged to share their research findings with university students, the public and policymakers.



Research Area: Humanities, cultural and social sciences, economics; collaboration with education science, communication and media studies possible



Funding Type: Teaching, science communication



Target Group: Principal investigators and postdocs who receive funding through the 'Perspectives on Wealth' initiative at universities/research institutions in Germany



Max.: 120,000 EUR



1 to 2 years



Teaching and dissemination (to the public or policymakers) in Germany

1 Objectives

With its funding initiative 'Perspectives on Wealth' the foundation aims at a shift in focus from poverty research to the various facets of the phenomenon of wealth. Earlier calls for proposals have focused on research projects. One thematic focus was on the (re)production of wealth; another focus was on the repercussions of wealth. An overarching question was how wealth relates to processes of societal transformation in the past and present, and what recommendations for action can be derived for the future.

The aim of this last call is to disseminate empirical findings and to strengthen the field of wealth research and its visibility in Germany. The focus is on the findings of the fifteen collaborative projects that received funding, covering topics such as start-up ecosystems, agricultural elites in the Global South, and the relationship between wealth and social cohesion. The foundation is looking for innovative outreach formats that will reach a specific target audience or pave the way for relevant new audiences.

The task is to present the research findings on wealth in a way that is tailored to specific audiences, and to communicate these findings beyond the confines of academic discourse. In addition, support is provided to scholars who want to integrate conceptual, methodological, and empirical findings into their teaching. Any other form of knowledge transfer based on the project results is also welcome.

2 Scope of Funding

On the one hand, funding is available for science communication formats aimed at non-scientific audiences, such as exhibitions, participatory formats, social media posts, audio, and video content. This includes knowledge transfer to experts and stakeholders from politics, public authorities, associations, and the non-profit sector, at both national and supranational level (e.g. EU, UN, World Bank). Please explain in the application your choice of target audience in relation to the project outcomes, outline your plans for recruiting participants and, where applicable, enclose letters of intent from partner organisations.

On the other hand, the foundation supports summer schools and/or the development of teaching modules to convey and discuss empirical findings as well as theoretical or methodological issues in wealth research with PhD students, possibly also master students and early-career postdocs. An application for a summer school series consisting of two or three consecutive courses is possible. For summer schools, a provisional programme and information on the selection of participants must be provided. The foundation places importance to an international group of participants as well as a proper representation from Germany (at least 50 %).

The foundation does not specify outreach formats but expects the proposal to include a justification for the chosen approach and a plan for self-assessment of effectiveness using indicators or descriptors. The following list is a suggestion, and does not limit the choice of other outreach formats to specific audiences:

- summer schools or teaching modules.
- science communication.
- evidence-based policy advice.

Eligible to apply are postdoctoral researchers and principal investigators, who take part in a project in the funding initiative 'Perspectives on Wealth' (original project) and who are employed at

a university or research institution in Germany. Please note that only one application can be submitted per original project.

Optionally, up to two co-applicants from scientific institutions in Germany or abroad may take part in the proposal. Co-applicants must have completed a PhD or hold a professorship. They do not need to be members of the original consortium. The foundation encourages to include scholars from disciplines relevant to teaching and dissemination, such as didactics or communication and media studies. If necessary, one or two practitioners may be involved (from media, museums, arts etc.). They have to be entered in the application portal as collaboration partners (not as co-applicants).

What we don't fund: Formats for academic discourse (such as scientific symposia) and scientific publications are excluded from funding. With regard to knowledge transfer to local communities outside Germany, please refer to the funds allocated for this purpose within the original research grant. No additional funding can be applied for such ongoing activities. However, international participation in knowledge transfer is welcome, e.g. international lecturers at a summer school.

All applications are first checked for the formal requirements. If the requirements are met, the application will be assessed by an academic expert jury. The following selection criteria apply:

- High-quality outcomes from the original project as a prerequisite
- Careful choice of a target audience, and relevance of the outcomes to this audience
- Originality of the format and knowledge transfer tailored to the target audience.
- Coherence of the work plan, timetable, and evaluation concept
- Composition and qualification of the team, also with respect to dissemination
- Adequateness of the budget

The budget may include the following items, which must be justified considering the project's requirements: staff and equipment costs; consumables and funds for contracts for services; travel expenses. The foundation considers 5 per cent of the total direct research costs as the usual amount for science communication, i.e. in this case around €75,000. The limit of €120,000 can only be successfully applied for if the potential impact is high, the application is of outstanding quality, and the costs items are convincingly justified.

3 Application and Selection Procedure

Please read the guidelines carefully and familiarize yourself with the application conditions. Use the templates provided when preparing your application. Please submit your application, written in English, in digital form via the funding system. You must re-register on the foundation's funding system if you have not applied in 2025 or 2026.

The proposal must not exceed seven pages (not counting cover page and bibliography). A brief report on the results of the research project forms an integral part of the application. Please follow the application template and do not forget to prepare the enclosures listed under point 4 in good time for the application deadline.

3.1 Overview



3.2 Procedure

The processing of the application – formal review, peer review, decision-making, notification – is expected to take approximately four months. The assessment will be conducted by an interdisciplinary expert panel based on the written application documents. Unlike in the earlier application for research projects, there will be no in-person presentation in front of the scientific jury.

An approved project can begin no earlier than January 1, 2027, and no later January 1, 2028. Ideally, the duration should be planned so that it ends at the same time as the underlying original project.

4 Information on the Application

4.1 Our Funding Platform

Applications must be submitted via the Volkswagen Foundation's [funding platform](#). Please look in the overview there for the relevant call for proposals relating to this information sheet. All templates (CV, expenditure plan, etc.) are available for download on the funding platform and on the website for the respective programme announcement. Please only use the templates available for download there when submitting your application.

In the case of international participation, the partner at the German research institution must create the application in the funding platform and be defined as PI. Otherwise, PI and Co-PI are equal partners.

It is important that all applicants (PI, Co-PIs, etc.) register early in the process. Co-applicant(s) may only work on an application if they have been invited (by the PI) and have registered on the funding platform.

For further technical support please contact support@volkswagenstiftung.de.

4.2 Information on Enclosures

Unless otherwise specified below, please use only the templates available for download at the funding platform or on the website for the respective programme announcement.

4.2.1 Project Description

Please observe the specifications in the template on the maximum number of pages as well as the other formal requirements.

4.2.2 Expenditure Plan

Please use the Excel template only available for download at the funding platform. It is not possible to upload and use other Excel sheets. For instructions on how to fill in the template, please refer to the respective help sheet.

Please note: Each Co-PI must submit an individual (possibly blank) expenditure plan. The responsibility for the administration of the total budget lies with the applicant (PI).

4.2.3 Curricula Vitae

Please submit the curricula vitae of all applicants in tabular, narrative form using the respective template.

4.2.4 Equal Opportunity Funds

To support equal opportunities and diversity in the research system, the Volkswagen Foundation offers the possibility to apply for equal opportunity funds. These funds – granted in addition to the maximum funding sum – support measures that serve to compensate for disadvantages at an individual level and/or aim to strengthen diversity in the education and research system in general. Equal Opportunity Funds can be applied for as lump sum of 1% of the total application amount (excluding overheads). Please indicate in the expenditure plan if you would like to apply for Equal Opportunity Funds; no further documents are required.

For further information please refer to our [website](#).

4.2.5 Further Enclosures

As optional enclosures, please upload only documents relevant to the assessment, such as letters of intent (LOI) from practitioners or partner organisations or a provisional programme for summer schools.

4.3 Further Information

4.3.1 Overheads

Except for Max Planck, Leibniz, Fraunhofer and Helmholtz institutes, public or non-profit scientific institutions in Germany can apply for 10% overheads in addition to the direct project costs. For more information on overheads, see 'Information on Lump Sum for Overheads', which is provided at our [download section](#). Under this call for proposals aimed at strengthening wealth research in Germany, no lump sum for overheads will be provided to institutions based abroad.

4.3.2 Positions for PhD-Candidates at German Institutions

To improve working conditions in academia, the foundation only funds full-time positions for PhD candidates at German institutions. Within the expenditure plan, doctoral positions must thus be calculated as 100% positions without exception.

In justified exceptional cases, it is possible to fill a doctoral candidate position with an employment share of less than 100% (for example, to better accommodate work-family balance). However, such reduced staffing can only be applied for after approval and therefore does not change the requirement to calculate doctoral candidate positions as 100% positions in the expenditure plan. Please note that in such a case, the personnel funds released by a part-time filling of a doctoral candidate position (i.e., the difference between the approved 100% position and the actual part-time position) cannot be used for other project expenses and will therefore no longer be available for the project.

4.3.3 Open Science

The foundation is committed to Open Science ([Open Science Policy](#)). Thus, we expect that results will be published open access and that data generated will be made available for scientific use following the FAIR principles via recognized repositories (see [NFDIs](#), [re3data](#), and [RI-sources](#)). If you intend to generate or reuse data, please provide the relevant information in the appropriate section of the project description template. Clearly state here if you do not intend to generate or reuse any data.

Note: The Volkswagen Foundation offers the module '[Data Reuse – Additional Funding for the preparation of research data](#)' for funded projects to prepare research data. You can apply for the module during or up to six months after the project duration.

4.3.4 General Information

The foundation cannot be held responsible for any obligations entered into prior to the receipt of grant approval.

Applications that have been or are intended to be submitted in this or a similar form to another funding organization will not be processed by the foundation. The foundation can only award funds to scientific institutions.

The foundation reserves the right not to process applications that do not meet the formal requirements or are incomplete.

5 Contact

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6 Further Information

- [Website VolkswagenStiftung](#)
- [Website programme announcement](#)
- [FAQ and Service \(including download section\)](#)
- [Influence of Generative AI on Research and the Volkswagen Foundation's Funding Activities](#)
- [Recommendations for Sustainable Travel](#)
- [Applying for science communication funding](#)