VolkswagenStiftung

Application for Workshop Participation (Preliminary Stage of the Task Forces Grant Application Process)

Transformation Knowledge on Democracies under Change – Transdisciplinary Perspectives (Task Forces) – Ideation Workshop

Profile Area: Societal Transformations

Deadline: 27 January 2027 (2pm CET)

Full participation in the Ideation Workshop is required to apply to the funding programme *Transformation Knowledge on Democracies under Change – Transdisciplinary Perspectives (Task Forces)*. Designed for transdisciplinary teams of four, the workshop offers an opportunity to discuss and develop specific, innovative project ideas in democracy research. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary exchange with fellow applicants, Foundation staff and experts will help teams prepare their grant applications.



Research Area: Humanities, Cultural Studies or Social Sciences (lead), where appropriate in cooperation with the Natural Sciences, Engineering or Life Sciences



Funding Type: Workshop participation for teams of four, travel expenses and accommodation costs



May 27–28, 2027; Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover, Germany



Target Group: Transdisciplinary teams of two researchers with doctorates and two practice partners from outside academia. Interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers is possible; at least one researcher must be based at a German research institution. International participation is possible and, depending on the topic, encouraged.



Workshop participation is required to apply to the Task Forces funding programme. All project members are expected to attend the full workshop.
Please note: The workshop will be preceded by 3 online webinars. Attendance at one of the 3 scheduled sessions is sufficient. If not all project partners are able to attend the same session, they may participate in different sessions.

1 Who can apply?

We are looking for: An innovative, original and as yet unexplored idea on transformation processes in democracies that can be investigated within two years; a team that brings together the necessary expertise; openness to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration; a willingness to experiment and critically reflect on one's own work; and a willingness to engage in dialogue with experts, Foundation staff and fellow applicants, accept feedback and develop the project idea further.

Teams of two researchers with Ph.D.s and two practice partners from outside academia planning to apply to the Task Forces funding programme at a lager stage may apply for the workshop in Hannover from 27 to 28 May 2027. At least one academic applicant must be based at a German university, university of applied sciences or research institution. International participation and interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers are possible and, depending on the topic, encouraged.

Important: All project partners – researchers and practice partners – must have worked together previously or have relevant experience in transdisciplinary collaboration.

2 What is the aim of the workshop?

The aim of the workshop is to prepare project teams to apply to the Task Forces funding programme. Its interactive format enables promising prospective project teams to develop their ideas together, with sessions on topics such as transdisciplinary collaboration, target group-specific outreach and impact monitoring. The project teams will be joined by Foundation staff and experts.

Any further questions? Webinars with Q&A sessions will be offered to anyone interested over the coming months. Further information is available here. Before submitting an application, it is expected to particpate at least one of the online webinars.

3 How to apply

Applications must be submitted as a team (submitted by one team member, affiliated with a German research institution) via the Foundation's website: here (German).

Required materials:

- **A short video** (maximum 90 seconds; mp4, download link) featuring all project members and addressing the followings topics: motivation, project idea, team composition and expertise, intended academic and societal impact, and the team's understanding of transdisciplinarity.

- **Template:** 1) An outline of the project and research idea, its disciplinary context and intended academic and societal impact; 2) Team composition; 3) Short biographies of all project members, including one most relevant publication for the project.

Please note:

- The same team may not reapply with the same topic the following year.
- Each person may be involved in only one project.

4 Selection process

Selection is based on a qualified lottery procedure. This means that the Foundation carefully reviews all applications and selects the most promising teams through an internal process. The remaining places are allocated by lottery. Up to 25 project teams will be selected in total.

Selection criteria:

- An original, as yet unexplored idea concerning processes of transformation in democracies that can be investigated within two years.
- Team composition: appropriate, complementary expertise, well-justified partnerships and transdisciplinary collaboration with a focus on practical implementation.
- Synergies and transdisciplinary collaboration on an equal footing; a willingness to experiment and engage in self-reflection.

Please note: The Foundation reserves the right not to process applications further if they do not meet the formal requirements or are incomplete.

Timeline: The results of the application process are expected to be announced in **April 2027**. Please keep the workshop dates free in case your application is successful. All project members are expected to attend the entire workshop.

5 What we fund

The Foundation will cover travel expenses and accommodation costs for the workshop. Die travel arrangements (return journey) have to be booked by the participants (2nd-class train travel, economy-class flights (journeys lasting 8 hours or more)). The Recommendations for Sustainable Travel have to be applied. Travel expenses will be reimbursed after the workshop. More detailed information regarding travel expense reimbursement will follow in due course.

The foundation will make the hotel reservations and pay for them directly. If you require assistance from the foundation due to existing caregiving responsibilities (very young children, infants, or nursing care), we recommend contacting our Events Team directly upon receiving your

invitation (Sibylle Rahm, **rahm@volkswagenstiftung.de**). Workshop costs, including on-site catering, will also be covered; no separate application is required for these costs.

6 What happens after the workshop?

All teams that complete the workshop (provided they meet the selection criteria listed above) may submit a Task Force application by **8 July 2027**. A corresponding guideline will be published on the funding initiative's website well in advance and will also be sent to all teams via email. Applications must be submitted via our funding platform. Assessment will be based on written reviews, with no project presentations.

The Foundation expects to make final funding decisions in **November 2027** and communicate them by **early December** at the latest. Funding is planned for approximately ten Task Forces.

7 Context: Objectives of the Task Forces

In each Task Force, four co-project leaders with equal standing address pressing, unresolved issues concerning processes of transformation in democracies. They develop and test scenarios for the future shape of democratic government, use their research findings to develop concrete recommendations for action for defined target groups and help put them into practice.

The teams of researchers and practice partners jointly develop the research question, methodology, theoretical framework and research design, integrating plans for societal impact and/or knowledge transfer from the outset. The team members collaborate on an equal footing, with their areas of expertise complementing one another.

The maximum grant amount for each Task Force is EUR 450,000 for a period of up to two years. Funding covers staff costs (excluding PhD positions), other research funds, travel expenses, publication costs (Open Access) and funds for science communication/knowledge transfer. Depending on the institution, applications may also include overheads of 10% or a lump sum for administrative costs, as well as equal opportunity funds.

8 General Information

- The Foundation does not cover financial commitments made prior to notification of acceptance or rejection for workshop participation.
- Given the very high number of applications expected, we regret that we cannot offer individual feedback discussions during this application process.

9 Contact

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10 Further Information

- Website VolkswagenStiftung
- Website funding programme
- Recommendations for Sustainable Travel