

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Announcement

Regulations governing the funding of African-German collaborative projects in the field of “Water security in Africa – WASA, main phase southern Africa”

of 6 February 2023

Safe access to a sustainable water supply and the protection against water-related natural hazards or diseases are essential prerequisites for improving living conditions in Africa. In global comparison, Sub-Saharan Africa shows by far the lowest levels of access to clean water for its population. In addition, the demand for water will increase strongly due to climate change and the expected dynamic growth of the economy, population and markets in Africa. Considerable investment in the water sector is essential to increase resilience. Innovative water technologies, adapted water infrastructures and anticipatory management strategies are urgently needed. New forms of cooperation are required to support Africa in addressing these challenges. Research and education can contribute substantially to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (in particular SDG 6 – Water and Sanitation), strengthen democracies and support the prevention of conflicts.

1 Aim, purpose of funding, legal basis

1.1 Aim of funding

The aim of these funding regulations is to contribute to achieving a sustainable increase in water security in Africa. This includes the improvement of water supply and wastewater management as well as the preservation of natural ecosystems.

The guiding principles behind the Water Security in Africa (WASA) programme are to enable joint action by African and German partners from the very start of the project, adopt a synergistic and integrated approach involving different ministries and political representatives as well as the pursuit of a long-term implementation strategy.

These funding regulations serve to implement the WASA research programme designed by the Federal Government’s Round Table on the Internationalization of Education, Science and Research in cooperation with African partners and participating federal ministries (Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Federal Foreign Office (FFO), Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ), Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (BMDV), Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK)).

The funding regulations form part of the BMBF’s “Research for Sustainability” (FONA) strategy and the Federal Government’s “Wasser: N – Research and Innovation for Sustainability” programme.

The funding measure contributes to the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 as well as the AU's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA 2024) and African Water Strategy 2025. The objectives of the SADC Water Research Agenda will be supported specifically for southern Africa. At a more generic level, the measure is expected to make significant contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda, deliver the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and implement national adaptation plans and strategies.

The implementation of the WASA programme supplements the national strategies of the participating countries in southern Africa and will be supported by the competent ministries. Applicants from the Republic of South Africa should also contact the Water Research Commission to obtain information about the corresponding instruments.

The funding regulations form part of the BMBF's Africa Strategy to strengthen cooperation with African partners in tackling global challenges, establishing long-term and high-quality infrastructures for scientific work, strengthening regional and continental collaboration, developing innovation potential and new markets and enhancing Germany's profile as a key partner for Africa in the fields of education and research. In its 2021 coalition agreement, the German Federal Government expressed its intention to establish a close partnership with Africa at all levels, cooperate with the African Union and regional organizations and increase science cooperation.

Achievement of the objectives will be documented by subsequent commercialization with partners from practice and by appropriate publication of the results, for example in scientific journals or through conference contributions as well as by filing patent applications.

1.2 Funding purpose

The purpose of funding is to promote the development of innovative instruments and holistic solutions for increasing water security in Africa. Sustainable water resources management, intact water infrastructure and hydrological forecasts are key areas in this respect.

A special feature of the WASA programme is that it targets an exploitation chain from knowledge generation to demonstration and implementation up to transfer and consolidation. The developed solutions can be transferred to other regions by implementing examples of best practice. Participation by companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is explicitly desired.

The WASA programme therefore pursues a multiphase approach including an initial phase, the first and second main phases and a transfer phase.

Funding for the initial phase of the WASA programme has already been provided under the “Water security in Africa – WASA, initial phase southern Africa” call which was published in the *Bundesanzeiger* (Federal Gazette) of 12 January 2021.

The present regulations govern the main phase of the “Water security in Africa” funding measure in southern Africa. The call builds on the findings of the preceding initial phase of WASA but is not exclusively addressed to the collaborations funded in the initial phase. Participation by new applicants is possible.

The first main phase will primarily focus on research and development work, capacity building as well as demonstration and innovation activities. The targeted transfer and subsequent application of research results requires close cooperation with potential users (ministries, companies, local communities, authorities and associations), a fact that must be documented in the project proposals. Consideration should be given to the possibility of using the available models and data and building on previous activities of local stakeholders.

A decision will be made in due course regarding the additional establishment of a second main phase in consideration of the results achieved by that time.

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 BMBF’s regulations governing applications for expenditure-based grants (AZA/AZAP/AZV) and/or applications by commercial companies for cost-based grants (AZK). 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 these funding regulations, state aid will be granted on the basis of Article 25 (1) and (2) (a) to (d) 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 for the requirements of state aid legislation applying to these funding regulations).

¹ Commission Regulation (EU) 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 the 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) 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)

2 Object of funding

Innovative solutions for increasing water security in Africa are to be developed and demonstrated under the WASA funding measure. The aim is to develop new processes, products and services in the following thematic fields:

- Sustainable water resources management
- Water infrastructure and water technology
- Hydrological forecasts and management of hydrological extremes

The projects are expected to contribute to the promotion of young researchers as well as capacity-building and vocational training for the partners in Sub-Saharan Africa; the project proposals should include relevant components. In this context, it will also be possible to earn doctoral degrees in bilateral sandwich programmes.

It will be of relevance in all these fields that consideration is given to the water-energy-food nexus as well as to the aspects of monitoring, digitalization and data management.

Existing laws and regulations as well as current legislative proposals, programmes and standards must be taken into account when formulating the research objectives in order to enable the subsequent application of the results. Funding can be provided for project-related standardization activities if the project provides a suitable basis for this. Attention must be paid to the fact that the practical application and implementation of regulations and laws is a particular problem in southern Africa so that new approaches and incentive systems are needed (enforcement tools).

One instrument that has become increasingly successful in establishing innovative processes is partnerships between German municipal water and wastewater management companies and their counterparts in African partner countries.

Applicants for the main phase of the WASA programme are invited to identify synergies with the SADC Water Research Agenda, describe links with the SASSCAL science service centre and, if appropriate, take them into account in conceptual development (particularly regarding the involvement of students participating in the SASSCAL Graduate Studies Programme). Consideration should also be given to possible links with global water data centres as well as the UN International Centre for Water Resources and Global Change.

The thematic fields as well as examples of research needs were identified in a co-design process between African partners and the partners of the Federal Government Round Table and are described in more detail below.

Project proposals can refer to one or a combination of these fields (in the latter case, one field must be defined as the main focus).

The funding measure includes a separate networking and transfer project which will be implemented in close coordination with the BMBF and the project management agency, addressing organizational, thematic and public relations tasks.

2.1 Sustainable water resources management

In the ongoing process of integrated water resources management, priority is given to improvements to the overall clean water supply and access to sanitation in southern Africa. The nexus between water and health, water and nutrition and water and energy must be taken into account. This applies to both the rapidly growing urban centres and the interplay between peri-urban and rural areas. Considerable water loss in distribution systems impairs the economic efficiency, pricing policy and consumption control of water suppliers. An overarching challenge is that nearly all of Africa's major rivers cross national borders and intergovernmental agreements and commissions have as yet developed few binding goals for further action. In addition to this, demand is growing in the agricultural sector. Irrigated areas are being expanded in many places due to climate change and in order to increase the food and bioenergy supply. The increasing use of alternative forms of energy (hydrogen, solar energy) may also have an impact on the water balance. Planning must be increasingly focused on sustainable use and the effects on water-dependent ecosystems in particular.

Examples of thematic areas for research and development work are listed in the following:

- New approaches to transboundary water resources management
- Adaptive, urban water management taking account of dynamic growth and informal settlements
- Minimizing the environmental impact of the mining and energy sectors and utilizing the potential for water reuse
- Adapting water management to climate change
- Sustainable development and use of groundwater resources
- Protecting water quality and avoiding water pollution
- Research on good governance in the water sector
- Effective use of digital technology and hydroinformatics in water management processes

2.2 Water infrastructure and water technology

As a result of substantial population growth and climate change, there is an urgent need both in urban and rural areas for energy-efficient water infrastructure and technology innovations tailored to local needs, capabilities and acceptance. In order to enable their successful, long-term use, all technologies must be appropriately adapted to the specific local needs and capacities in southern Africa, in terms of operation and maintenance as well as costs and operator models. It is also important to take a multifunctional, socially

inclusive and integrated approach to infrastructure planning. Use should be made of the considerable potential of digitalization where this seems promising. In this context, consideration should also be given to possible links with demonstration platforms in southern Africa (e.g. WADER – Water Technologies Demonstration Programme).

Examples of thematic areas for research and development work are listed in the following:

- Improved access to sustainable water supplies and wastewater management
- Improving the efficient use, storage and quality of water
- Utilization of alternative water resources including the sustainable use of groundwater reservoirs, wastewater reuse, mining water, brackish water or rainwater
- New strategies for the establishment and long-term operation of decentralized systems and nature-based solutions
- Adapting water infrastructure and water technologies for handling climate change in order to increase resilience

2.3 Hydrological forecasts and management of hydrological extremes

Adaptation to climate change and climate protection through water management are key to sustainable development and indispensable for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda and of the Paris Climate Agreement and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Possible behavioural and management measures include implementing a forecasting and warning system, drawing up emergency plans, integrated rainwater management or drought planning. Physical protection measures (both technical and nature-based) are also required. It seems appropriate to shift focus from the mere management of natural disasters and extreme events (post-disaster mentality) towards greater linkage with the aspects of risk reduction, disaster prevention and preparation.

Examples of thematic areas for research and development work are listed in the following:

- Hydrological extremes – development of innovative early warning systems adapted to local conditions on the basis of climate and weather information
- Integrated management of water-related disasters – fast and safe action, technological measures, use of social media, local information systems
- Innovative modelling and measurement systems for monitoring and simulating conditions in surface and groundwater bodies
- Studies regarding the regional distribution and future development of water demand in agriculture, energy production, mining and industry as well as urban centres
- Optimized use of hydrological resources by means of advanced monitoring technology and remote sensing

2.4 Networking and transfer project

A separate networking and transfer project will provide scientific and organizational support for the funding measure. Its main objectives include the synthesis and processing of the results of individual research projects, coordination across thematic areas and high-profile presentation of the funding measure. The implementation of the networking and transfer project will be coordinated closely with the BMBF and the project management agency. The BMBF assumes that the work involved in the networking and transfer project is in the applicant's own interest. This interest must be clearly revealed in the application. The research and development projects funded in accordance with the present funding regulations will be obliged to cooperate with the networking and transfer project. Cooperation with SASSCAL is desirable.

The tasks include the following:

- Processing of project results for different target groups (scientific community, general public, industry, politics and other decision-makers)
- Preparation, implementation and analysis of working meetings, discussion forums and status seminars on cross-project issues
- Support for coordination with relevant ministerial stakeholders in Africa and Germany to promote the exploitation of the results of research projects
- Establishing an overarching professional knowledge management strategy to improve utilization of the results obtained under this funding measure
- Preparation and provision of information on the funding measure (press and advertising material, website, etc.)
- Establishing links with relevant national and/or international activities.

All projects are expected to make the following contributions to increasing water security which will serve as indicators of success in a progress review:

1. Development and demonstration of innovative, regionally adapted methods for water management
2. Development of innovative water technologies
3. Improved models for application in the water sector
4. Utilization of the research results in companies and by relevant stakeholders in the region; development of patents and standards
5. Sustainable collaborations between institutions in southern Africa and Germany to support multilateral relations
6. Successful capacity development measures, which include support for young researchers and initial and advanced education, training for decision-makers and other formats

7. Participatory cooperation, collaborations between science and practice as well as involvement of relevant decision-makers in the development of solutions
8. Peer-reviewed publications, in particular open access and conference contributions.

3 Funding recipients

Applications may be submitted by commercial companies and universities, research institutions, municipal, Länder and federal institutions as well as associations and other societal organizations. Applicants are required to have a plant or branch (company) or another entity serving the activities of the funding recipient (university, research institution, municipal, Länder and federal institutions as well as associations and other societal organizations) in Germany at the time of payment of the grant.

Applications by SMEs are expressly welcome. In particular the engineering, planning and counselling offices which are actively engaged in the water sector are invited to participate in the research projects.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the meaning of these funding regulations are companies that meet the requirements of the EU definition of SMEs.² Applicants will declare their classification according to the Commission Recommendation concerning SMEs to the granting authority in their written application for funding.

Concerning 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 Community Framework for State Aid for R&D&I.³

Research institutions which receive basic funding from the Federal Government and/or the Länder can only be granted project funding supplementary to their institutional funding to cover additional project-related expenditure or costs under certain conditions. The relevance of the proposed project to the research financed from this basic funding must be described in this case.

4 Special prerequisites for funding

Funding will be provided exclusively for collaborative projects with partners from industry, science and practice. One exception to this is the networking and transfer project described in 2.4 above which can also be funded as an individual project.

² 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): [<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=EN>].

³ Commission Communication (2022/C 414/01) of 28 October 2022 (OJ C 414 of 28 October 2022, p. 1 ff.).

The collaboration with partners from industry, science and practice must comprise at least one German partner and at least one partner from one or more of the following countries in southern Africa: Angola, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Partners from other countries in southern Africa may become involved, but the complexity of the overall project should be kept to a manageable level and practical feasibility must be ensured.

Further prerequisites for funding in the three thematic areas are:

- Previous work and comprehensive understanding of the current status of knowledge and technology
- Cooperation of institutions from industry, science and practice making separate contributions to solving the shared R&D tasks
- Clear structure of the project proposals in terms of content and organization
- Substantial financial contributions by the individual German industry and practice partners involved in the collaborative project
- The participating African partners must become involved with own contributions (financial or in-kind, e.g. staff, material or premises). Consideration must therefore be given to relevant funding possibilities in the partner countries.
- A clearly visible interest of the individual collaboration partners in exploitation of the results must be documented in specific utilization plans.

The proposals must target innovative application-oriented research approaches, technologies and schemes which enable novel solutions for increasing water security in Africa, will strengthen knowledge networks, can be expected to be applied and offer links with other relevant national/international activities. Pure basic research or product development will not be funded.

The partners in a collaborative project will set out the terms of cooperation in a written agreement. All the funding recipients including those which are 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 Community Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation must be observed. 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 BMBF (cf. BMBF form No. 0110).⁴

Funding presupposes the participants' fundamental willingness to cooperate with the networking and transfer project. Programme governance will include the organization of status seminars. Project participants are obliged to participate in supporting and evaluation measures and to provide any information needed to assess the success of the funding measure.

⁴ https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=easy_formulare, header BMBF under "Allgemeine Vordrucke und Vorlagen für Berichte".

Type, scope and rates of funding

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

Funding of up to a maximum 2,000,000 euros per collaborative project (including flat-rate grant where applicable) will be awarded for a period of usually up to 48 months.

Grants for commercial companies and for projects of research institutions which fall into the category of economic activities⁵ 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 BMBF's policy requires that applicants make an appropriate contribution of their own towards the eligible costs incurred.

The basis for calculating the grants for universities, research and science institutions and similar establishments which do not fall into the category of economic activities is usually the eligible project-related expenditure (in the case of the Helmholtz centres and Fraunhofer, the 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 BMBF.

The African partners must be involved with their own contributions. To a limited extent, collaboration partners from southern Africa can receive additional federal funding by concluding a contract for the transfer of grants or an R&D contract under these funding regulations. The transfer of grants is limited to a maximum 100,000 euros per collaboration. In this case, the German project coordinators will receive their funding including the grants for the foreign partner with whom they conclude a transfer contract in accordance with No. 12 of the administrative regulations pertaining to Section 44 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO).

Alternative measures are to be prepared for all planned activities which may be adversely affected by restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, such as travel and workshops, so as to ensure that the objectives of the project can still be achieved. The COVID-19 information provided on websites published by the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Ministry of Health, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Federal Government provide guidance and support to help evaluate situations.

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

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

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 Other terms and conditions

The *Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen auf Kostenbasis des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung an gewerbliche Unternehmen für Forschungs- und Entwicklungsvorhaben* (NKBF 2017) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research 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 Bildung und Forschung zur Projektförderung* (NABF) (Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research for the Promotion of Projects on an Expenditure Basis) and the *Besondere Nebenbestimmungen für den Abruf von Zuwendungen im mittelbaren Abrufverfahren im Geschäftsbereich des BMBF* (BNBest-mittelbarer Abruf-BMBF) for the drawdown of funds.

Notification of award for grants on an expenditure basis will include the *Allgemeine Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen zur Projektförderung an Gebietskörperschaften und Zusammenschlüsse von Gebietskörperschaften* (ANBest-GK) (General Auxiliary Conditions for Grants awarded to Territorial Authorities and Associations of Territorial Authorities), the *Besondere Nebenbestimmungen für Zuwendungen des BMBF zur Projektförderung auf Ausgabenbasis* (BNBest-BMBF 98) (Special Auxiliary Terms and Conditions for Funds Provided by the BMBF for the Promotion of Projects on Expenditure Basis), and the *Besondere Nebenbestimmungen für den Abruf von Zuwendungen im mittelbaren Abrufverfahren im Geschäftsbereich des BMBF* (BNBest-mittelbarer Abruf-BMBF) for the drawdown of funds.

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 BMBF or reviewing institutions with the data necessary for the progress review without delay. The information will be used exclusively for the purposes of supporting research and 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.

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 suitable embargo period where appropriate (secondary publication). Embargo periods for secondary publication must not exceed 12 months. The BMBF expressly welcomes secondary open access publication of scientific monographs resulting from the project.

Programme governance will include the organization of status seminars. Project participants are obliged to participate in supporting and evaluation measures and to provide any information needed to assess the success of the funding measure.

7 Procedure

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

The BMBF has currently entrusted the following project management agency with implementing the funding measure:

*Project Management Resources, Circular Economy, Geosciences
Project Management Agency Karlsruhe (PTKA)
Water Technology
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)
Hermann-von-Helmholtz-Platz 1
76344 Eggenstein-Leopoldshafen*

Contact person:

Dr Leif Wolf

Phone: +49 (0)721 6 08 - 28 22 4

Email: leif.wolf@kit.edu

Applicants are recommended to contact the project management agency for advice on applications. The agency will provide further information and details (<https://www.ptka.kit.edu/wasa.html>).

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

Application forms, guidelines, leaflets, information and auxiliary terms and conditions are available online at

https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy/easy_index.php?auswahl=formularschrank_foerderportal&formularschrank=bmbf

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

The “easy-online” electronic application system must be used for drafting project outlines and formal applications (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>). This portal enables the electronic submission of the application which must be submitted in writing. An electronic document that bears a qualified electronic signature is sufficient for electronic submission.

Questions regarding co-funding by the South African Water Research Commission (WRC) may be addressed to the following national contact point:

Water Research Commission

Dr Mamohloding Tlhagale (general queries)

Email: mamohlodingt@wrc.org.za

Mr Jay Bhagwan (technical questions)
Email: jayb@wrc.org.za

7.2 Two-step application procedure

Application is a two-step procedure and consists of the submission of a project outline and subsequent formal application. No legal claim to funding can be derived from the submission of a project outline.

7.2.1 Submission and selection of project outlines

In the first step, project outlines must be submitted

by 15 June 2023 at the latest

to the project management agency (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easy-online>) in electronic form.

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

Research and development projects

The project outline to be submitted by the envisaged collaboration coordinator must be self-explanatory, allow evaluation without further enquiry and be structured as follows: 15 pages maximum plus cover sheet, A4, Arial 11, 1.5-spaced, margin 2 cm. The only attachments accepted are the Lol or MoU of associated project partners (one page maximum per partner).

In order to facilitate coordination with the partners and the evaluation, the project outline should be submitted in English including a German summary.

The outlines must meet the following requirements:

Cover sheet: topic of the collaborative project; assignment to the thematic fields listed in section 2 above; collaboration coordinator (including postal address, phone number and email); information regarding total funds, requested funding and project period; overview of envisaged collaboration partners (name and type of institution); brief description in English (200 words maximum). The template provided at <https://www.ptka.kit.edu/wasa.html> must be used when drafting the cover sheet.

1. German summary (one page maximum)
2. Objectives: description of the project goals based on the state of research and technology (innovativeness of the idea for a collaborative project), including

problem relevance and/or verifiable practical relevance (technical, economic and societal importance; relation to the objectives of this call, relevance for the strategies and goals of the African institutions; relevance for activities and goals of German federal ministries in Africa)

3. Solution: description of the research approach and of the work, milestone and time schedule; description of the intended measures for capacity building
4. Structure of the project: project management, coordination, cooperation of the participating partners including a brief description of the partners involved
5. Resource planning: specifying for each partner the expected costs and/or expenditure and the contribution of own or third-party funds. Detailed description of the contributions of the African partners, German federal ministries or their executive agencies
6. Coordination: summary of the coordination processes in the WASA initial phase or comparable coordination processes with institutions in southern Africa
7. Exploitation of results: intended economic and scientific/technical utilization, particularly regarding practical application of the results at the research site and by the individual partners, transferability, contribution to regulation and standardization

In order to ensure that the project can be successfully implemented, the description of project measures in the outline must also include alternative options for all activities which may be adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The outline must show clearly how all the partners will participate in the project's tasks and results. The protection of intellectual property also plays an important role in this context.

Project outlines which do not meet the above structural and formal funding requirements cannot be considered.

The selection procedure will include a scientific evaluation involving external experts. The project outlines received will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Contribution of the project to achieving the objectives of the call
- Problem relevance and practical relevance (scientific/technical, economic and societal importance; relevance to strategies of the African partner countries)
- Innovativeness of the scientific and technical approach (novelty and originality of the potential solution)
- Scientific and technical quality of the solution (plausibility, consideration of the current status of research and technology)
- Plausibility and feasibility of the project (financing, milestones, time frame)
- Exploitation prospects of the project (prospects for planned practical application of the results, transferability of the approach)
- Establishment or consolidation of bilateral/international partnerships
- Qualification of the consortium and project structure (expertise of the project partners, work-sharing, cooperation between industry, science and practice, appropriateness of resource planning)

Networking and transfer project

The project outline must be self-explanatory, allow evaluation without further enquiry and be structured as follows: 10 pages maximum plus cover sheet and German summary, A4, Arial 11, 1.5-spaced, margin 2 cm). The only attachments accepted are the Lol or MoU of associated project partners.

The project outline should be submitted in English to facilitate coordination with the partners and the evaluation. A one-page summary in German is required in this context.

Project outlines for the networking and transfer project must be structured as follows:

- Cover sheet: topic of the project, applicant, postal address, phone number and email of the applicant
- Overall objective of the project
- State of science and technology, previous work
- Description of the work plan taking account of the tasks listed in section 2.4 above
- Resource planning: specifying the planned costs and/or expenditure and the contribution of own or third-party funds
- Exploitation of results: high-profile presentation, summary analysis and transfer to practice

The review and evaluation of the project outlines submitted will be based on criteria other than those applied to research project outlines:

- Quality of the strategy for analysis, synthesis and networking in the funding measure and for supporting the transfer of results
- Profile, scientific/technical excellence and previous experience of the applicants (including profile and performance of any partners that may be involved)
- Effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed organization and management of the networking and transfer project
- Appropriateness of work, time and resource planning

Suitable project ideas for research projects or the networking and transfer project will be selected for funding on the basis of the above criteria and evaluation. Applicants will be informed in writing of the result of the selection.

The project outlines and any other documents submitted in this step of the procedure will not be returned.

7.2.2 Submission of formal applications and decision-making procedure

In the second step of the procedure, the applicants whose project outlines have been given a positive evaluation will be invited to submit formal applications. 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 applications (taking into account the requirements set out in the Annex) (<https://foerderportal.bund.de/easyonline>). This portal enables the electronic submission of the application which must be submitted in writing. An electronic document that bears a qualified electronic signature is sufficient for electronic submission.

Formal applications must be submitted by all of the envisaged collaboration partners. In addition, the collaboration coordinator must submit a detailed joint project description which builds on and specifies the project outline. In particular, the objectives and research issues must be clearly stated and the work programme, cooperation and work-sharing as well as resource, time, milestone and exploitation planning must be specified accordingly. The financial plan must be itemized and explained with comments in the project description. The contributions of African partners, German federal ministries or their executive agencies must be described and secured by letter or confirmation.

It is expected that any requirements and suggestions issuing from the evaluation and review of the outlines will be met and addressed. The responsible project management agency involved will provide applicants with further details and information concerning the handling of application documents when inviting them to submit formal applications.

In order to explore the potential for synergy, applicants are furthermore invited to contact the competent counsellors at the German embassies in the partner countries as well as the implementing organizations (e.g. KfW, GIZ, BGR) in the field of water resources management mandated by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Funding applications for collaborative projects must be submitted in consultation with the envisaged collaboration coordinator.

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

- Fulfilment of any reviewers’ suggestions and requirements issuing from the evaluation of the outline
- Plausibility and appropriateness of the work and milestone planning as well as resource planning
- Feasibility and prospects of success

After final consideration of the application, a funding decision will be taken on the basis of the above criteria and evaluation. The project outlines and any other documents submitted in this step of the procedure will not be returned.

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 funding regulations allow deviation from the general administrative regulations. The *Bundesrechnungshof* (Germany's Supreme Audit Institution) is entitled to carry out audits in accordance with section 91 of the Federal Budget Code (BHO).

8 Validity

These funding regulations will enter into force on the day following publication in the *Bundesanzeiger* (Federal Gazette).

These funding regulations 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 2024. 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 2029. 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 then applicable exemption provisions and remain effective at least until 31 December 2029.

Bonn, 6 February 2023

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Dr Helmut Löwe