

Application Guide & FAQ 2026

Klaus Tschira Boost Fund - A joint program by GSO and Klaus Tschira Stiftung offering flexible funding and career development to promote researchers in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geosciences, Mathematics, Neurosciences and Physics.

Before you apply

We strongly recommend that you

- read all information available on [our KT Boost website](#) carefully,
- check [our career resources website](#) for valuable peer advice on grant applications,
- contact us if your question is still not answered,
- and ask colleagues, mentors, etc., for feedback on your application.

Your application must include

- I. Project proposal (cover page, project idea, contribution, references, time frame, budget plan)
- II. Curriculum Vitae
- III. Personal statement
- IV. Letter of support by the research institution employing you during your Boost Fund project

Important

We do not accept shared proposals. We do not have templates or requirements regarding font type, font size or spacing, but we ask you to be considerate of the reader when formatting your application.

How to submit your application

- Compile all documents in the correct order into a single PDF (max. 4 MB) and name the file Boost_Application_Your Last Name.
- Upload your application via GSO's [online application form](#) **by October 1, 2026, 23:59 CEST**.
- Get familiar with the application form beforehand. Completing the information takes time.
- We accept only complete applications submitted on time via our online application form and in compliance with the requirements of this Application Guide.

In the online form, we ask you to **suggest three potential national/international reviewers** for your proposal. These can be full, associate, assistant, junior professors, or group leaders. Make sure to avoid any potential conflicts of interest (see [DFG Guidelines](#)).

Note that GSO may select other reviewers than those you suggest.

You may exclude potential reviewers as competitors in your field whom you do not want to know about your project by adding the name(s) and affiliation(s) in the online form or by informing us via phone/email before the application deadline.

CONTACT:

Important

Due to the high number of applications (2025 > 300) and our limited resources, we do not share reviews/evaluations and do not provide individual feedback on applications or funding decisions.

I. Project proposal

1. Cover page [1 page, English]

Title of your project + max. 3 project-specific keywords + abstract of your project (max. 100 words in MS Word count)

The use of AI systems must be disclosed on the cover page in a manner appropriate to academic standards. This means specifying which generative models you used, for what purpose and to what extent. Specific marking of the passages in question in the proposal is not required. AI tools not affecting the content (e.g., grammar, style or spelling checks, translation) need not be disclosed.

Important

We no longer accept any pictures, illustrations, figures or tables on the cover page.

2. Project idea [max. 2 pages, English]

What is the main idea of your research project? Please present it clearly and concisely.

You may include supporting pictures, figures or tables as part of the 2-page limit.

FAQ project idea

Can I apply with a research project to develop a new method or approach?

Yes, if you can explain why this is important (e.g. for the field, for your career development, etc.).

Can I apply for seed funding to build a start-up?

No, the Boost Fund is designed for research with potential application implications, but not for the commercialisation of your research.

Can I apply with a research project in human geography and/or cartography? No.

Can I apply with a research project in didactics or pedagogy? No.

Can I apply with a clinical and/or medical research project?

No. We exclude invasive research, clinical interventions, clinical trials and recruitment of patients for trials, as well as research involving medication or treatment regimens and interventions (Arzneimittelstudien, -prüfung). We do accept collaborative projects involving clinics and patients, engaging with patient populations, evaluating and analyzing patient data and samples.

Can I see examples of successful and unsuccessful proposals?

No, but you can find out more about our previous fellows and their projects on our website.

Are you funding research projects in the same area as previous fellows, or prioritising new areas?

We consider new projects independently of previously funded projects.

For re-applications: Does the research project need to change significantly, or can it be similar?

Applying with the same project or a new project is both possible if it has not already been funded elsewhere and is still up-to-date. If you apply with the same project, update your proposal to reflect your academic development since your last application.

3. Contribution of the Klaus Tschira Boost Fund [max. 1 page, English]

Explain why the Boost Fund is particularly important for your project and career stage. Focus on specific “Boost” effects of the funding, career development program and fellowship community that are relevant to your project and career. Let these questions guide you:

- What becomes possible through the Boost Fund?
- What potential(s) remain untapped without the Boost Fund?
- How does the Boost Fund make a difference in your career right now?
- What concrete next step(s) does the Boost Fund enable?

You are welcome to be specific, personal, and authentic.

4. References/literature for sections 1-3 [max. 1 page in total]

5. Project time frame and milestones [max. 1 page, English]

What are the key milestones of the project during the funding period?

Outline the time frame for your project, including preliminary work, intermediate and final project goals.

6. Budget plan [max. 2 pages incl. explanations, English]

Download the Excel template from the [KT Boost website](#) and complete it.

List your budget requirements by calendar year and by type of cost in Euros [no cent amounts!].

Describe and justify the requested funds with a comprehensive, clear explanation below the budget plan:

a) Staff: e.g., for your position unless you are a junior group leader or junior professor, for PhD student(s), Master's or Bachelor's student(s), technical staff with salary level (e.g. E13) and scope of position (e.g., 50%).

Note that all staff must be hired and employed by your institution. We do not fund scholarships. Your budget calculation must include all expenses and taxes covered by the employer. Contact your Human Resources Department for assistance in calculating the gross total sum. Further information can also be found here: [DFG personnel rates](#).

Explain the necessity of the requested staff. In case of partial funding of positions (e.g. PhD students), indicate the extent and by whom co-funding is provided to ensure that those hired can complete their degrees. This information must be confirmed in the letter of support.

b) Material costs: e.g., equipment, instruments, consumables, services, fees, licenses.

Explain the requirements and utilisation of equipment and instruments. You do not need to attach offers, but we strongly recommend checking prices, providers, and delivery times beforehand. Equipment and instruments remain with the host institution at the end of the funding.

c) Other costs: e.g., project-related travel for you and/or your staff as field trips (including hiring local field assistants), expeditions, conferences, collaborator visits, travel costs of visiting researchers, workshops and symposia related to your project (attending or organizing), publication fees, overhead.

FAQ budget plan

Can I fund a research stay abroad (for collaboration) using the Boost Fund?

Yes, that is possible, but the majority of your project must be spent at the German institution.

Do you pay expatriate allowance (*Auslandszuschäge*)? No. An expatriate allowance is generally paid only for scholarships, not for public service salaries (see also DFG). We reimburse expenses in accordance with the Federal Travel Expenses Act (*Bundesreisekostengesetz*).

Do you pay for overhead?

If your institution retains overhead, yes. Overhead must be included in the requested budget and indicated in your budget plan. Since the Boost Fund is a program addressing postdoctoral researchers on their way to independence, we expect the overhead to remain within reasonable limits to support you and your project.

How much of the funding can I use for my salary?

You can use max. €67,000 gross for your salary for the duration of your project. The program is designed to top-up, extend or bridge an existing position to allow fellows to focus (part of their time) on their independent project. The requested salary should align with your research project, workload and career plans. If you are a junior group leader or junior professor, you cannot apply for funding for your own position. The € 67,000 limit does not apply to hiring staff (e.g., Postdoc, PhD or Master's student, technical staff).

Is it ok to apply for less than € 115,000 and/or less than 24 months?

Yes. Applying for less funding or less time will not increase or decrease your chances. You may still apply for the maximum of €67,000 gross for your salary. The reviewers will assess the feasibility and *Boost* of your project within the time frame you propose, and whether your budget plan fits.

Can I change my time frame, budget plan and/or institution once the project has started?

The Boost Fund is quite flexible for adjustments, if you can explain the reasons and necessity. In any case, always contact us for approval before making any changes.

II. Curriculum Vitae [max. 5 pages, English]

Include the following information:

- Your current status and position,
- how your position is currently funded,
- your most important publications (in total max. 10 articles, chapters or monographs published, under review, submitted, or in preparation),
- grants, scholarships, prizes, and awards you have received.

An excellent publication record is not the primary funding criterion for the Boost Fund. However, your publications should reflect your academic career stage and convince the reviewers of the merits of your project.

III. Personal statement [max. 2 pages, English]

The selection committee is interested in learning more about you as a person beyond your project proposal and CV. They will evaluate your personal statement based on these questions:

- What drives you?
- What kind of research culture and collaboration matter to you?
- How do you approach working with others, mentoring, and leadership?
- What experiences, perspectives, or qualities do you bring into scientific environments?
- What would you contribute to the KT Boost Fund fellow community?

CONTACT:

IV. Letter of support [max. 2 pages, German or English]

Your application and project must have the support and approval of the institution employing you during your Boost Fund. The letter of support must be on your institution's letterhead, signed, and include the following information:

- How your position will be funded during your project and throughout the funding period,
- whether you have guaranteed access to basic research infrastructure,
- if the approved funds are made freely available to you, and
- if they will only be used as indicated in your submitted budget plan.

In case of partial funding of positions through the Boost Fund (e.g., for a PhD student), indicate the extent and by whom co-funding is provided to ensure that those hired can complete their degrees.

FAQ letter of support

Do I have to be employed in Germany at the time of my application? Or can employment start later?

You must be employed at a state-funded (public law) university or state-funded (public law) university of applied sciences (= *öffentlich-rechtliche Universität oder HAW*), at a *Bundesamt* or *Bundesanstalt* (*Ressortforschung*), at a Fraunhofer, Leibniz, Max Planck, Helmholtz, or DLR institute or at EMBL in Germany at the latest at the start of your project.

What happens if I move to another institution than the one I am at when I apply?

We look at your project and its feasibility at the institution you have chosen. A change of institution within Germany is possible. In any case, always contact us for approval beforehand.

Who should write and sign the letter of support?

It must be someone eligible to confirm your position, employment for the duration of your project, and all required information. This could be your PI or Head of Department. It does not have to be the President or Rector. We recommend allowing sufficient time to obtain the letter and signature(s).

Is it possible to fund a cooperation project between two German institutions? Do you need a letter of support from both?

Yes, that is possible as long as you are the only applicant and you will manage the budget at your host institution. Submit only one letter of support from your host institution (not the partners).

In case of international cooperation, does the non-German institution provide a letter of support?

No, submit only one letter of support from your host institution (not the international partners).

Support letter example text (in German)

Die [Name der antragstellenden Institution] unterstützt den Antrag von [Name Bewerber*in] im Rahmen des KT Boost Funds 2026/27 mit dem Titel [Projekttitle] mit großem/größtem Nachdruck.

[optional: Empfehlung Kandidat*in]

[falls Bewerber*in noch promovierend: Angaben zum Stand und vorauss. Zeitpunkt der Verteidigung]

Die Stelle von [Name Bewerber*in] wird über den geplanten Projektzeitraum [TT.MM.JJJJ – TT.MM.JJJJ] zu [xx] % aus [Art der Finanzierung] finanziert.

[falls zutreffend: Angaben zur (Weiter-)Finanzierung von Promovierenden nach Projektende]

Die [Name der antragstellenden Institution] sichert [Name Bewerber*in] die Bereitstellung der notwendigen infrastrukturellen Grundausstattung für die Durchführung des Projektes zu.

Die beantragten Mittel werden [Name Bewerber*in] im Falle einer Bewilligung frei zur Verfügung stehen. Die Verwendung erfolgt gemäß dem eingereichten Budgetplan.

Bei Rückfragen steht Ihnen [Name Ansprechpartner*in] gerne zur Verfügung.

CONTACT: