

List of Questions

for review sessions on Collaborative Research Centres (CRC) and CRC/Transregio

I. Questions for each project section

These questions relate to project sections being considered for renewed funding. As far as planning is concerned, the questions also apply to newly proposed projects. Likewise, the questions regarding results also apply to completed project sections.

1. How would you assess the results generated by the research so far?
 - How would you evaluate the progress made, both in terms of content and methodology, since the last review?
 - Were there unforeseen developments or problems in implementing the work programme? How did the working group deal with them (alternative strategies)?
 - What publications were produced during the previous funding period, and how would you assess their quality?
 - What forms of cooperation were observed with other project sections within the Collaborative Research Centre? Did they result in joint publications?
 - Please evaluate the research work conducted by the project section in comparison to work done outside the Collaborative Research Centre. How were the results generated by the research received and incorporated into the project? Can you see the potential that the results achieved so far could be transferred into application in medium-term future?

2. How would you assess the work programme of the project section for the next funding period according to the following criteria:
 - the potential for gaining new insights in the field of research explored by the project, other fields, or for application
 - originality, innovation and risk
 - relevant preliminary work
 - the present state of knowledge in the field, methodology, objectives, experimental plan, feasibility
 - long-term concept beyond the duration of the project
 - How does the project differentiate from other projects in the working group and/or of the project section leader(s)?

3. Are the researchers participating in the project section well qualified academically? Is the number of staff participating in the project sufficient to be able to successfully carry out the given work programme?
4. Is the project section strongly connected with the Collaborative Research Centre as a whole, or could it be considered marginal?
 - To what extent is this project section necessary for other project sections?
 - What means of collaboration are planned with other project sections? Does this planned collaboration appear beneficial? Have important cooperative opportunities been overlooked?
5. Should funding of the project be contingent on certain recommendations and/or conditions?
6. Are the funds requested - for personnel, consumables and investment - appropriately estimated with regard to the core support?
7. Are the funds requested for experiments involving animals necessary (species and number of animals; upkeep of laboratory animals et. al.)?
8. Are significant subsequent costs for purchasing equipment, etc., requiring clearance with the university to be expected?
9. How would you assess the project section in terms of international competitiveness based on the results thus far and future plans: excellent - very good - good - not worth funding?

II. Questions on the Collaborative Research Centre or CRC/Transregio as a whole

1. What progress and results were achieved in the Collaborative Research Centre during the previous funding period? To what extent was the cooperation within the Collaborative Research Centre necessary to accomplish this? Has there already been or will there be added value to the Collaborative Research Centre due to the integration of industrial or other partners oriented towards application? What problems arose, either in content or methodology, and how were they solved? What long-term research objectives will continue to be pursued?
2. What developments were made in the Collaborative Research Centre's field of research outside the organisation? How would you assess the perspectives of the Collaborative Research Centre in terms of national and international competitiveness?
3. How has the location of the Collaborative Research Centre developed? Is the Collaborative Research Centre taken into consideration in the structural planning of the university and in filling professorships?
4. Is the overall research programme well defined, i.e. coherent and feasible within a foreseeable time period? Has the internal breakdown of the Collaborative Research Centre into project areas and project sections proven beneficial?
If the programme is too broad: Would further differentiation have an effect on the inclusion of individual project sections? Or are there disciplines important to the topic that are not represented?
5. How has the cooperation among the participating researchers developed? Whose influence and support are especially strong in the Collaborative Research Centre?

6. How would you assess the existing / future measures for data management? Are common standards of the respective disciplines held and (existing) repositories used?
7. What is your impression of the young researchers involved with the Collaborative Research Centre? How would you assess existing/future measures taken to promote young researchers?
8. How would you assess the level of participation of female researchers within the Collaborative Research Centre? Please assess the existing / future measures taken to promote gender equality within the proposed Collaborative Research Centre.
9. Is there sufficient space available to accommodate the staff and equipment? Is the cost sharing, i.e. the relation between institutional support and the amount requested from the DFG, adequate, or is a higher contribution by the university and participating institutions necessary?
10. How are the general funds, e.g. lump sum funds, funds for publications or sabbaticals, funds for guests, travel, colloquia and public relations used? Has the Collaborative Research Centre developed transparent procedures and evaluation criteria for the distribution of funds?
11. Please comment on how the project will be administered with regard to financial and organisational aspects. Do the leadership and administration of the Collaborative Research Centre appear adequate?
12. Does the proposal justify renewed funding as a Collaborative Research Centre? Should funding of the Collaborative Research Centre as a whole be contingent on certain recommendations and/or conditions?

III. Questions on the Integrated Research Training Group – if requested –

1. How would you assess the qualification concept with regard to:
 - the quality of the qualification programme and other qualifying measures
 - relevant preliminary work and experiences, in particular, teaching cooperation between the participating researchers
 - the qualification of the doctoral researchers for the international scientific and non-scientific job market
 - the relevance of the qualification programme to the research programme of the proposed Collaborative Research Centre or CRC/Transregio
 - the communication of expertise that extends beyond the individual specialised areas
 - the communication of the rules of good scientific practice
 - its scope in relation to the amount of time it will take doctoral researchers to complete their projects
 - For Integrated Research Training Groups in an CRC/Transregio: Does the qualification concept consider the regional distribution and what measures are included?
2. How would you assess the organisational and supervisory concepts with regard to:
 - the suitability of the announcement and selection procedures for attracting highly qualified international doctoral researchers
 - ensuring a structured, transparent and speedy doctoral process
 - their scope and the intensity of regular progress checks

- the balance between supervision and encouraging independence
 - clear definitions of responsibilities, roles, rights and procedures within the Integrated Research Training Group
 - For Integrated Research Training Groups in an CRC/Transregio: Were the proposed organisational and supervisory concepts considered in the regional distribution?
3. How is the Research Training Group integrated into the university and non-university environment?
 - Does it fit into existing qualification structures and/or established forms of doctoral training? Are convincing collaborations planned?
 - What additional support will the university provide to help the Integrated Research Training Group succeed (e.g. reduction of the teaching load of participating professors, simplification of doctoral procedures for interdisciplinary projects, cross-departmental degree regulations, family-friendly doctoral training, support for foreign doctoral researchers)?
 4. Is the amount of funding requested appropriate in relation to the amount of core support provided by the institution(s)?
 5. How would you assess the proposed project “Integrated Research Training Group” in terms of international standards: excellent - very good - good - not worth funding?

IV. Questions on the INF project section – if requested –

Funding may be requested for an INF project section as a scientific support service for the CRC as a whole: (a) For data maintenance and indexing incl. securing their long-term availability and/or (b) For testing examples or developing prototypes of new methods of communicating scientific data.

1. On the setup of the INF project section within the CRC
 - Is it certain that the data generated by the scientific project sections and included in the INF project section are suitably comprehensible from the point of view of their scientific content?
 - Has appropriate consideration been given to the question of how the data generated by the scientific project sections will be processed by the INF project section from the IT point of view?
 - Are there any special, novel ideas on data handling methods?
 - Is the work programme for the INF project section appropriate to the overall scope of funding for the project?
 - Do the plans anticipate any prototypical developments, which could also be used in other ways?
 - Do the principal investigators of the project section have the necessary skills, both in terms of the subject matter as well as from an IT and methodological point of view?
2. On the integration of the INF project section with the hosting university and beyond:
 - Is the project section appropriately linked to the existing information infrastructure and facilities at the hosting university?
 - Is the long-term availability of the proposed information infrastructure adequately secured beyond the funding period of the CRC, both in terms of content and technically, either at the hosting university or elsewhere?
 - Have relevant database systems available outside the hosting university been taken into account by the principal investigator? Is the way in which the work of the project section is connected to other developments adequately justified, or does it stand out from them in developing independent solutions,?

3. On the requested funding:
 - Is the planned use of the funding appropriate?
 - Is the core support appropriate, both from a scientific point of view and especially in terms of the information infrastructure provided by the university submitting the application?