

Information Sheet CZS Nexus 2027 – Project Outline Submission

Please note that the information provided here pertains to the submission of the project outline. More detailed information can be found in the call for proposals, which is expected to be published in early September 2026 and communicated on the website. The exact deadline for submitting the project outline will also be available there.

General Information

Funding period:

5 or 6 years (the project must start between October 1, 2027, and February 1, 2028)

Funding amount:

Up to 1.5 million euros (plus an overhead flat rate of 20% of the project funding amount)

Application requirements

- The research group must be based at a public university or a non-university research institute affiliated with one of the four major research organizations (Fraunhofer Society, Helmholtz Association, Leibniz Association, Max Planck Society) in Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate, or Thuringia (host institution).
- The research group may be based at two scientific institutions simultaneously.
- The applicant must hold a Ph.D., and the completion of the Ph.D. (date of the defense) must not have occurred more than four years prior (the cutoff date is the application deadline for submitting the project outline). Interruptions in employment since obtaining the doctorate due to parental leave, illness, or caregiving are taken into account based on the actual duration of the interruptions. Similarly, part-time employment of less than 50% due to parental leave, illness, or caregiving is also counted as interruption time.
- Postdoctoral researchers who are already funded by a similar program (e.g., Emmy Noether Group, Leibniz Junior Research Group, Helmholtz Young Investigator Group, ERC Starting Grant) are excluded from applying, as are candidates who already hold a (junior) professorship or have completed their habilitation.

Application and Selection Process

The application and selection process is divided into two stages: a concept phase and a full-proposal phase. Interested researchers have the opportunity to submit a project outline in accordance with the guidelines. The number of concepts is limited to 100. All submitted project outlines will be reviewed for formal compliance and evaluated by a selection committee. The highest-rated project outlines will be selected for the full proposal phase.

Submission of Project Outlines

Formal Requirements

- The project outline, including all attachments, must be written in English.
- The project outline must be written in Arial font, size 12, single-spaced, with margins of at least 2 cm.
- The project outline, along with all required documents, must be submitted exclusively via the Carl Zeiss Foundation's application portal, which opens upon the announcement of the call for proposals.

The templates for the required attachments are available only through the portal.

Registration is required for the portal: <https://portal.carl-zeiss-stiftung.de/authentication/login>

Project Outline

1. Basic Information (max. 1 DIN A4 page)
 - a. First and last name of the applicant
 - b. Current employer/position, including contact information
(Please note that we primarily communicate via email during the application process. Please ensure that you provide us with an email address that allows for reliable communication—keyword: spam)
 - c. Date of doctoral degree (defense date)
 - d. Title of the research project
 - e. Lead host institution where the research group is to be established
 - f. Total funding requested, including a brief description of how the requested funds are expected to be used (e.g., hiring of how many staff members at which qualification level, purchase of equipment, planning of workshops...)

2. Project description (max. 1 DIN A4 page)

Brief description of the research project and its objectives.

3. Description of interdisciplinarity (max. 1/2 DIN A4 page)

Description of the interdisciplinary nature of the applicant's own career, the composition of the planned group, as well as the content of the research project and the methods employed. Explanation of the originality of the interdisciplinary project.

4. Appendix

- a. Interdisciplinarity Form
- b. Curriculum Vitae Form
- c. Copy of doctoral degree certificate
- d. Letter of support from the host institution (a letter from the faculty or department is sufficient):

The letter should state that the host institution will accept the applicant and provide him or her with conditions appropriate for independent research work (e.g., workspace, access to (large) equipment...). Furthermore, the letter should include a statement on whether and, if so, how the applicant is to be involved in teaching.