

neue forschung

Pro*Niedersachsen – Cultural Heritage – Collections and Objects

Deadline: 15 December 2026

Through the funding initiative 'Pro*Niedersachsen: Cultural Heritage – Collections and Objects', the state provides targeted support for research into the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Lower Saxony. This may encompass collections, archival materials, as well as architectural, landscape, archaeological, and paleontological monuments. The aim is to catalogue, research, and make the results accessible to the public, thereby providing fresh impetus for the cultural memory of Lower Saxony. Projects that place contexts in Lower Saxony within an international research framework are also welcome.

- 📁 **Targeted fields: Humanities, cultural studies and social sciences**
- 📄 **Type of funding: Research projects**
- 👤 **Target group: Applications may be submitted by state-funded museums, libraries, and archives in Lower Saxony, as well as the Lower Saxony State Office for Heritage Management, the Lower Saxony Institute for Historical Coastal Research, and the Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation.**
- € **Funding amount: up to 250,000 euros**
- 📅 **Duration of funding: maximum three years**
- ⚠️ **Annual deadline; call for applications with an internationalisation module**

1. Objective

The state of Lower Saxony boasts a rich cultural heritage. This is shaped by the region's natural, historical, political and economic diversity. Making the evidence of this development visible to the present generation and preserving it for future generations is both a duty and a challenge.

Through the 'Pro*Niedersachsen: Cultural Heritage – Collections and Objects' programme, the state specifically supports research into the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Lower Saxony. This may encompass collections, archival material or architectural, landscape, archaeological and palaeontological monuments. The aim is to catalogue, research and make the results accessible to the public, thereby providing fresh impetus for Lower Saxony's cultural memory. Projects that place contexts in Lower Saxony within an international research framework are also welcome.



Research projects that explicitly make use of innovative technical and scientific methods are expressly included in the scope of funding. The decisive factor for funding is that the project fundamentally addresses a cultural-historical research question.

2. Funding Opportunities

1. Eligible Applicants

Museums, libraries and archives funded by the State of Lower Saxony, as well as the Lower Saxony State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments, the Lower Saxony Institute for Historical Coastal Research and the Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation, are eligible to apply. These institutions may cooperate with a higher education institution or a non-university research institution in Lower Saxony. If it is considered to be substantively necessary for the proposed project, other institutions located in other German Länder or abroad may also be appointed as cooperation partners.

Universities as defined in Section 2 of the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act (NHG) are eligible to apply, provided they possess collections of structural significance or cooperate with one of the other institutions listed here as being eligible to apply. Non-state-funded institutions of this kind cannot be funded.

Applications must be submitted by researchers who hold a PhD.

2. Funding amount, duration and start date

Projects may be funded for a maximum period of **three years**, with a **maximum funding amount of 250,000 euros**.

Under the **Internationalisation Module**, additional funding of up to 10 per cent of the total grant amount may be applied for to involve international cooperation partners. More information can be found [here](#) .

Where expenditure incurred as part of the project can be clearly attributed to the host institution's core activities (excavation, cataloguing, restoration), the institution shall contribute to the project through co-funding. Co-funding shall generally amount to at least 30 per cent of the total eligible expenditure and may also be provided by third parties. Proof that co-funding is secured must be provided as part of the application. If the project does not involve any expenditure that can be clearly attributed to the institution's core tasks, no co-funding is required.

Project funding may be provided from 1 October of the year following the application at the earliest and must be utilised within six months of approval at the latest.

3. Use of funds

Funding may be used for personnel resources, operating costs and investment in equipment. In the event of cooperation with a research institution outside Lower Saxony, up to 10 per cent of the funding may be allocated to that institution.

The following items are eligible for funding:

- funding for PhD positions (up to 100 per cent of a full-time equivalent position in pay grade 13 of the TV-L for a maximum of three years; PhD candidates should, as a rule, be integrated into a structured PhD programme),
- funding for postdoc positions (up to 100 per cent of a full-time equivalent position in pay grade 14 of the TV-L for three years),
- funding to enable 'research leave' for professors through a teaching substitution of up to one year,
- funding for academic staff and student or research assistants,
- A proportion of the personnel resources for additional academic and technical positions at the institutions.

Note on personnel resources to cover a teaching

The **average rates set by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Finance** shall be used to calculate the funding necessary. If a specific individual has already been designated to work on the project at the time of application, this must be stated in the application. In this case, funding must be calculated as accurately as

possible on the basis of the individual's personal details.

If the applicant is employed on a fixed-term contract, the application must be accompanied by a declaration from the applicant institution stating that the project can be carried out at that institution, that the host institution, as the grant recipient, will take responsibility for the administration of the funding amount, and that the implementation of the project will be guaranteed there even after the applicant's possible departure.

- **Non-personnel and travel funds.** Travel expenses must be calculated in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Travel Expenses Act (BRK) in conjunction with the provisions of the Lower Saxony Travel Expenses Ordinance (NRKVO) and the Administrative Regulations relating to the NRKVO (VV-NRKVO) dated 10 January 2017, as currently in force (Note: Eligible expenses are those incurred for travel on the most cost-effective regular public transport services).
- **Printing and publication costs** for the publication of research results (up to 20,000 euros). The results should preferably be made available as open access. If further funding is sought from open access schemes, a separate condition of approval may apply.
- **Scientific equipment.** Funding for scientific equipment may be applied for provided it is required to carry out the project and is not part of the basic institutional equipment. When applying, the equipment must be described in detail and its prices, including all ancillary costs, must be specified. Ongoing expenditure on scientific equipment, e.g. for energy consumption, insurance, maintenance, repairs and spare parts, is not eligible for funding. It must be confirmed that the proper use, storage and maintenance of the equipment, as well as the coverage of ongoing expenditure, are guaranteed.

The following are not eligible for funding:

- Indirect costs, i.e. costs for infrastructure used (e.g. room or energy costs; see also the notes on scientific equipment),
- expenditure on hospitality,
- Funds for the acquisition of land and buildings, and building maintenance.

Lump sum for administrative and infrastructure expenditure (VIAP)

The grant is subject to the payment of a 10 per cent flat-rate administration and infrastructure expenditure allowance. This is automatically added to the expenditure items in the submitted financial plan.

Note: Please only include in the financial plan the funds directly required for the project. The flat-rate administration and infrastructure will be calculated upon approval by the MWK.

3. Application and selection procedure

3.1 Timetable / Application deadline

The funding application must be submitted by 15 December of the year prior to project start.

3.2 Procedure

By submitting the application, you confirm that the university management has taken note of and supports the application.

Funding applications must be submitted **electronically (as a single PDF file, max. 10 MB** including the attachments requested in the form), in accordance with VV 3.1 relating to Section 44 of the State Budget Regulations, using the application form **„Application for Funding for Research Project“** [☞], to the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture:

Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture,
Division 12

Pro.Niedersachsen@MWK.niedersachsen.de [☞]

The annual selection process is organised by the Office of the Academic Advisory Commission of Lower Saxony (WKN). Drawing on its specialist expertise, a multidisciplinary review panel ranks the applications

according to their eligibility for funding.

The selection process is usually completed by the end of the second quarter each year. The MWK generally makes its funding decision in July of each year on the basis of the review panel's recommendations and decides at its discretion within the limits of the available budgetary resources.

Under this call for proposals and the administrative regulations relating to Sections 23 and 44 of the State Budget Regulations, applicants may receive funding in the form of project grants as non-repayable grants based on expenditure. There is no legal entitlement to funding.

In the event of funding being granted to recipients, the General Ancillary Provisions for Project Funding Grants (ANBest-P) shall form an integral part of the grant award notice.

During the course of the project, an interim report (2 pages) must be submitted, and upon completion of the project, a final report (3–5 pages) must be submitted, providing information on the progress of the project, deviations from the originally planned work and time schedule, as well as the key findings in the context of the initial questions and objectives, the publications produced, and follow-up projects.

4. Application procedure

The application form requires information on the following points. These also form the criteria for the assessment:

Research interests:

- research area(s),
- specific research question(s),
- scientific relevance of the project,
- methodological and/or substantive innovation of the project,
- relevance of the project to Lower Saxony and/or justification as to why it can only be carried out using Lower Saxony-based collections.

Objectives:

- scientific objectives and expected scientific findings,
- identification of structure-building measures within the research project,
- possible follow-up projects following completion of the project,
- involvement of early-career researchers,
- planned collaborations, where possible supported by relevant letters of intent,
- planned publication of the results,
- expected results of non-scientific relevance and how these are to be communicated to the non-scientific public (science communication).

State of the art:

- Current state of research and how the project builds on this,
- current status of the applicant's own relevant preparatory work,
- where applicable, a description of the project's interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary focus.

Data and methods:

- data/corpora to be analysed,
- research methods,
- planned measures for data management and the re-use of the research data obtained.

Work programme and expenditure:

- Work plan and timetable,
- Cost estimate.



Information on the relevance of gender and diversity

- The composition of the project team must be determined in accordance with the **DFG's equality and diversity standards** . Applicants must explain the role that gender and diversity dimensions play in the research process (methods, work programme, objectives) and in the transfer/translation process. The relevant information will be taken into account during the peer review process.

5. Contact

If you have any questions regarding the programme call, please contact:

Andreas Stuhlmacher
Lower Saxony Ministry for Science and Culture
Tel.: 0049 (0)511 120 2480
E-Mail: Pro.Niedersachsen@MWK.niedersachsen.de 

As of November 2026