







Lower Saxony – Scotland Research and Innovation Scheme: Stream II – Excellence Track

Deadline: June 30, 2025 12 pm (CET)

The programme “Lower Saxony – Scotland Research and Innovation Scheme” is jointly run by the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE, Stream I – Development Track) in partnership with the Ministry of Science and Culture of Lower Saxony (MWK) and the Volkswagen Foundation (Stream II – Excellence Track) and is supported by the European Centre for Advanced Studies (**ECAS**[↗]). The programme provides Lower Saxonian and Scottish higher education institutions and their researchers with a unique opportunity to conduct joint research to lay the foundation for successful third-party funding bids, in particular Horizon Europe (other prestigious funding calls are welcome too).

This information sheet outlines the structure of “Stream II – Excellence Track”.

-  **area of research: all topics, particularly energy (transformation), life sciences, educational sciences, mobility and its transformation as well as security policy.**
-  **type of funding: cooperative research projects**
-  **target group: researchers from lower saxony together with a scottish counterpart (see faq)**
-  **funding amount: up to 100.000 EUR**
-  **funding term: up to 2 years**
-  **beneficiaries are obliged to present their funded projects during the yearly lower saxony – scotland joint forum hosted by ecas.**

1. Scope of Funding

1.1 Project Characteristics:



The programme funds joint research projects between partners in Lower Saxony and Scotland aiming for longterm cooperation and joint proposals. The proposed project shall build on existing projects and specifically planned collaborations (for example, those supported by a MoU). The proposal should address the following criteria:

1. Quality of the Project
2. Feasibility and Soundness of the Collaboration Plan
3. Commitment and Sustainability of the Partnership

1.2 Area of Research

All topics are welcome, particularly topics focusing on energy (transformation), life sciences, educational sciences, mobility and its transformation as well as security policy are encouraged based on the in May 2024 renewed Memorandum of Understanding between the Lower Saxonian State Rector's Conference and Universities Scotland.

1.3 Type of Funding

All direct costs for personnel, consumables, equipment and travel necessary to conduct the project may be applied for. It is up to the applicant to determine the budget and its distribution, including the use of some of the financial means for their Scottish project partner. In line with the aim to support genuine cooperation, funds should be adequately distributed.

Applications for funding of the own position are excluded. If funding for PhD students is applied for, positions have to be calculated according to at least 65% TV-L 13 (for positions at an institution in Lower Saxony; deviations have to be justified. Please calculate according to the Ministry's personnel rates for academic staff you find on the [website](#)^[3]). Please note: The Foundation's personnel rates (as specified in the electronic application system) are not applicable here. In order to facilitate the collaboration further, it is possible to apply for joint post-doctoral positions (100% TV-L 13). In Scotland, an equivalent salary applies according to local standards.

1.4 Funding Amount

Up to 100.000 EUR.

A cash or in-kind contribution of 50.000 GBP by the Scottish partner is expected. In a letter of support, the Scottish partner has to specify in detail the cash or in-kind contribution.

Those grantees that seek to prepare a Horizon Europe application, may apply for an additional funding of up to 80.000 EUR in the "Europe Program" according to that eligibility criteria of that funding line: (<https://zukunft.niedersachsen.de/en/funding-offers/europe-program/>^[3]).

1.5 Funding Period

Up to 2 years.

1.6 Additional Requirements

The research team should be gender and diversity balanced. In addition, it must be stated whether and to what extent gender equality and diversity aspects are relevant to the research project (methods, work

programme, objectives). Compliance with the will be taken into account in the funding decision.

It is assumed that all project participants will adhere to the DFG's **rules of good scientific practice** [☞], any rules of good scientific transfer or cooperation practice at their institutions, and the **DFG's guidelines for handling research data.** [☞]

If data collection is intended, the essential information must be presented in a data management plan (basic data management plan of the Volkswagen Foundation or a more detailed data management plan of the respective discipline). If no data are to be generated in the project, this must be explicitly stated in the application text. Costs for the preparation of research data must be included in the application budget.

Administration and Infrastructure Expenditure Allowance („Verwaltungs- und Infrastruktur-Ausgaben-Pauschale“ – VIAP):

The funding is linked to the payment of a 10% administration and infrastructure expenditure allowance (VIAP). This is automatically added to the total eligible expenditure. If funds are forwarded to project partners entitled to receive them, the VIAP must also be forwarded proportionally.

The VIAP is intended to cover additional expenses incurred by universities and research institutions due to the granting of third-party funded projects from zukunft.niedersachsen. The VIAP is designed to cover parts of the expenses that arise for the administration of the project at the implementing institution as well as for the provision of infrastructure.

Note: Please only enter the funds directly required for the project in the financial plan. The VIAP will be credited independently by the MWK.

2. Selection Procedure

Applications will be assessed comparatively by an interdisciplinary panel based on the review criteria listed above. Applications that do not meet the formal criteria will not be considered. A funding decision may be expected at the latest three months after the deadline has passed. Please note that due to the comparative review no detailed feedback on the proposals will be provided in written form.

3. Application

Applications have to be submitted by the lead applicant in Lower Saxony online via the Volkswagen Foundation's electronic application system

until June 30, 2025 at 12:00 pm CET (portal.volkswagenstiftung.de [☞]).

For your application, please **use the template and forms available for download** from the electronic application system. **Please follow the instructions in the electronic application system.**

You will be asked to provide information about the applicant, the institution (grant recipients), the co-applicants, the project (title, duration and total amount) and the budget. Please invite one person per applicant institution to participate in the application system so that one budget per institution is submitted. Please do not invite other co-applicants to the portal and use the text of the application to explain their involvement. Please submit:

3.1 Proposal according to the template file

3.2 Budget Plan

Please submit a separate budget plan for each PI

3.3 Curriculum Vitae of all Applicants

The CV should include the 10 most important publications (max. 2 page/applicant); links to ORCID, research gate, google scholar or similar profiles – if existing – are welcome.

3.4 Data management plan (if applicable)

3.5 Statement of the recipient of funds, i. e. the academic institution in Lower Saxony

Please use the form (German) available in the application system and sign it (PI in Lower Saxony).

3.6 Further Contents

- Memorandum of Understanding (if applicable)
- Letter of support: Proposals should highlight any institutional commitments that will facilitate the success and sustainability of the partnership (optional).
- Letter of support of the Scottish partner specifying in detail the cash or in-kind contribution of 50.000 GBP (required).

4. Contact

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