Guidelines for Application, Evaluation and Awarding of Projects

1. Preamble

Background and Aims

The German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA) is a proponent for interdisciplinary and collaborative global health research. Addressing the complex challenges we face today – neglected tropical diseases and antibiotic resistance, but also mental illness and diabetes together with achieving universal health coverage and the human right to health – requires research approaches that defy traditional boundaries. GLOHRA seeks to foster exchange and forge new mechanisms of cooperation across institutions, disciplines, sectors and countries.

Specifically, GLOHRA aims to fund projects that:

- address transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions
- contribute to the improvement of health and health equity worldwide
- are interdisciplinary (→ Box 1)
- contribute to the aims of the GLOHRA (→ GLOHRA Statutes)
- link scientific excellence with the domains of capacity-building, science-based policy advice, teaching, implementation and/or clinical practice
- promote active, eye-level partnerships with national and international partners, including collaborators in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)

GLOHRA supports this kind of research through three funding pathways: interdisciplinary pilot projects, cross-sector projects, and global health postdoctoral fellowships.

Interdisciplinarity in GLOHRA Projects

For our collaborative research funding paths, i.e. interdisciplinary and cross-sector projects, we expect that project applicants represent at least two of the four GLOHRA's research disciplines:

1) biomedical science
2) public health
3) social sciences and humanities
4) engineering and other sciences.

In global health fellowships, applicants should outline their interdisciplinary approach in their application.

For example, projects could scrutinize a particular problem from multiple perspectives using a mix of methods. They could also involve complementary disciplines and partners early on in the process. This will improve the chances that other researchers, policymakers, communities or companies will take up the knowledge, technology or intervention generated by the project.

Box 1 Interdisciplinarity in GLOHRA Projects

2. Eligibility and Roles

GLOHRA Members / Project Applicants

GLOHRA full members are entitled to submit project proposals as applicants. The Steering Committee and its members also have the right to submit projects.

GLOHRA aims to link members from different institutions and cities. A member can only apply for one project per call and only hold one grant at a time.

Associate Members

Associate members are eligible to apply for project funding as part of a team with other GLOHRA members. Funding for associate members' institutions inside Germany is capped at 50,000€ per year. For institutions outside Germany, the associate member's institution must adhere to the same conditions as subcontractors listed below.

An associate member can only apply for one project per call and only hold one grant at a time.

Non-academic project partners

Representatives of non-academic legal entities who fulfill the formal eligibility criteria of the Federal Ministry of Technology, Science and Research (BMFTR) can be project partners. In the cross-sector project funding line, GLOHRA explicitly requests members to work on research questions by engaging with partners from industry, policy and/or civil society. In cross-sector projects, the cross-sector partner(s) should also be listed as an applicant.

Funding for project partners is capped at 50,000€ per non-member per year. In accordance with BMFTR principles, commercial enterprises are expected to make an appropriate contribution of their own – generally at least 50% of the eligible costs incurred. In case of small and medium-sized or not for profit enterprises, this contribution may be reduced.

Funding can only be awarded to legal-entities in Germany. Individuals cannot be project partners.

Subcontractors

Projects may include subcontracts, e.g. for service providers or legal entities abroad. A subcontract may not exceed 50% of the budget of the institution awarding the subcontract. Since GLOHRA aims to support capacity-building, core activities/ tasks should generally not be outsourced to service providers, but provided by the consortium.

Please note that subcontracts are subject to Value Added Tax (VAT). Additional costs may be incurred due to international transfer fees etc.

Links & Resources

- Definitions of GLOHRA members, associate members, and project partners: https://www.globalhealth.de/faqs/#c563
- FAQ on GLOHRA project funding: globalhealth.de/faqs.html
- Find partners and experts in the Global Health Research Directory: researchdirectory.globalhealth.de
- Projects already funded by GLOHRA: globalhealth.de/funded-projects.html

3. Types of projects

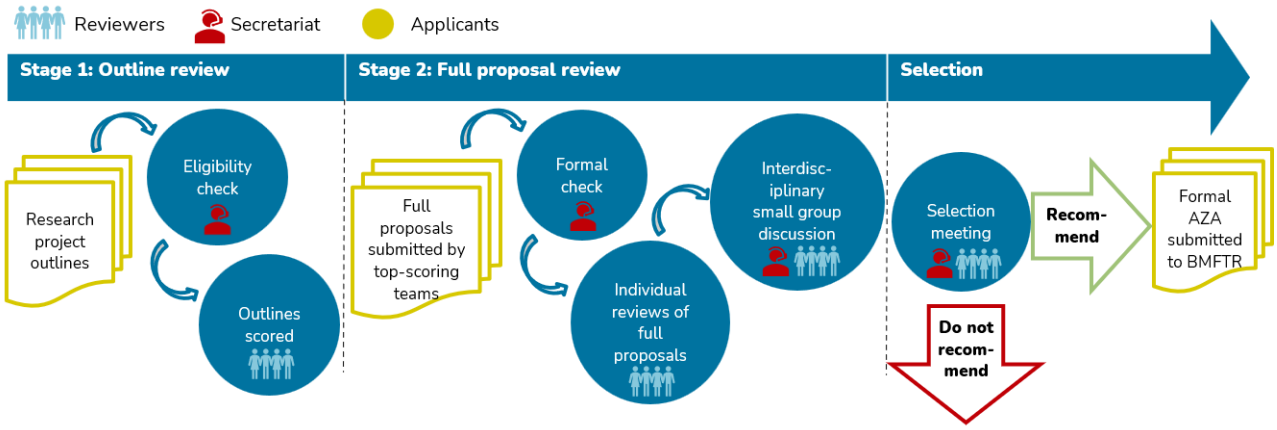
	Interdisciplinary pilot projects	Cross-sector projects	Global health postdoc fellowships
Description	Seed funding to validate approaches and prepare external funding applications	Collaborative projects between academic and non-academic partners	Postdoc fellowships
Minimum consortium	At least two GLOHRA members, representing ▪ at least two disciplines (→ Box 1) ▪ at least two organizations ▪ adequate balance in terms of budget and task distribution between the partners	At least three applicants, of whom ▪ at least two GLOHRA members ○ from two different organizations ○ at least two disciplines (→ Box 1) ▪ one non-academic project partner (e.g. policy, industry, civil society)	Applicant must ▪ be a GLOHRA member ▪ have obtained a PhD degree or equivalent within the last 0-7 years at the time of application*
	Funding for project partners and associate members is capped at 50,000€ per partner per year. International partners can participate as subcontractors. A subcontract may not exceed 50% of the budget of the institution awarding the subcontract.		
Duration	Generally up to 12 months 18 months in exceptional cases	Up to 24 months	12-24 months
Indicative funding amount	120,000€ per project over 12 months	240,000€ per project over 24 months	Up to 120,000€ per project per year
Evaluation criteria* *see pp. 5	▪ Scientific novelty, quality and originality, interdisciplinarity ▪ Adequacy and feasibility of the work plan, budget and management procedures ▪ Impact and expected results		
Expected results	▪ Scientific publications, third-party funding applications ▪ Approaches, results, strategies, narratives, etc. that underpin and support	▪ Innovative structures, models, methods, tools, networks etc. that are accessible and usable for the wider global health community and/or transferrable to other contexts	▪ Scientific publications, third-party funding applications ▪ Contribution to cross-institutional and interdisciplinary cooperation within and beyond Germany

*Career breaks for reasons such as child care are factored into eligibility.

	interdisciplinarity in global health research projects ▪ Contribution to cross-institutional and interdisciplinary cooperation within and beyond Germany	▪ Contribution to cross-institutional and interdisciplinary cooperation within and beyond Germany	

4. Application

Two-stage review process



In stage one of the application process, applicants are asked to submit a project outline via the application portal by the deadline specified on the website. At this stage, you should have a well-formed idea of your project concept, a clear approach, and have a confirmed team.

In stage two, a select number of applicants with the highest-scoring project outlines will be invited to submit a full application. For all other applicants, the review process concludes at this stage.

Applicants who have been invited to participate in stage two will be asked to download the application form for full proposals and submit their proposal via the online application portal.

Leading up to and throughout the review process, we encourage applicants to reach out to the GLOHRA Secretariat with any questions regarding the suitability of your research concept, eligibility, the review process, or other inquiries. Please allow sufficient time for the Secretariat to respond to your request.

5. Evaluation

Process

Formal check

In stage one, the Secretariat checks the eligibility of the project outline submissions, e.g. minimum team consortium. The application may not progress if eligibility criteria are not fulfilled.

In stage two, if formalities are not adhered to, the applicant may be given the opportunity to submit the missing information at short notice. GLOHRA may reject applications that do not meet the formal requirements. The SC may delegate this decision to the Secretariat.

Evaluation by the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will jointly discuss, score and rank the proposals and recommend a limited number of projects for funding. GLOHRA members who fulfill eligibility criteria may be asked to participate in different stages of the review process. Representatives of the funding ministries and the funding agencies are expressly invited to participate in the evaluation as observers.

Decisions

After deliberations about the project proposal, the Steering Committee can make funding recommendations as follows:

1. Recommended: The project proposal is evaluated positively and recommended for funding. In some cases, the Steering Committee may suggest modifications to be integrated in the project and/or formal application ("AZA", see below).
2. Not recommended: The project proposal is not recommended for funding.

The approval or rejection of a project proposal is decided by a simple majority of the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee are entitled to vote, provided they do not declare a conflict of interest.

Selection

Final selection and implementation by the funder and designated project management agency

The final funding decision will be taken by the BMFTR.

If a project is recommended, a contract will be made between the research institution(s) of the respective applicant(s) and the BMFTR. For the final funding decision, the Secretariat forwards the application documents, the Steering Committee's vote and the minutes of the Steering Committee's review to the funding ministry or its designated project management agency. The applicant will then be invited to submit a formal application ("AZA") to the project management agency.

A binding grant can only be awarded after a final review of the documents by the funding body or its project management agency. The project management agency will handle grant agreements and contracts, official progress and financial reporting etc. directly with the applicant. The BMFTR has entrusted the Project Management Agency Health Research in the German Aerospace Center (PT-DLR) with implementing the projects.

Criteria

Scientific novelty, quality and originality, interdisciplinarity

- The project idea is ambitious, original and goes beyond the state of the art (e.g. groundbreaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches).
- The project has the potential to address (or lay the groundwork for addressing) a global health need.

- The project is aligned with GLOHRA's values and mission and the (inter)national global health agenda. The project cannot easily be funded through other programs and mechanisms.
- The project is rooted in existing knowledge.
- The research questions/ research objectives are clear.
- The project concept is coherent and convincing.
- The proposed methods are adequate for addressing the research question/objectives.
- The different disciplines involved are linked/ integrated in a meaningful way.
- The collaboration/partnership is new and brings together especially well suited and qualified partners (rather than the most convenient ones who are geographically close or know each other from previous collaborations).
- The applicants have the necessary knowledge/ expertise to address the questions raised and/or plan to involve relevant partners.

Adequacy and feasibility of the work plan, budget and management procedures

- The work plan is coherent; tasks and resources are adequate and allocated in a plausible way.
- The proposal aims at producing measurable outcomes that align with the stated research objectives.
- The applicants have the operational capacity to carry out the project.
- Applicants and partners work in a complementary manner. All partners make a meaningful contribution to the project. Partners' roles and responsibilities in the project fit their capacities and interests (including non-academic partners in cross-sector projects).
- If applicable: LMIC stakeholders are adequately and fairly represented (e.g. in research design, project execution and decision-making, budget, ownership of results).
- The project has appropriate management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management.

Impact and expected results

a) Interdisciplinary pilot projects

- The project develops approaches, results, strategies, narratives, etc. that underpin and support interdisciplinarity in global health research projects.
- The project has good prospects for publications and third-party funding after the pilot phase.
- The project contributes to academic interdisciplinary and cross-institutional network integration across Germany/within GLOHRA.
- The project supports and/or benefits early career researchers.
- Ethical dimensions are appropriately considered (e.g. adequate management of ethical risks when dealing with vulnerable populations or collecting/ using personal data, adequate

involvement of local review boards, reflections on power imbalances in global health research and awareness of the applicants' positionality as researchers from Germany collaborating with stakeholders in LMICs).

- Gender dimensions are appropriately considered (e.g. in project team composition, leadership, contents, methods, target populations and outcomes).
- Sustainability dimensions are explicitly considered (e.g. environmental sustainability, sustainable use of project results, social sustainability for local populations).

b) Global Health Fellowships

- The project makes a significant contribution to the applicant's career development and potentially benefits for other early career researchers.
- The project has good prospects for publications and third-party funding after the pilot phase.
- The project contributes to the applicant's integration in academic interdisciplinary networks within GLOHRA.
- Ethical dimensions are appropriately considered (e.g. adequate management of ethical risks when dealing with vulnerable populations or collecting/using personal data, adequate involvement of local review boards, reflections on power imbalances in global health research and awareness of the applicants' positionality as researchers from Germany collaborating with stakeholders in LMICs).
- Gender dimensions are appropriately considered (e.g. in project team composition, leadership, contents, methods, target populations and outcomes).
- Sustainability dimensions are explicitly considered (e.g. environmental sustainability, sustainable use of project results, social sustainability for local populations).

c) Cross-sector projects

- The project develops innovative structures, models, methods, tools, networks etc. that are accessible and usable for the wider global health community and/or transferrable to other contexts.
- The expected impact is ambitious, but realistic. The pathway to impact is clearly described.
- The project promotes German integration in international and cross-sector global health research networks and activities.
- The project supports and/or benefits early career researchers.
- Ethical dimensions are appropriately considered (e.g. adequate management of ethical risks when dealing with vulnerable populations or collecting/using personal data, adequate involvement of local review boards, reflections on power imbalances in global health research and awareness of the applicants' positionality as researchers from Germany collaborating with stakeholders in LMICs).

- Gender dimensions are appropriately considered (e.g. in project team composition, leadership, contents, methods, target populations and outcomes).
- Sustainability dimensions are explicitly considered (e.g. environmental sustainability, sustainable use of project results, social sustainability for local populations).

Sustainability considerations

GLOHRA aims to fund teams with a long-term vision. When writing your proposal, please reflect on the following questions:

- How do you make the knowledge, tools or materials that you produce during your project available to the scientific community, your target population, policymakers and/or practitioners?
- How do you make sure that the products/processes/services you develop in your project can be used after your project funding ends? Can they be continued without or with limited extra funding and/or scaled up and/or transferred to other contexts?
- How do you intend to limit the environmental impact of your project, e.g. by reducing air travel, using digital collaboration tools, budgeting for carbon offsetting, reducing plastic and sourcing local food at events?

Box 3 Sustainability

Conflicts of interest

Steering Committee members and other potential reviewers must declare a conflict of interest if they are involved financially or in terms of content in the planned project; if they are employed in the same institute or working group as an applicant and cooperate with them in terms of content; if they have close family or personal ties to an applicant; and/or if they have had close collaboration with an applicant (e.g., publication on original research) in the past 12 months.

In addition, members of the Steering Committee are requested to truthfully declare close cooperation or direct competition with the applicant in thematically similar projects. Employment in the same superordinate institution alone is not a reason for bias. Cases of doubt will be decided individually, using the DFG Guidelines for Avoiding Conflicts of Interest as a reference. Only Steering Committee members who are free of conflicts of interest may participate in funding recommendations.

6. Resubmissions

Rules for re-submissions and renewals

Rejected full proposals cannot be resubmitted. Rejected outlines are also generally not eligible for resubmission. In exceptional cases, if a project outline has undergone major revisions, it may be submitted with an explanation of the changes. Applicants are strongly advised to contact the Secretariat early to discuss their individual circumstances.

Applications for renewal of cross-sector projects are generally possible. Applications for renewal must be treated in the same way as new applications in the application procedure. Due to the nature of pilot projects, these cannot be renewed.

7. Reporting duties

Reporting to the funder and the Steering Committee

Applicants are obliged to report to the funding body or its project management agency, which is independent of GLOHRA. Completed reports should be sent to the GLOHRA Secretariat, who will forward them to the project management agency. The Steering Committee is entitled to request written or oral interim and/or final reports on the projects. It is desirable that short project reports are presented at GLOHRA's annual symposium.

8. Changes compared to the previous Project Guidelines (2026 call)

- Clarified language relating to research disciplines
- Grant amount for postdoc fellowships

9. Contact

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