

Volkswagen Foundation and its international funding activities

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Content

1. The Foundation at a glance
2. Basics
3. Strategic Objectives
4. Funding



History

- Non-profit foundation under private law located in Hanover
- A result of the privatisation of the Volkswagen Company
- Established by the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Lower Saxony
- Signing of the Foundation's statutes in May 1961
- First funds allocated in February 1962
- Since 1962: about € 4.9 billion for some 32,000 projects
- Foundation capital in 2017 € 3.2 billion



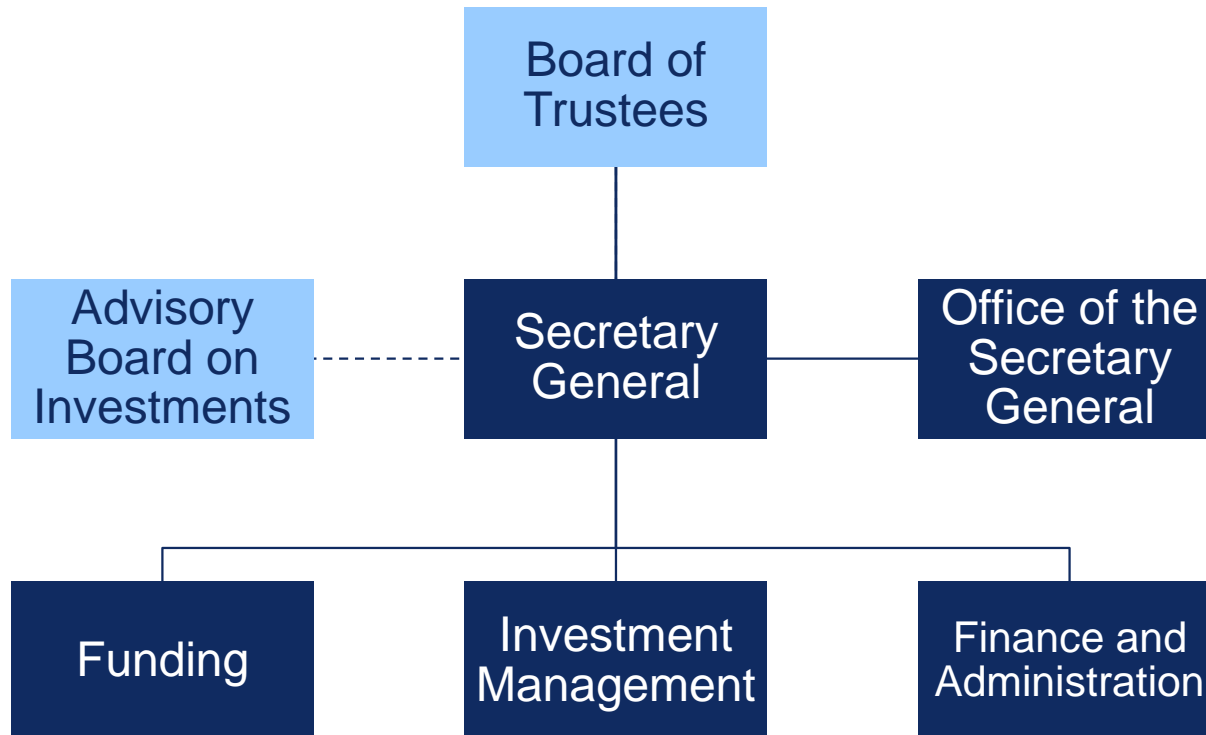
Purpose of the Foundation

To promote the advancement of the sciences (including the humanities and social sciences) and technology in research and higher education.

§ 2, Statutes of the VolkswagenStiftung

Wir stiften Wissen

Organigramm



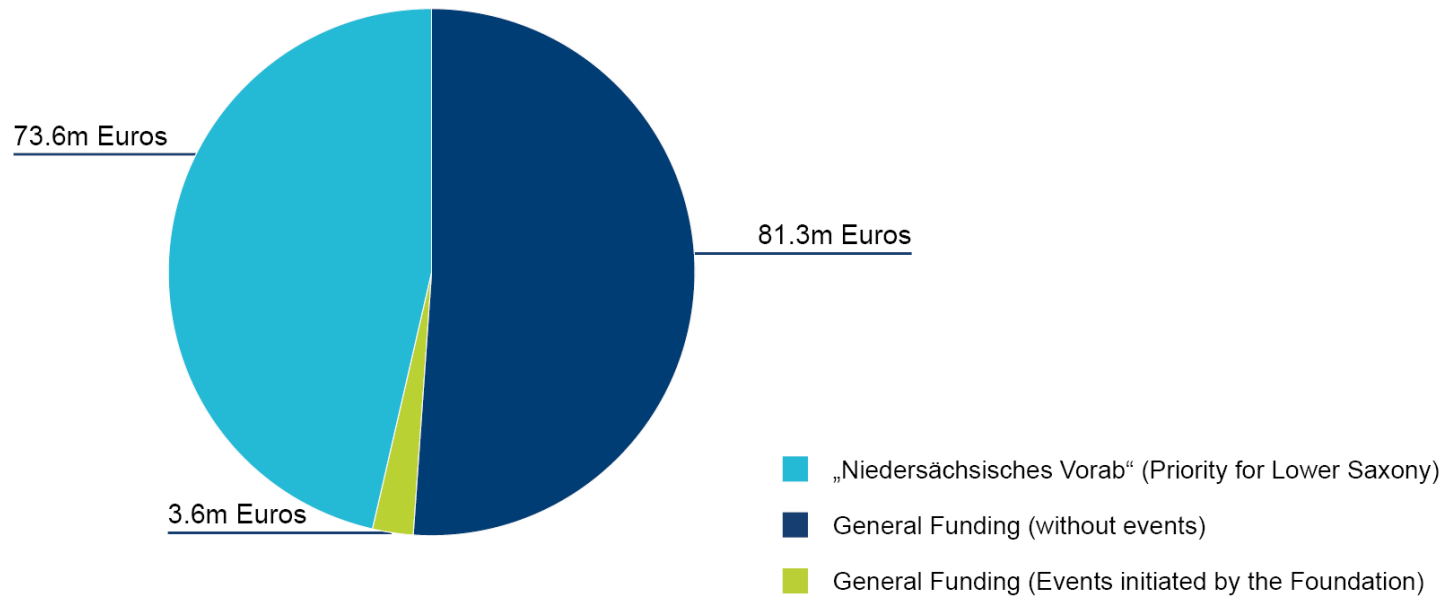
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Basic Data 2017

Total Funding: 158.5 million Euros in 2017



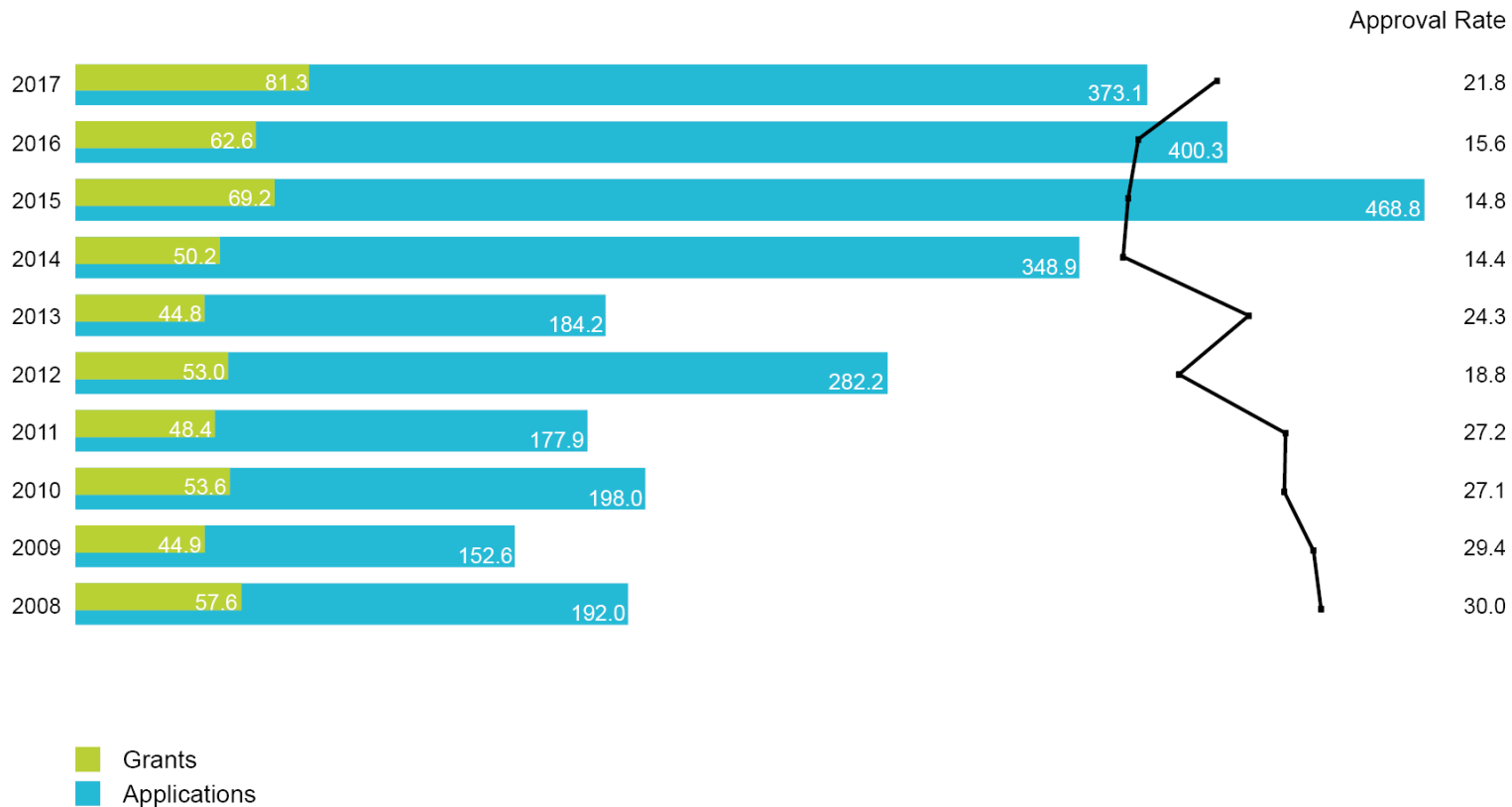
Basic Data 2008-2017

Total Amounts Grants and Applications



Basic Data 2008-2017

Grant Sums and Application Sums in Millions of Euro



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Strategic Objectives

- To offer development opportunities to early-career researchers
- To support outstanding research personalities
- To overcome disciplinary boundaries
- To take risk and support highly innovative research
- To advance new research methods and topics
- To link research questions to societal challenges
- To facilitate transnational research in European and global perspectives
- To enhance training and research infrastructures

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Overview of the Funding Structure

Persons and Structures

“Niedersächsisches
Vorab“

Challenges –
For Academia and Society

Off the Beaten Track

International Focus

Communicating Science
and Research

Persons and Structures

- Lichtenberg
Foundation professorships
- Freigeist Fellowships
- University of the Future
- Opus Magnum
- Momentum – Funding for Recently
Tenured Professors
- World Knowledge – Structural
Support for "Rare Subjects"



Photo: Martin Bühler for VolkswagenStiftung

Challenges – for Academia and Society

- Life? – A Fresh Scientific Approach to the Basic Principles of Life
- Experiment! – In search of bold research ideas
- "Original – isn't it?" New Options for the Humanities and Cultural Studies
- Artificial Intelligence and the Society of the Future
- Symposia and Summer Schools



Photo: Felix Schmitt for VolkswagenStiftung

International Focus

- Central Asia and the Caucasus
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Europe and Global Challenges
- Post-doctoral Fellowships in the Humanities
- Europe and Global Challenges
- Global Issues – Integrating Different Perspectives on Social Inequality



Photo: Felix Seuffert for VolkswagenStiftung

Between Europe and the Orient - A Focus on Research and Higher Education in/on Central Asia and the Caucasus

History:

initiated in 1999, modified and extended for 5+5 years in 2011

initially focusing on stimulating German academic interest in the region and building/expanding research and teaching capacity at German institutions

subsequently putting more emphasis on capacity development and cooperation with scientists in the region based on equal partnership

consequently concentrating funding activities in 2 thematic calls (after exploratory workshops) and several structurally oriented measures

finally developing an exit strategy to sustain previous efforts, desirably in cooperation with institutions in the regions

up to 2017, 426 projects funded with an amount of approx. 63 Mio. EUR

Between Europe and the Orient - A Focus on Research and Higher Education in/on Central Asia and the Caucasus

Goals:

to strengthen research interest in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and to encourage joint research projects on current developments in this region (research cooperation)

to intensify cooperation with scientists from Central Asia and the Caucasus, and to improve conditions for research and higher education in these countries (capacity development)

Between Europe and the Orient - A Focus on Research and Higher Education in/on Central Asia and the Caucasus

Pharmaceutical Values of Onions and Related Species (*Allium* L.) of Middle Asia and the Caucasus (Prof. Dr. Keusgen, Marburg; Dr. Fritsch, Gatersleben; Prof. Dr. Abbasi, PP&D Research Institute Teheran; and further partners from Georgia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) *2005*

Sustainable Mobility Research in Central Asia (Dr. Arndt, Berlin; Prof. Dr. Mamdoohi, Tarbias Modares University Teheran; and further partners from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) *2017*

Strengthening the Adaptive Potential of Hyrcanian Forests - Strategies and Measures for Increasing and Sustaining the Provision of Ecosystem Goods and Services (Dr. Yousefpour, Freiburg; Prof. Dr. Pourbabaei, University of Guilan; Dr. Mahdavi, University of Ilan; Dr. Farzaliyev, Baku) *2017*

Global Issues – Integrating Different Perspectives

- Cooperative funding initiative for research projects generating new insights on understudied issues of global relevance, aiming at an „economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable future for our planet“
- Thematic foci on Social Inequality, Heritage and Change, Global Health, and Human-Environmental Interactions
- Format: 3 to 5 PIs (1-2 from HIC (incl. 1 from Europe), 2-3 from LMIC), up to 1.5 million Euro per project for up to 4 years
- Transnational cooperation on three levels:
 - Design of calls: Experts from different regions of the world
 - Projects: Researchers from high income countries partnering with researchers from low and middle income countries
 - Funding: Major European Foundations

„Cooperation architectures“

- *Global Issues – Integrating Different Perspectives on **Social Inequality**.*
Compagnia di San Paolo (I), Novo Nordisk Fonden (DK), Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (S) (**call out, deadline for applications 30 October 2018**)
- <https://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/en/funding/our-funding-portfolio-at-a-glance/global-issues-%E2%80%93-integrating-different-perspectives-on-social-inequality>

Under negotiation:

- *Global Issues – Integrating Different Perspectives on **Heritage and Change***
(call envisaged for 2019)
- *Global Issues – Integrating Different Perspectives on **Global Health***
(call envisaged for 2019)
- *Global Issues – Integrating Different Perspectives on **Human-Environmental Interactions*** (call envisaged for 2020)

Principles of cooperation

- **Cooperation** based on mutual understanding, trust, and openness, readiness to adjust frameworks and processes if necessary, prevention of any additional administrative regulations
- **Joint decisions** on framework of initiative/calls, assessment criteria and peer review process, and administrative processes
- Two-step **review process**: pre-proposals → list of eligible applicants → selection of convincing pre-proposals by jointly nominated review panel → full proposals + presentation of project ideas for review panel → funding recommendations by review panel
- **Grants**: Each foundation decides on how many projects to fund. The proposals recommended for funding by the review panel are divided among the participating foundations; funds are then allocated **according to the individual rules and regulations of the respective foundation**. No common pot.

„We fund knowledge“

- Grants are available
 - for academic institutions*, not for individuals,
 - for specific purposes (only supplementary),
 - for projects with clearly defined objectives and budgets,
 - for all types of relevant expenditure (preferably for scientific personnel),
 - for all partners in international cooperation projects
 - for funding periods (normally) up to five years,
 - without restriction to a specific financial year.

** in Germany: As the Foundation is exempted from tax, Germany has to „benefit“ from its activities; therefore, international collaborations generally require the involvement of a German academic partner.*

Application, Selection, and Decision

- For most funding initiatives, deadlines are posted on the Foundation's website. In some initiatives, applications may be submitted anytime.
- In case of doubt, it may be advisable to contact the responsible program director in advance before submitting an application. In some initiatives, the Foundation, in a first step, requires an outline of the proposed project.
- For formal requirements of each initiative, please see the respective 'Information for Applicants' on the Foundation's website.
- All applications have to be submitted via the Foundation's electronic application system: **portal.volkswagenstiftung.de**
- The Foundation seeks transparency with respect to the selection process, but maintains confidentiality concerning the reviewers involved.
- The Board of Trustees takes its decisions based on the reviewers' or review panels' votes at board meetings held three times a year.
- Grants can be awarded to academic institutions only, not to individual scientists. A cooperation partner in Germany is mandatory in all projects.

Thank you for your attention!

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Quellenangaben

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Wir stiften Wissen