

Start Fund 2026

Call for proposals (Funding period: 01.06.–31.12.2026)

Background

The **iDiv Start Fund** is designed to promote integrative activities among scientists within the iDiv consortium and is specifically aimed at early career researchers.

Eligibility

All **iDiv Members** employed at a research institute in Central Germany and who have obtained their doctorates less than 6 years ago are eligible to apply. This call supports projects with a clear relation to the iDiv mission and scientific strategy. It is possible and desirable to have one or more co-PIs from the iDiv community (both with or without a specific member status) to strengthen integration, especially when funding is used to initiate new projects.

Applicants may only submit one proposal as main PI in a calendar year. However, individuals can be co-PI or collaborators on more than one proposal.

Funding

The total budget for a proposal must not exceed **10,000 euros**. Eligible for funding are all directly attributable and project-specific expenses that comply with the currently valid budget regulations and the regulations of the respective host institution.

Investments and basic equipment (including IT equipment) or costs for events (with catering) are not eligible for funding. The budget allocation is tied to the above mentioned funding period and cannot be carried over.

Examples for possible costs are:

- Student or research assistants (HiWis)
Please note: If you plan to hire a HiWi, please contact us before submitting your proposal, as the universities have minimum contract durations.
- Travel costs (e.g., conferences/meetings with project partners or lab visits)
- Consumables (e.g., lab expenses)
- Small equipment
- Contract of services

Submission of proposals

Proposals are limited to two pages, please use the iDiv Start Fund template for submission (available on the [call webpage](#)).

Proposals shall be submitted as a single PDF file to resources@idiv.de no later than 11 May 2026 (11:59 pm CEST).

Evaluation

Submitted proposals will be assessed by an evaluation committee based on the following criteria:

1. scientific quality (60%),
2. integration within iDiv (20%) and
3. feasibility (20%).

In addition to these three selection criteria, across proposals and relative to the number of submitted proposals, we aim to strengthen:

- support member participation within iDiv (activity in the past and in the future, e.g. participation in boards/committees, internal reviews, teaching etc.);
- balance of institutions across the iDiv consortium (based on the main PI);
- balance of genders (based on the main PI).

The above criteria will be scored from 5 (excellent) to 1 (insufficient) by each member of the evaluation committee. A funding recommendation will be submitted to the iDiv Extended Executive Board (EEB) where the final decision will be taken. Decisions will be communicated in written form; funding may begin immediately after approval in the EEB.

For further information, please visit the [call webpage](#) or contact us via resources@idiv.de.

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The Executive Board, consisting of the Scientific Director, Prof Dr Martin Quaas, and the Chief Operating Officer, Dr Anne Wesemann, acts on behalf of iDiv e. V., the representative body of the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research Halle-Jena-Leipzig. Leipzig University, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Friedrich Schiller University Jena, and the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research GmbH – UFZ are founding institutional members of iDiv e. V.