Objectives and Brief Description

The university of excellence measure *KIT Future Fields* specifically supports scientists who are pursuing highly innovative, high-risk projects at the frontiers of science and at the interface between disciplines which are expected to give rise to scientific breakthroughs. *KIT Future Fields* will expand flexibility in science and help to improve the boundary conditions for conducting major coordinated research projects. *KIT Future Fields* enables preliminary research collaboration at a stage for which third-party funds are usually not yet available. These activities will be advanced in such a way that they serve as a nucleus of proposals for highly competitive external funding schemes (e.g., Cluster of Excellence, CRC/TRR, ERC Consolidator/Advanced/Synergy) to pursue visionary future research questions.

*KIT Future Fields* consists of three stages. Passing through the three stages one after the other with the required proposals is possible, as is direct filing for Stages 2 or 3:

**Stage 1** – generating ideas about future research topics through workshops, foresight conferences, and projects (possibly involving external scientists).

**Stage 2** – funding for individual scientists or groups of scientists for pilot projects in emerging research topics (funding can be used for scientific staff, purchase of equipment, or support in project management).

**Stage 3** – strategic reinforcement of a visionary research focus or an emerging field: The objective is to identify and substantially promote research of outstanding quality at KIT and with high potential for scientific breakthroughs. Research shall be advanced to the point where it could serve as a nucleus of proposals for highly competitive external funding schemes (e.g., Cluster of Excellence, CRC/TRR, ERC Consolidator/Advanced/Synergy). Part of each activity (at least at Stage 3) is the development of a concept for research data management.

*KIT Future Fields* is also intended to particularly promote women scientists, who should be included as PIs in research collaborations. External scientists can be included; the substantial part of the planned activity should be located at KIT. For further details, please refer to the specific information and proposal templates available for stages 1, 2, and 3.

**Positioning in University of Excellence Concept and KIT 2025 Umbrella Strategy | Selection Criteria**

*KIT Future Fields* is positioned in Thrust A: *Strengthening Excellent Research* of the university of excellence concept “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association | Living the Change” and thus supports the objective to enhance performance and agility of top-level research and to strengthen the renewal of KIT’s research portfolio. Through the EXU measures in Thrust A, KIT will maintain the international preeminence of its research focuses and strengthen its emerging fields; it will foster ideas for future research and provide the support necessary to develop them into internationally renowned research efforts.

Within the context of the KIT 2025 Umbrella Strategy, the EXU measure *KIT Future Fields* supports especially the following objectives of the area of action *Research*: Objective 1 Highest performance in research (winning prestigious prizes, success in competitive individual funding programs such as ERC Grants as well as competitive collaborative research programs); Objective 2 Profile shaping and profile enhancement in research; Objective 5 Framework conditions for research (attractive conditions regarding time budgets available for research).
Proposals for *KIT Future Fields* (especially Stages 2 and 3) are hence subject to the following **selection criteria** based on the Cluster of Excellence competition:

- Potential of the planned activity as a nucleus of sustainable, long-term coordinated research projects at KIT
- Quality and originality of the research program in an international comparison and openness to risk
- Coherence of the research program and academic productivity of the collaboration
- Quality of previous contributions to the field of research
- Expected positive impacts on the future development of the field of research or the stimulation of new research areas
- Academic excellence of the participating researchers
- International competitiveness
- Diversity in the composition of the group
- Support of equal opportunity
- Integration in the development planning of KIT (university of excellence concept; KIT 2025 Umbrella Strategy)
- Appropriateness of the requested funds; resource and time planning

### Funding

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<tr>
<th>KIT Future Fields</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1</strong> (bi-annually)</td>
<td>In 2020, approx. 30 EXU activities of up to EUR 10,000 each can be funded at Stage 1 (KIT Future Fields and KIT Centers). Thereafter, about 20 initiatives per year.</td>
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<td><strong>Stage 2</strong> (bi-annually)</td>
<td>In 2020, approx. 8 new EXU activities of up to EUR 400,000 each (duration 2 years) can be funded at Stage 2. Thereafter, about 4 initiatives per year.</td>
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<td><strong>Stage 3</strong> (annually)</td>
<td>Two EXU activities of up to EUR 1 million (duration 2 years) can be funded with start of funding in 2021. Thereafter, one new initiative per year.</td>
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Initiatives are funded as EXU activities within the framework of KIT’s university of excellence funding. Proposals may request funds for staff, direct costs and instrumentation; funds cannot be transferred to external cooperation partners. For EXU activities with a typical duration of 1-2 years, an individual funding period can be defined when funds are released; funding for EXU activities within *KIT Future Fields* should generally start within 6 months after notification of approval. The funds are then tied to the funding period and not to calendar years. If at the end of an activity the budget is exceeded, then the deficit must be cleared from the remainder account (“Restesammler”) or the cost center of the leading OE (organizational unit) before the PSP (WBS) is closed. Positive remainders are returned to the central university of excellence funds at the end of an EXU activity’s funding period.

These are state funds (Landesmittel; secondary funds in the UB, earmarked third-party funds in the GFB). They are subject to the Landeshaushaltsordnung (state budget regulation) and the current administrative regulations of the Ministry of Finance on budgetary and economic management. For the management of the funds made available during the funding period, the personnel, budgetary and cash regulations of the State of Baden-Württemberg are binding.

### Procedure

Scientists and groups of scientists at KIT can apply for funds in the three stages of the EXU measure *KIT Future Fields*. Passing through the three stages one after the other with the required proposals is possible, as is direct filing for Stages 2 or 3. Calls are usually made bi-annually for Stages 1 and 2 and
annually for Stage 3. Together with a follow-up proposal and/or after completion of a funded EXU activity, a written report must be submitted by the activity coordinators.

Proposals will in all three stages be funded by decision of the Executive Board on recommendation of CRYS according to the selection criteria set out above. The necessary information is collected by means of a proposal template. For Stage 1, CRYS makes its recommendation based on the written proposals only; for Stages 2 and 3, a presentation of the individual proposed initiatives by the applicants to CRYS is planned; and for Stage 3, the decision-making process is supported by external reviews. Subsequently, CRYS will make a recommendation to the Executive Board as to which EXU activities should be funded.

The application procedure is managed by DE Forschungsförderung (FOR), process owner is the VP Research.

Contact
If you have any questions, please contact DE FOR:

  Dr. Doris Lechner, doris.lechner@kit.edu, extension 46110
  Dr. Eva Reussner, eva.reussner@kit.edu, extension 48242