

## FAQ Kickstart Fund

### 1 Can I apply for funding after founding a company?

Yes, funding can also be utilized if a company has already been established to implement the transfer project, but each case must always be examined individually. The crucial factor is that the company is still in the pre-competitive founding phase and has not yet engaged in customer acquisition. This means that "Kickstart Fund" by the Joachim Herz Foundation can only be used for competition-neutral aspects of your project.

### 2 What does "pre-competitive phase" and "competition neutrality" mean?

The pre-competitive phase is the period during which ideas or technologies are being developed before they come to market. During this phase, the developments are often not yet market ready. The funding measures are designed to ensure that no unfair advantages are created for individual companies in the competition. In summary, the pre-competitive phase can be described as a time of research and development, where it is important that funding is awarded fairly and, in a competition-neutral manner.

Individual cases must be discussed with the legal department before the funding measures are implemented.

### 3 What readiness level must my transfer project have at the start of the project?

The "Kickstart Fund" is aimed at projects that are in the early phase and is intended to create financial and temporal flexibility to facilitate implementation while also pursuing other academic career goals. The scientific findings on which the transfer project is to be based must already be available, the idea must be clearly defined, and relevant stakeholders must be planned (see point 3 of the selection criteria).

The transfer goal of the project must be clearly identifiable, and initial steps in this direction should have already been taken. During the project duration, visible steps should be undertaken that enable further implementation after the "Kickstart Fund" period ends.

### 4 What can I use the funding for?

The funding can be used for research and development in the pre-competitive phase. This includes, for example:

- Computers, laptops, and accessories, as well as other IT infrastructure, cloud services, and server costs
- Personnel costs (e.g., assistants, support staff, etc.)
- Technology research, feasibility studies, experimental validation studies of the technology, prototype development

- Costs for conducting clinical trials
- Data acquisition, data collection, digitization of data
- Literature, software, licensing costs, FTO analysis, competitive analysis, publication and patent costs, legal advice (e.g., contract drafting, data protection, licensing law, IP law), and (external) consulting services primarily related to transfer topics
- Travel and accommodation costs for project-related travel
- Conducting experiments, laboratory equipment, and technological infrastructure
- Costs for release from teaching responsibilities
- Building and deepening partnerships, e.g., travel and event costs
- Conducting events, workshops, or other activities that serve to build a relevant network
- Networking activities and participation in conferences
- Costs for training and transfer-related continuing education offerings
- Marketing and communication costs (if pre-competitive)
- Costs for creating documentation and reports

Using the funds for other types of costs can only occur if the Joachim Herz Foundation has given written consent before the use.

## **5 What is excluded?**

The following examples are excluded:

- Projects that are already market-ready or have entered the competition.
- Costs that are not directly related to the transfer project.
- Projects that create an unfair competitive advantage for a specific company.

## **6 How are the funds awarded?**

Applications are evaluated by a committee that assesses the relevance and innovation level of the project. Subsequently, the funds are awarded as a funding commitment to a German research institution (public-law sponsorship or private non-profit organizations) where the funded person is employed—at least for the duration of the funding.

## **7 I already have another funding; am I still eligible to apply?**

From the perspective of the Joachim Herz Foundation, yes. The funded person must independently clarify whether other funding partners allow additional funding.

## **8 What connection must the transfer project have to my research?**

The transfer project should have a clear connection to your research or expertise based on the results or findings of your scientific work. The goal of the "Kickstart Fund" is to promote the transfer of your own scientific findings.

**9 How does the (interim) evaluation of the transfer project work?**

The evaluation is conducted through a presentation in a (virtual) meeting with the Joachim Herz Foundation.

**10 Is a reapplication possible after a successful application?**

No, generally a follow-up application is not possible. The funding is intended to provide the opportunity to elevate the transfer project to a level that allows for successful applications to other funding sources (e.g., GO-Bio, EXIST, etc.).

**11 What support can the Joachim Herz Foundation provide to establish transatlantic connections?**

To establish transatlantic connections that may be relevant to the transfer project, the Joachim Herz Foundation can provide event spaces, resources, and networks in Georgia, USA, if applicable. More information can be found at: [Joachim Herz House](#).