

innovate! center „Transformation Space: Resilient Water- and Soil Systems of the Future“
Establishing a private transfer structure for regional transformation

General

Applications must be submitted in German or English. Applications, including all required attachments, must be submitted exclusively online via the Joachim Herz Foundation application portal. In case of uncertainty, the German version of this document applies.

[>> Apply here <<](#)

Note: For the successful implementation of the project, the applying university and the participating partners should involve the relevant internal departments at an early stage, as these departments will be responsible for establishing the gGmbH and concluding the required contracts if the application is successful. In view of the tight schedule – from the jury’s decision in mid-July to the completion of the founding phase and the signing of all agreements by the end of 2026 – early internal coordination is strongly recommended in order to avoid delays and ensure the smooth conclusion of the funding agreement at the end of the year.

Required Documents

1 General summary

(max. 500 characters including spaces)

2 Abstract of the overall project

(max. 2,000 characters including spaces)

3 Strategy Concept

(max. 30,000 characters including spaces)

3.1 Vision and Goals

- What is your long-term vision for the proposed innovate! center for resilient water and soil systems?
- What are the key and, ideally, systemic objectives you wish to achieve with the proposed innovate! center?

3.2 Scientific Concept

- How would you characterize the transdisciplinary approach of your project?
- How would you classify your project in terms of the current state of research?
- What societal challenges does your project address?
- How does your project contribute to solving these challenges, particularly in your region?

3.3 Innovation potential and transfer strategy

- What is original/innovative about your project?
- How do you assess the application potential and scalability of the results?
- How can your previous transfer successes be leveraged and professionalized in the proposed innovate! center?
- What is your previous experience in collaborating with partners in industry and in exploiting research results?

3.4 Integration into the university strategy

- How is your project embedded in the strategic goals of the university?
- What synergies exist and/or arise between the proposed innovate! center and existing structures or initiatives at the university?
- What strategic relevance and leverage would the funding have for the further development of the university location?

3.5 Infrastructure

- What infrastructure is required for the project?
- How will availability be ensured?

3.6 Partnerships and collaborations

3.6.1 Collaboration partners at shareholder level

- Which founding partners are planned for the proposed innovate! center? (see also Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.)
- How has the collaboration worked so far?

3.6.2 Other collaboration partners

- Which other (regional) partners and companies play a role in the proposed innovate! center, and why?
- What contacts do you have with other potential funding providers?

4 Concept of structure and governance (max. 15,000 characters including spaces)

4.1 Structure and Governance

How are the structure and governance of the planned innovate! center designed? How are management, committees, and responsibilities organized? What advantages does the structure offer for the planned innovate! center compared to current transfer activities at the university/in the region?

4.1.1 Shareholder structure and ownership structure

- How are the ownership structures and relationships of the founding partners specifically designed, and how do you justify them (in accordance with 3.6.1)?
- Is participation by the Joachim Herz Foundation desired and planned? If so, why? *(Note: participation by the foundation is not a prerequisite for a successful application)*
- What potential federal and state legal requirements (e.g., with regard to human resources and/or procurement) arise from the planned participation structure or apply due to the other features of the innovate! center?

4.1.2 Organs and committees

- How are the planned organs and committees structured?
- What tasks do the individual organs/committees perform?
- How are the organs/committees planned to be composed and how will they work together?

4.1.3 Scope for action

- What flexibility and entrepreneurial scope for action will the gGmbH have as a result of the planned ownership structure?

4.2 Personnel structure

It is highly advantageous to appoint a designated management team at an early stage and to involve this person directly in the application process.

- How is the planned personnel structure designed in terms of size and qualifications?
- Which individuals are intended to fill management functions and other key positions?
- How is the staffing and organization of the office planned?
- How will highly qualified top personnel be recruited and/or provided (e.g., in secondary employment or according to the “Jülich model”)?

4.3 Implementation and feasibility

4.3.1 Operational implementation plan

- How will the implementation of the structural framework conditions be ensured within the planned timeframe, and how is the associated schedule structured?
- How are the contact persons and responsibilities defined?
- How do you assess the plausibility and chances of success of your project planning?

4.3.2 Establishment and operation of the innovate! center

- What schedule, including milestones, do you envisage for the establishment and operation of the overall project during the funding period?
- How are the coordination and control processes between the various bodies, committees, and stakeholder groups organized?

5 Financial sustainability *(max. 5,000 characters including spaces)*

To ensure viability beyond the funding phase, a perspective outline of financial sustainability is required.

- What options do you see for the sustainable financing and economic viability of the innovate! center beyond the funding phase (e.g., through the accumulation of own funds, co-financing, or follow-up funding)?

6 Annex

6.1 Institutional readiness and acceptance of the framework conditions

Letters of support from all founding partners, including acceptance of the structural framework conditions and the ability to establish the necessary structure (gGmbH) (see call, chapter 3).

6.2 Local cooperation partners

Letters of support from other cooperation partners.

6.3 Cost plan *(Excel-template)*

Cost plan overview clearly showing the financial requirements for carrying out the above-mentioned activities and the use of funds (personnel, material resources, infrastructure).

6.4 Curriculum vitae

Short CVs of the persons involved at management level (PDF, max. 3 pages each)

6.5 References