

LADENBURG, 20 JUNE 2021

Call for applications for a project network of the Daimler and Benz Foundation “Resolving conflicts of goals with business games and simulations”

Over the next few years, the Daimler and Benz Foundation will be providing funding for the topic area “Resolving conflicts of goals with business games and simulations” in its *Ladenburg Research Network* format and will be making a sum of up to 650,000 euros per year available to such a research consortium (maximum term three years). Independent research group leaders at universities and non-profit, non-university research institutions are eligible to apply.

1. Description of the research topic area

With the *Ladenburg Research Network* format, the Foundation sets out to address important trends in society at the interface of humans, technology and the environment. At a time when simple answers to difficult questions and simple explanations for complex phenomena often appear enticing for the media and the political discourse, the *Ladenburg Research Networks* provide space for challenges that are characterized by seemingly insurmountable conflicts of goals. These issues are characterized on the one hand by the large number of actors involved (consumers, companies, politics, society, media, etc.) and on the other hand by the time delay between their decisions and the onset of long-term consequences.

1.1 The challenge/motivation

Our society is characterized by many areas of tension that are marked by seemingly irresolvable conflicts of goals. The research funding action will focus on approaches to so-called ambivalence conflicts, which are characterized by the pursuit of goals with both positive and negative consequences.

These include for example:

- acknowledgment of climate change and nuclear phaseout vs. rejection of new power lines,

- installation of wind turbines for sustainable energy production vs. rejection of their construction due to possible negative effects on humans (e.g. infrasound), blemish on the landscape and damage to fauna,
- electromobility as a contribution to preventing climate change vs. global dependencies and social injustice in the mining of the raw materials required for batteries,
- the desire for low-cost, individualized products, high mobility, and security of supply vs. commitment to reducing poverty worldwide,
- the desire to tap the potential of digitization vs. concerns about privacy protection and job losses, and
- increasing efficiency in agriculture vs. detriment to biodiversity.

1.2 Focus of the call for applications

In an interdisciplinary and possibly transnational research project, emerging and/or already existing areas of tension between business and technology, the environment and society with seemingly irresolvable conflicts of goals are to be identified and discrepancies made transparent. A profound understanding of the conflicting goals can then serve as a basis for both technological and societal approaches to finding solutions.

Methodologically, the research projects submitted should focus on business games or simulations. The mode of technological implementation can be freely chosen (as an experiment, a board game, a computer simulation, etc.). The business games and simulations can even help persons not directly involved in the project to develop a profound understanding of the problem as well as the effects of possible solutions and sensitivities. Also with a view to accompanying scientific communication specifically oriented to the proposed project, the business games or simulations should be prepared within the framework of the project in such a way that they can then be made available for training purposes as a separate research result. Depending on the topic chosen, the focus of the project can vary between initial modeling, identification of cause-and-effect relationships, and making the selected areas of tension visible or experienceable.

Some well-known examples of such simulation games and simulations are *Daisyworld* (a minimal model of the self-regulation of environmental parameters), the *Bak-Tang-Wiesenfeld* model of self-organized criticality (which has shaped our understanding of complex systems and avalanche-like behavior in many fields of application), the multifarious works on *digital organisms* (for the illustration and quantitative analysis of evolutionary relationships), and also John Conway's *Game of Life* (regarded as one of the simplest sets of rules for complex behavior, based on insights from population dynamics). The *Tanaland* experiment investigates human behavior in complex situations in the context of a computer simulation. There are also a large number of models and business games in the field of corporate management and logistics.

2. Description of the funding format

The *Ladenburg Research Network* funding format involves research projects that are normally supported for a period of three years and whose results are published. Under the leadership of a scientific coordinator (spokesperson for the network), a research topic specified by the Foundation is worked on over an extended period by several research groups at various scientific institutions in Germany and abroad. The members of the research consortium will have a high degree of autonomy, determine their research program independently and meet regularly at the Foundation. The Foundation primarily finances positions for doctoral students and covers travel expenses; provision of material resources can only be approved to a very limited extent.

Funding for basic equipment and overheads cannot be applied for. The research networks are open to scientists from all disciplines.

3. Application

Project outlines for the research consortium in German or English are to be initially submitted to the Daimler and Benz Foundation by email (info@daimler-benz-stiftung.de). Following pre-selection and an initial review, individual applicants are invited by the Foundation to submit full proposals for assessment.

3.1 Application outline

Application outlines may be submitted up until September 1, 2021. They should include the following information:

- a) Applicant (coordination of the network; name, function, institution, address, telephone, email)
- b) Project title and description (max. three A4 pages)
- c) Requested budget
- d) List of participating scientists and institutions

3.2 Preliminary review by the Foundation

After receipt, the application outline is reviewed by the Foundation. This process can take up to four weeks. Please refrain from making inquiries to the Foundation during this phase.

3.3 Full application

Should the preliminary review be positively assessed, the Foundation will invite you to submit a detailed full application. In addition to the information provided in the application outline, this full application should include the following information:

1. Detailed project description, with information on the current state of research and the overall context of the planned research project (max. 20 A4 pages)

2. Information on the societal relevance of the project
3. Details of all project participants (in particular co-applicants, project management, cooperation partners, co-financers, etc.)
4. Detailed financial plan
5. Time and milestone plan

The full application with all attachments can only be submitted via the Foundation's online portal. For registration, please note that only persons previously registered in the application portal can access the application data, submit an application and receive e-mail notifications. Applicants responsible for a project must therefore either register themselves or appoint an employee to set up a user account under the respective name and to indicate the relevant e-mail address.

3.4 Review by the Foundation

Following receipt, the full application is reviewed internally by the Foundation and evaluated with the participation of external experts.

3.5 Final decision by the Executive Board and management

The final decision on the full application is made by the Foundation's Executive Board and management.

4. Contact

If you have any questions, please contact the Foundation's Managing Director Dr. Jörg Klein.

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