

Call for Proposals

No. 27

13 May 2019

Priority Programme “The Digitalisation of Working Worlds. Conceptualising and Capturing a Systemic Transformation” (SPP 2267)

The Senate of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) established the Priority Programme “The Digitalisation of Working Worlds. Conceptualising and Capturing a Systemic Transformation” (SPP 2267). The programme is designed to run for six years. The present call invites proposals for the first three-year funding period.

The Priority Programme assumes that the digitalisation of the worlds of work represents a systemic transformation that will change all the institutional systems of the society of work in a fundamental and lasting way. This programme’s intention is to research the digital transformation as an interaction of three process dimensions in which this socio-technical change is: a) socially prepared, b) technically enabled and c) discursively negotiated and socially mastered. At present, the research on digitalisation is fragmented and focuses strongly on isolated technical phenomena. The Priority Programme, in contrast, seeks to investigate the societal conditions and ways of shaping the current digitalisation of the society of work as a whole as well as the dynamics and impact of this systemic transformation, which is at once nonsynchronous, interdependent and contradictory. The programme plans to achieve an interdisciplinary combination of perspectives from the social sciences, economics and history on new configurations of work and technology, on multi-layered dynamics of change and on changing forms and places of value creation.

The Priority Programme investigates systemic transformation as a process that simultaneously manifests itself in three overlapping motion dynamics: permeating (e.g. work processes are permeated by digital technologies), making available (e.g. data on individual workers and operations are made available) and perpetuating (e.g. the emergence of autonomous systems). The digital transformation will be investigated at three levels: (1) at the micro level, in the interplay of working subjects/practices with digital artefacts, (2) at the meso level, in the interplay of enterprise and network structures, value chains and digital systems, and (3) at the macro level, in the interplay of social institutional structures and digital infrastructures.

The Priority Programme comprises two funding phases, each lasting three years. In the first funding phase, the aim is to identify and empirically research the individual structures, processes and mechanisms in which the systemic transformation of the worlds of work manifests. In this funding phase, the individual projects will focus on aspects of digital change that can be classified either at the micro, meso or macro level of social processes and structures in the worlds of work. The projects will focus on current developments (and asynchronisms) but also on the historical precursors of the digital transformation. Overall, the corpus of funded projects should ensure a good balance between the micro, meso and macro levels. It is

expected that the project proposals will refer to the heuristics of motion dynamics described above and locate themselves within them. In the first phase of the programme, the individual projects should be based on a specific disciplinary perspective and use it to interpret their findings based on the heuristics of motion dynamics; at the end of the first funding phase, the different projects will be linked in an interdisciplinary exchange.

The Priority Programme aims to fund individual projects that will make basic research contributions to the understanding of socio-technical change in the field of digitalisation of the worlds of work. It particularly addresses sociology, economics and history, but also other disciplines of the social sciences that investigate the worlds of work (e.g. political science, ergonomics, work and organisational psychology, economic geography and business informatics, educational research). Project proposals with a comparative design (including international comparisons) are welcome.

The research envisaged here is to focus on various forms of paid employment, including dependent employment and self-employment. The projects can focus on the transformation of work in traditional service and industrial sectors as well as on the development of new forms of platform-mediated solo self-employment or digital “shadow” work. The individual projects can examine the forms of digitalisation currently under discussion as well as longer existing automation, computerisation or informatisation phenomena and thus the digital transformation of historically conditioned processes and developments.

The Priority Programme was initiated by Michael Henke (TU Dortmund), Martina Heßler (TU Darmstadt), Martin Krzywdzinski (WZB Berlin), Sabine Pfeiffer (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg) and Ingo Schulz-Schaeffer (TU Berlin).

An information event on the content and formal aspects of the application will be offered on 8 July 2019 (11 am–4 pm) at the Nuremberg Campus of Technology of the Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen Nuremberg. Interested parties are requested to register by 14 June 2019 under: <https://digitalisierung-der-arbeitswelten.de/call>.

A summary of the application to establish the Priority Programme and further information can be found on the programme homepage (see below).

Proposals must be written in English and submitted to the DFG by **15 October 2019**. Please note that proposals can only be submitted via elan, the DFG’s electronic proposal processing system. To enter a new project within the existing Priority Programme, go to Proposal Submission – New Project/Draft Proposal – Priority Programmes and select “SPP 2267” from the current list of calls.

In preparing your proposal, please review the programme guidelines (form 50.05, section B) and follow the proposal preparation instructions (form 54.01). These forms can either be downloaded from our website or accessed through the elan portal. In addition to submitting your proposal through elan, please send an electronic copy to the programme coordinator.

Applicants must be registered in elan prior to submitting a proposal to the DFG. If you have not yet registered, please note that you must do so by **1 October 2019** to submit a proposal under this call; registration requests received after this time cannot be considered. You will normally receive confirmation of your registration by the next working day. Note that you will be asked to select the appropriate Priority Programme call during both the registration and the proposal process.

Further Information

More information on the Priority Programme is available under:
<https://digitalisierung-der-arbeitswelten.de>

The elan system can be accessed at:
<https://elan.dfg.de/en>

DFG forms 50.05 and 54.01 can be downloaded at:
www.dfg.de/formulare/50_05
www.dfg.de/formulare/54_01

For scientific enquiries please contact the Priority Programme coordinator:
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Questions on the DFG proposal process can be directed to:
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