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## The Concept of the DFG Joint Research Projects with Special Regard to Collaborative Research Centres

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### Abstract

The DFG is the largest provider of research funds to universities and the most important funding organisation of basic research. All programmes support and encourage international cooperation. Besides the Individual Grants Programmes there are several joint research programmes which can be conducted by German scientists in cooperation with researchers or research institutions in developing countries.

Collaborative Research Centres are long-term university research centres in which scientists and academics pursue ambitious joint interdisciplinary research undertakings. This funding instrument aims to create core research areas at universities. The programme is focused on strengthening the research capacity and the scientific efficiency of the participating scientists in the respective developing countries in order to help to solve specific problems. Collaborative Research Centres are funded for a maximum of 12 years. Every four years the DFG reviews the research programmes and budget of each individual centre and evaluates the results achieved in the preceding funding period. This evaluation is the basis for the annual funding decisions of the Grant Committee for Collaborative Research Centres. In 2002 312 Collaborative Research Centres were funded with a budget of EUR 361.9 million. Eight centres dealt with topics that are relevant to developing countries, especially Africa. Examples of areas to be studied were the consequences of cultural developments and changes as well as the history of languages and settlements. The goal of a biomedical Collaborative Research Centre is to control tropical diseases. Two other centres dealing with land use concepts in developing countries will be presented at the meeting in detail.

Another example for joint research projects in which partners from developing countries can be involved are Research Units. They support close partnerships in high-quality research ventures at one or more locations and are funded up to six years. They often contribute to establishing new research directions. In the frame of Priority Programmes the participating researchers from all German research institutions are free to choose their topics, research plan and methods in a supraregional cooperation. Research Training Groups are combined research and study programmes established at German universities for a period of time for the purpose of promoting young researchers at one location. They afford doctoral students the opportunity to complete their doctorates within a coordinated research programme. Some examples will be presented.

The DFG generally provides the funds necessary for the German share of the project while the BMZ covers costs which the cooperating partner in the developing country incurs in connection with the implementation of his share. Specifically, BMZ may provide financial support for the purchase of scientific materials e.g. consumables and scientific

equipment, but also for local casual labour, and for journeys the co-worker may need to undertake in his/her own country or to Germany. It is not possible to finance the whole infrastructure of the foreign universities or other research institutions. In general, an adequate financial contribution of both parties is expected. The qualification of the applicants and the scientific relevance of the proposal are the main prerequisites for funding, despite of the relevance of the planned project for the developing country involved.

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