

DEVELOPING CONCEPT

SUPPORT CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

SOURCES	Foundation statutes; realization concepts; foundation practice; foundation board strategy meetings
GOAL	Elaboration of support criteria in view of the fields of support activity

INTRODUCTION

Gebert Rüt Stiftung was established by entrepreneur Heinrich Gebert as a science and innovation foundation. Its objective is to promote «Switzerland as a top location for business and as a place to live» (purpose article). As a private funding agency guided by its mission statement «making science effective», it supports entrepreneurial projects which are committed to achieving an impact.

Gebert Rüt Stiftung supports innovation at Swiss institutions of higher education. In order to be effective, it stresses the networkability and integration of the various support projects into its established, medium-term fields of activity.

Gebert Rüt Stiftung does not support projects that optimize the already-known, the proved and the experienced based on the motto «faster, higher, better, more precisely», but rather those that effectuate something fundamentally new. These projects often have a bridging function, meaning they are essential components of larger synergistic networks. The foundation particularly supports projects that assist well-qualified, future academics who follow individual and innovative paths.

BASIC SELECTION CRITERIA

Sought are innovative projects of high relevance and scientific quality. This is ensured by the following basic criteria: originality, effectiveness, transfer potential and interdisciplinarity collaboration. These four fundamental criteria reciprocally interact. Deserving projects should fulfil most, if not all, of these criteria; nevertheless, if a project is distinctive in one single fundamental criterion, this may compensate for shortcomings in meeting other criteria:

Originality – The project is unique or novel, it is non-traditional, unconventional or unusual. This originality is particularly noted in its presentation of the problem, its method or its implementation. The project is independent; it seeks to send out signals for the new and seminal; it puts trendsetters to the test; because of its model constellation, a signal effect emerges.

Effectiveness – The project aims at applying scientific cognitions to achieve a social and economic benefit, or prepares for its implementation. There is a clear relationship to Switzerland. One particular intention is to enhance Switzerland as a location for business and place to live.

Transfer potential – The project creates an exchange of knowledge amongst various science disciplines or between science and society. The project encourages the exchange between science and economy; it realizes forms of integrating the liberal arts into the problems and demands of the technical civilization and vice versa; it ensures the open dialogue between the sciences and the public concerning questions and consequences of innovation.

Interdisciplinarity – The project is multi-faceted and holistic yet anchored in expertise specialization. When scientific fields collaborate on the various projects, methods and spheres of competence for multidisciplinary cooperation are employed. The project deals with all aspects of a particular problem and develops the solution from an integral presentation of the subject; in so doing, it strives to assign a solid place in research and teaching for interdisciplinary insight strategies. Criteria must be set for assessing, and showing the transparency of its interdisciplinary performance.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Besides the primary goal of supporting future academics and the four fundamental criteria, the support practice of Gebert Rűf Stiftung employs a series of selection criteria that encompass both strategic and formal aspects. The positive and negative selection criteria pose the central filter and control function for the support practice. Beyond the fulfillment of the abstract fundamental criteria, the secondary function of these practical selection criteria is to channel projects into the fields of activity of Gebert Rűf Stiftung, i. e. into its medium-term support cluster. For the final funding decision, the criteria relevant to the respective fields of activity are pivotal.

POSITIVE CRITERIA – WELCOME ARE...

Implementation, application, transfer, science entrepreneurship, high quality, originality, innovation

- projects which are generally rooted in a Swiss institution of higher education;
- projects whose realization would be enhanced by a leadership team experienced in entrepreneurial project management and non-scientific communication;
- complete, «whole» projects with a clear contour or identity;
- projects whose realization appears necessary/desirable/promising against a background of a specific need, a defined lack, or an obvious gap;
- unorthodox projects with a large potential impact, especially model, trend-setting projects that initiate new developments as well as projects having a multiplicatory effect;
- projects which need initial support;
- projects that enhance catalytic structural modifications and reform processes, which the public authorities cannot (yet), or do not wish to, implement.

NEGATIVE CRITERIA – WE DON'T SUPPORT...

Purely fundamental research, follow-up financing, perfecting

- projects that are not generally rooted in a Swiss institutions of higher education;
- typical SNF, Bridge and Innosuisse projects;
- purely fundamental research projects;
- projects in the venture phase that are looking for investor funds;
- financing of personal study-related projects, stays in foreign countries and continued education of a purely personal nature, i. e. projects for achieving scientific degrees and qualifications (graduation, doctorate, habilitation);
- isolated contributions to publication projects and exhibitions;
- optimization of the already known and the tried and tested based on the motto «faster, higher, better, more precise»;
- projects that have already commenced;
- applications for contributions to the fundamental, basic financing of institutions and other foundations as well as sponsoring, i. e. indirect promotion; funding of institutions that support research;
- applications for contributions to infrastructures;
- projects for relieving the public authorities of their responsibility for ensuring the provision of a qualified fundamental core offering;
- applications for the financing of responsibilities and institutions which have been discontinued by the public authorities, or which they wish to discontinue with good reason, notably those projects that undermine the structural decisions of the public authorities or university-wide, canton or state educational policy;
- projects that require follow-up financing so they may finally be concluded as well as continued financing;
- isolated individual projects lacking adequate integration into scientific institutions or selective teaching or research projects that have little synergistic impact.