Goethe IT-Lab Innovation Program
Innovative and interdisciplinary applied research relating to information technology at the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

Goethe IT-Lab mission statement
“With its innovation program, the Goethe IT-Lab supports Ph.D. students and junior scientists at the Goethe University in conducting innovative and interdisciplinary research related to information technology (IT).”

Goethe IT-Lab Innovation Program
The main goal of the Goethe IT-Lab at Goethe University is to strengthen the alliance between business and interdisciplinary university research relating to information technology (IT).

The Goethe IT-Lab is a community foundation supported by a number of leading companies as donors, other community foundations and the Goethe University itself. Young researchers are able to conduct their own interdisciplinary research relating to information technology (IT) at the Goethe IT-Lab by receiving research fellowships and material expenses for a period of up to three years. The Goethe-IT Lab also organizes an open forum called Horizon Forum biannually, where researchers at the Goethe University and business representatives meet and discuss relevant IT-topics and their research results.

1 Basic concept
The Goethe IT-Lab focuses on two fields research and interaction.

Young researchers have the opportunity to conduct their interdisciplinary research with the support of fellowships awarded by the Goethe IT-Lab and the provision of additional assistance.

First preference is given to complex research assignments with an interdisciplinary approach, focusing on IT as a means in accomplishing them. These assignments should have high relevance and innovative potential.

The appointment of mentors (minimum two, maximum three) on equal terms from different departments of the Goethe University as permanent contact persons ensures manifold and continuous orientation for the young researcher.

This way the young researcher is able to work on the project freely and independently without losing track.

The Goethe IT-Lab wants to attract not only alumni of the Goethe University but also distinguished alumni from other universities.
The field of interaction is addressed by the biannual *Horizon Forum*. This is an open forum in which researchers at the Goethe University and business representatives meet and discuss relevant IT-topics and their research results. The *Horizon Forum* enables current research projects to be presented and business representatives to introduce their research into specific areas. This bidirectional exchange of experience is intended to strengthen mutual understanding.

Mentors from different departments and workshops are able to strengthen the internal communication between the departments as well as the communication with business through interdisciplinary research assignments.

## 2 Rules for receiving funding

The Goethe IT-Lab supports accepted project proposals for up to three years. The rules for receiving funding and criteria for assessing proposals are explained in the following subsections.

### 2.1 Projects

Project proposals submitted to the Goethe IT-Lab must fulfill following criteria in order to be further evaluated:

- A project must appoint a minimum of two (maximum three) mentors on equal terms from different departments. A mentor can be a professor or a young academics group leader\(^1\) from the Goethe University.
- The project must contain a complex research assignment that requires an interdisciplinary approach and focusing on IT-based solution with a high relevance and innovative potential.
- Project proposals with higher risks than conventional research projects receive priority.
- The project proposal must clearly state how it is connected to information technology.
- The funding should be requested for at least one but not more than two Ph. D. students per project.
- The project must be conducted at the Goethe University.

### 2.2 Proposal submission

Proposals can be submitted via the Goethe IT-Lab online form. Two deadlines per year need to be met in order to be considered by the Goethe IT-Lab Selection Board.

Project proposals can be submitted by:

- Alumni who fulfill the requirements to becoming a Ph. D. student at the Goethe University and
- Young academics group leaders at the Goethe University.

Submissions are not restricted to Goethe University alumni.

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\(^1\) Young academics group leaders are independent researchers (postdoc) up to W1 (junior professor).
2.3 Types of funding

Ph. D. students are supported by a research fellowship. The duration of the research fellowship is generally two years. Upon request, and dependent on a positive evaluation by the selection board, it may be extended by one year.

Up to two research fellowships may be granted to young academics group leaders in order to acquire Ph. D. students for their project.

The amount and extent of the funding, especially for material expenses like books, hardware, software, travel costs and costs for publication, are dependent on the means available.

2.4 Revision and selection process

Revision and selection of projects to be funded is made by the Goethe IT-Lab selection board. The selection board normally meets at a workshop twice a year to decide which projects shall be funded and what the funding volume is. Based on the criteria defined in 2.1, the workshop consists of:

- A presentation of project proposals by the applying researcher (10 minutes each)
- An announcement of the projects chosen for funding.

The intention is to realize a quick and non-bureaucratic process.

The Goethe IT-Lab advisory board may propose topics that will be taken into special consideration for funding.

![Timeline for a project](image-url)

**Timeline for a project**

2.5 Project execution and evaluation

The young researcher is to conduct the project freely and autonomously and report on the development, written in collaboration with the appointed mentors, must be submitted each year. In exceptional cases (e.g., ethical cases, missing documents, or permanent absence of a research fellow) the Goethe IT-Lab Advisory Board has the right to withdraw funding.
In the second year of funding, an extension of up to one further year may be requested. For this purpose a positive evaluation by the mentors is required. The Selection Board bases its decision on a presentation of the project’s development (30 minute presentation) and the available means.

Results of selected projects can be presented at the Horizon Forum.

2.6 Sustainability

By funding these projects we want to enable excellent research and publication results. This helps young academics group leaders to shorten the time required to become full professor and/or increase their chances in the job market. Continuation of the projects into setting up start-ups is also an important goal of the Goethe IT-Lab. These start-ups could for example be further supported by the Goethe-Unibator (http://www.goetheunibator.de).

3 Partner and eco-system

The Goethe IT-Lab consists of a dynamic eco-system of different partners split between four boards:

The Goethe IT-Lab Management Board manages the operative operations and the science coordination at the Goethe IT-Lab. It consists of:

- One managing director
- Two scientific directors (professors at the Goethe University).

The Goethe IT-Lab Advisory Board defines and supervises the rules of the Goethe IT-Lab as part of a charter. The Advisory Board may also propose topics of special interest to be taken into consideration during funding selection. Representatives from university and business should be represented equally. The board consists of:

- Premium donors from business
- One representative of the Goethe University steering committee – normally one of the vice presidents
- The two scientific directors at the Goethe IT-Lab
- Professors of the Goethe University.

The Goethe IT-Lab Selection Board decides which projects are to be granted funding. Representatives from university and business should be represented equally. The board consists of:

- Premium donors from business,
- Professors from different departments at the Goethe University (a stipulation is that at least one Project has a connection to the department),
- The two scientific directors of the Goethe IT-Lab.

The Goethe IT-Lab Program Committee defines the program for the Horizon Forum. Representatives from university and business should be represented equally. The board consists of:

- Premium donors from business,
- The two scientific directors of the Goethe IT-Lab,
- Professors at the Goethe University.
Figure 2 - Goethe IT-Lab Eco-System