

Home » Science » Funding structure

Call for proposals

The Jacobs Foundation is pleased to announce the 2024 Call for Proposals for its LEVANTE framework. The Jacobs Foundation is devoting up to CHF 4 million to support project proposals to become part of the LEVANTE network.



Apply here now.

Deadline for submission: October 06, 2024.

The **Learning Variability Network Exchange (LEVANTE)** seeks to understand how children grow, learn, and develop across different times, places, and contexts so that they can be supported to thrive in the multitude of experiences they will encounter throughout life. It brings together researchers from around the world to create the first cross-cultural, multidisciplinary open dataset aiming to capture the richness and diversity of child development and learning.

The overarching objective of LEVANTE is to identify **how individual variability, group heterogeneity, and contextual variability influence children's learning and development**. By including data collection of common measures on these different areas longitudinally and at a global level, LEVANTE will help researchers, educators, and policymakers understand child development within individuals, within groups, and across contexts, thus improving future learning outcomes for diverse groups of children worldwide. The focus of the Jacobs Foundation is fostering scientific excellence and building a strong network of internationally active researchers in the field of child and youth development with a strong focus on variability of learning and to foster long-term collaboration with other researchers and the Jacobs Foundation.

Below are outlined the details of the request for proposals process, including requirements, general priorities, budget guidance, add-ons, and types of projects eligible for submission.

Beyond these guidelines, we invite creativity in proposals to use the LEVANTE framework. For example, we would expect to support:

- Integration of LEVANTE measures into ongoing cohort studies.
- Use of LEVANTE measures as part of a suite of measurements related to the outcome of a randomized intervention.
- Coordination of LEVANTE measures with the collection of other measure types, with the proviso that these be collected so as to be shared as broadly as possible. These might especially include:
 - Dense sampling of behavioral measures to reveal within-person variability,
 - Neuroimaging or psychophysiology measurement (e.g., EEG, fMRI, eye-tracking, etc.),
 - Genetic data,
 - Educational context data, including but not limited to classroom-based observation and/or additional administrative data beyond the standards for school-based recruitment, or

- Rich environmental characterization (e.g., home video or audio recordings).

LEVANTE focus

- Embracing and understanding variability in learning across the three dimensions described in the Jacobs Foundation Research Agenda: within-subject, within-group, and contextual variability.
- Focus on typically developing children within the age range 2-12 (i.e., compulsory primary school years). However, because selecting measures for young children ages 2 – 5 carries a number of special challenges, the first call for proposals for LEVANTE focuses on children ages 5 – 12. The available measures address both the general constructs and the specific tasks and measures to be adopted by the LEVANTE framework for children ages 5 – 12. These measures are currently available in **English, Spanish** and **German**.
- As a global program, LEVANTE encourages applications from all countries, bearing also in mind the special interest of the Jacobs Foundation in its target countries (Colombia, Ghana, Switzerland, and Côte d'Ivoire).

Selection criteria and eligibility

Main applicants should:

- Have obtained a PhD or equivalent degree at least 5 years prior to the application deadline;
- Be employed by and be part of a research lab at an institution of higher education or research institute;
- Be conducting high-quality research in the area of variability of learning and development;
- Be committed to engaging with and contributing to the activities of both LEVANTE and the Jacobs Foundation.

The following selection criteria are considered in the selection process:

- Scientific quality of methods and data
- Publication record and experience on similar collaborative projects
- Feasibility of the proposed project
- Availability of resources and capacity of the lab
- Innovativeness, uniqueness, and value proposition of the proposed project
- Geographic localization of the proposed project and demographic representativeness of the sample
- Conceptual alignment and integration of planned project with the LEVANTE framework
- Collaboration and/or multidisciplinary character of the proposed project
- Inclusion of young scholars in the team
- Inclusion of additional measures with no/limited additional funding request.

Requirements

The following requirements must be met by all submitted proposals to be considered for funding within the LEVANTE scheme:

- Sampling, recruitment, and administration must follow the [guidelines](#).
- All age appropriate [LEVANTE Core Assessment Measures](#) must be administered to children, caregivers, and (where appropriate) teachers. There is some flexibility in grouping and style of administration as specified above.
- Data must be collected using the [LEVANTE infrastructure](#) tools. Any potential customization must be discussed, approved, and implemented by the Data Coordinating Center and must include a

budget for such customizations.

- Proposals should be administer the LEVANTE Core Assessment Measures in the available languages (English, Spanish, German), or should have a plan for working with the Data Coordinating Center to translate/adapt the measures to other languages.
- All data from these measures must be covered under the LEVANTE Data Submission Agreement.
- Proposals must comply with the LEVANTE Ethics, Privacy and Data Use Policies.

General priorities for proposals

Proposals will be evaluated using the following priorities:

- Scientific merits of the articulated research questions
 - Alignment of the proposed project to the LEVANTE key Scientific Aims.
- Feasibility of the study
 - Site has the resources and expertise necessary to carry out the proposed data collection.
 - Proposals from low-resource contexts might want to budget for capacity building to ensure study feasibility.
- Sample Characteristics
 - Diversity of population being sampled, with the goal of collecting data from a broad set of cultural and linguistic contexts.
 - Representativeness of the sample within the particular context of recruitment (e.g., representativeness of a particular local or national community).
 - Sample size – larger samples add greater value to the dataset and will be preferred all else being equal.

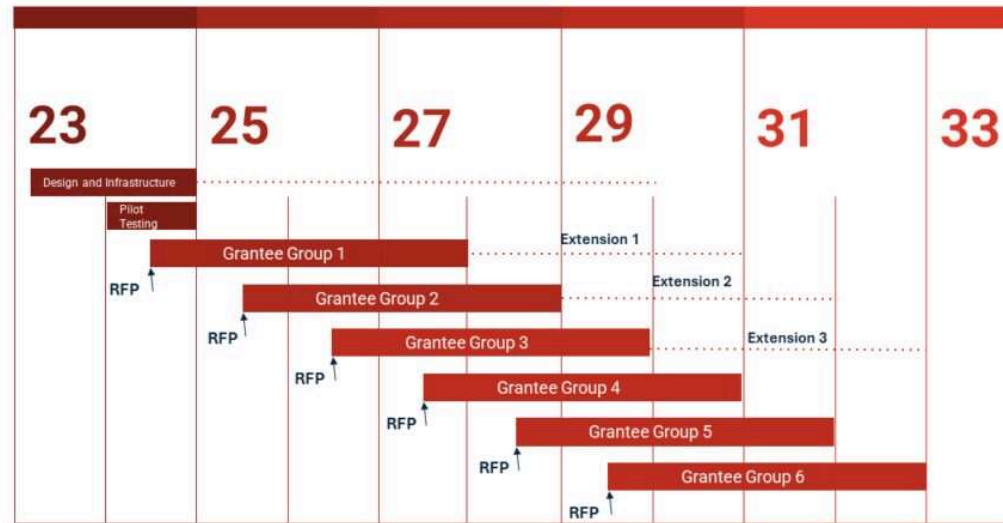
- Value of additional measures
 - Previously collected or planned collection of data that enhance the value of the core LEVANTE measures, including other measure types, and prior or subsequent longitudinal tracking.
- Sharing feasibility and policies for additional data
 - Resulting dataset will be shared in a manner that facilitates easy harmonization with LEVANTE core measure data.
- Coordination opportunities beyond the LEVANTE measures
 - The effort is co-supported through another study or initiative.

Budget and timeline guidance

On the first call for proposals, the Jacobs Foundation is devoting up to CHF 4 million to support project proposals to become part of the LEVANTE network.

All projects will have a minimum duration of three to four years, with the possibility of competitive renewal for an additional three years for those projects funded in the first three Requests for Proposals (RFPs) (see below).

We will support both smaller- and larger-scale projects, and review will take into account the scope of the proposed budget relative to the value of the project according to the general program priorities.



Types of projects

Proposals can be submitted within the following two categories:

- Category 1: Small projects. Grants of up to CHF 400'000 each
- Category 2: Large projects. Grants of up to CHF 700'000 each

1) Small projects – new data

Maximum budget: CHF 400.000 over a minimum of 3 years

Small projects are expected to support:

- Collection of LEVANTE measures in new samples

- Addition of LEVANTE measures to ongoing or planned studies
- Supplementation of LEVANTE data collection with other measure types

2) Large projects – new data

Maximum budget: CHF 700.000 over a minimum of 3 years.

Large projects are expected to support:

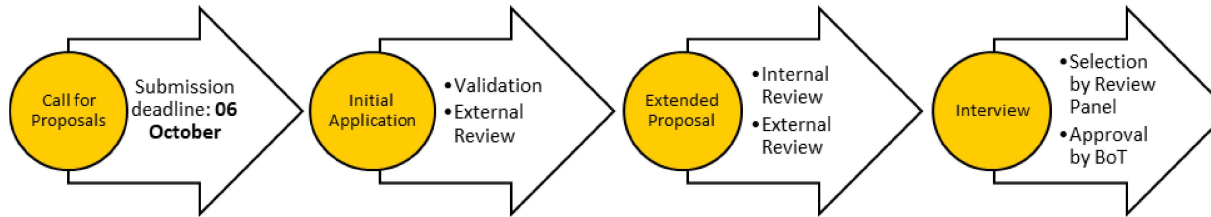
- Collection of LEVANTE measures in new samples of greater size or with specific population characteristics of interest that require greater resource expenditure
- Supplementation of LEVANTE data collection with other measure types (see above)
- Extensions of the LEVANTE framework (e.g., to new languages)

3) Analysis projects

In addition, in years 2 – 6, analysis projects are expected to support:

- Psychometric modeling of the LEVANTE dataset
- Novel analyses of the LEVANTE dataset
- Harmonization of LEVANTE data with other datasets

Overview of the application process



Stage 1: Initial Application (Aug 12 - Oct 06, 2024)

The initial application comprises three parts:

- General Information: You will be asked to submit general information about yourself, your team and your background.
- Application Form: Submit details of your study, including the project description, geographical focus, and target population age range.
- Upload your CV and a list of publications.

Stage 2: Extended Proposal (Nov 20 - Dec 15, 2024)

If your initial application is successful, you will be asked to submit an extended proposal, which includes:

- Extended Proposal Form: Submit in depth description of your study.
- Timeline.
- Budget.

Stage 3: Interview (Feb 03-07, 2025)

After your extended proposal is reviewed, you might be invited to an interview with the review panel. The final candidates will be presented for approval to the Jacobs Foundation Board.

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