

# Profile

The Volkswagen Foundation in brief



Volkswagen**Stiftung**

# What is the purpose of the Foundation?

The purpose of the Foundation is to promote the advancement of the sciences and technology in research and higher education (Section 2 of the Statutes). We support the humanities and social sciences as well as engineering and the natural and life sciences. Interdisciplinarity and internationality are important to us.

# Whom do we fund?

We support outstanding scholars and scientists in Germany and abroad who want to advance research and teaching with their original and challenging ideas. As a funder of such innovative research, we are prepared to take the associated risks and therefore also to accept that a promising project may not always reach its goal. After all, there can be no scientific progress without trial and error.



Psychologist Patricia Kanngießler – supported as a Freigeist Fellow

# How is our funding structured?

Our funding portfolio is divided into three profile areas (see right), each with its own focus. Independent of this, there is, fourthly, “zukunft.niedersachsen”, the funding program for the strategic development of science in Lower Saxony. Comprehensive information on the current funding offers can be found on our homepage:

[www.volkswagenstiftung.de/en/our-funding-portfolio](http://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/en/our-funding-portfolio)

# On what basis are decisions reached?

Hundreds of experts in Germany and abroad support the Foundation each year in reviewing applications (peer review). They submit individual evaluations and sit on review panels, their recommendations forming the basis for the funding decisions reached by the Board of Trustees and the Secretary General. The overriding goal is to ensure the highest scientific quality.

## EXPLORATION

Breaking into previously unexplored research territory with unconventional ideas and experimental approaches.

## SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATIONS


Expanding knowledge about processes of transformation and developing possible courses of action together with stakeholders in civil society.

## UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH – EVALUATION AND SCIENCE PRACTICE

Critically exploring and reflecting on the research system with a view to initiating positive change on areas such as career paths, governance, research and teaching.

## zukunft.niedersachsen

Funding program for top-level research and teaching in Lower Saxony.



Physicist Uwe Morgner –  
at an event held in  
Herrenhausen Palace

## Where does the money come from?

The funding finance comes from income generated by investment of the Foundation's assets (3.4 billion euros as of December 31, 2022). On the other hand, "zukunft.niedersachsen", the program to promote science in Lower Saxony, is financed primarily by dividend payments on Volkswagen shares held by the state of Lower Saxony, to which the Foundation has a statutory entitlement.

## What does the Foundation do for knowledge transfer?

We promote knowledge transfer on different levels: experts from the research community meet and exchange views at international conferences; at evening events they share their knowledge with the wider public. The venue for such meetings and discussions is the conference center at Herrenhausen Palace in Hannover ("Xplanatorium"), but increasingly also the Internet with its live streams and opportunities for dialog.

# Who established the Foundation?

The Foundation owes its existence and its name to an agreement concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany and the federal state of Lower Saxony in 1961: The then “Volkswagenwerk GmbH” was converted into a stock corporation, thus settling the dispute over unresolved ownership. The proceeds from this privatization were transferred as the assets of the newly established Foundation, a private charitable foundation under civil law – neither a corporate nor a public foundation.

# Who works at the Foundation?

The Secretary General Dr. Georg Schütte heads the office in Hannover. Around 100 people are employed as members of his staff units and the departments of funding, investment management, finance and administration. Anyone interested in working at our Foundation will find current vacancies posted on the homepage, but are also welcome to contact us directly.

Medical scientist Dorothee Viemann – supported in her research work on the immune system of newborns





## What is our driving vision?

**With the courage to take risks, we launch new ideas in the fields of research, teaching and knowledge transfer – together with the scientific community and with partners around the world.**

# A Foundation of Knowledge

## **Published by**

VolkswagenStiftung  
Kastanienallee 35  
30519 Hannover  
Germany

Phone: +49 (0)511 8381-0  
info@volkswagenstiftung.de  
www.volkswagenstiftung.de/en

## **Editor**

Jens Rehländer

## **Production**

Bureau Bordeaux, Hannover

## **Photography**

Mirco Krenzel (S. 3), Isabell Winarsch (S. 6),  
Sven Döhning (S. 9), Thomas Bach (S. 10)

## **Print**

Umweltdruckhaus Hannover GmbH,  
Hannover

