

Instructions and Template

For Base4NFDI Basic Service Proposals
Ramp-Up Phase

Version 1.1
2025-12-17

I General Instructions

The proposal template provides a mandatory structure and a number of tables to be completed. Apart from that, applicants may decide how to present the content. All sections of text in grey are intended to provide guidance for completing the proposal and should be deleted in your proposal submission.

Proposals for Base4NFDI Basic Services must be submitted via the spokesperson of the NFDI Section supporting the proposal to base4nfdi-office@lists.nfdi.de in PDF format. This implies that the proposal as well as results and work progress of the Basic Service has been presented and discussed in a Section meeting and was met with approval.

Further information about the next submission deadline and the whole evaluation process can be found at the Base4NFDI website, which will be updated continuously^{1,2}. Proposals must be written in A4 format, 11 pt Arial font with line spacing of 1.5. The length of the proposal may vary depending on the complexity of the proposed service but may not exceed 15 pages (excluding cover page, financial tables of chapter 6 and appendix). A different font or line spacing may be used in tables, figures, footnotes and the list of references, provided the text is still easy to read. The proposal and appendices are to be written in English (BE). Please use the proposal template contained in part II of this form.

The requested funding amounts should not include programme allowances (for indirect project costs). Budgeted allowances will come from Base4NFDI flex funds and vary by the phase (Initialisation, Integration, Ramp-Up) for which funding is requested.

Funding – with the exception of well-argued cases – will be limited to a maximum of two years and a maximum of €309.600,00 per year³.

For further information please refer to <https://base4nfdi.de> or contact Base4NFDI base4nfdi-office@lists.nfdi.de whenever answers are not available online.

¹ <https://base4nfdi.de/process/how-to-apply>

² <https://base4nfdi.de/process/decision-making>

³ An additional financial top-up to the stated amount - to compensate increased personnel costs based on updated DFG Personnel Rates - is fully subject to the decision of the NFDI Consortia Assembly. For further information please refer to <https://base4nfdi.de/process/funding> or contact base4nfdi-office@lists.nfdi.de in the case that answers are not available online.

II Proposal Template – Ramp-Up Phase

Purpose:

The Ramp-Up phase marks the transition from foundational setup to full operational capacity. While the Initialisation and Integration phases were dedicated to establishing a cohesive and interoperable Basic Service concept, this final stage focuses on scaling, optimising, and ensuring sustainability.

1 General Information

- Name of proposed Basic Service (in English)
- Acronym of the proposed Basic Service
- Service "subtitle" explaining key functionality
- Corresponding NFDI Section
- Lead institution

The lead institution is the coordinating institute for the Basic Service for the current stage of development.

Please enter the institute's name and address.

- Name of lead institution principal investigator

The primary contact and coordinator of the Basic Service.

Please enter the name and email address.

- Participating institutions

Table 1: List of participating institutions

Principal Investigator	Institution, location	Contact E-mail	Member in [consortium] ⁴	Funding requested [yes no]

List all participating institutions. If applicable, make clear if there are partner institutions without funding.

- Integration Phase

Provide information on the start date of the Integration phase, the planned runtime and the estimated end (month / year).

- Planned duration of the Ramp-Up phase

The Ramp-Up phase typically runs 2 years. Please provide estimated starting and end time (month/year).

- Summary and expected outcome of Ramp-Up strategy

Explain in non-technical terms how the service will grow and create meaningful value by outlining its benefits, commitments, and unique contributions, while establishing a reliable, long-term solution through a business model with dedicated service providers and embedding it into the NFDI Basic Service portfolio. Emphasize your vision for continued relevance and adaptability beyond initial funding by responding to evolving user needs and sustaining long-term impact, ensuring user experience, scalability, interoperability, service

⁴ Name one DFG consortium the institution is or has a route to become a member of and through which funds should be appropriated if this proposal is approved.

levels and sustainability throughout the operational phase, validation of support structures and ongoing development. This text will be presented as a short explainer to the consortia in the questionnaire, where they will vote on the proposal. (max. 250 words)

- Summary of the proposal in English and German
up to 1,500 characters each, including spaces

2 Summary of Integration Phase Results (max 3 pages)

2.1 Change in Background and Motivation since the Start of the Integration Phase

Are there any changes compared to the proposal for the Integration Phase (e.g., in the background or motivation, service concept, technological approach, interoperability strategy, partner roles, training concept, etc.)? If yes, please explain briefly and point out any deviations from the proposed work plan., If no changes were made please state 'There are no changes compared to the proposal in the Integration Phase'.

If there have been any conditions or notes for the application for the Ramp-Up Phase issued by the **Technical Expert Committee** in their proposal review for the Integration Phase, please share details on how these issues were addressed or resolved / what changes were made to the work plan in response.

2.2 Results of Integration Phase

Please report on the status and results of Integration Phase work. Please also describe the work that still needs to be completed by the end of the Integration Phase in order to begin the orderly transition to the Ramp-Up Phase.

2.2.1 Interim Report on Requirements for Finalisation of the Integration Phase

Please provide a summary of the Base4NFDI Integration Phase results reflecting the current status of service development. Include information on the status of the requirements listed below as far as applicable and a summary of outcomes (e.g., links to publications, repositories, or other documentation). If necessary, provide an outlook on plans for completion until the end of the current phase. An overview of the overall Integration goals is given in the *Report on service integration procedures*⁵, focusing on concepts and contents, while *Requirements for completion of Integration Phase*⁶ describes the detailed deliverables (D.Int.x) of what the service teams should achieve in practical terms during Integration and how these achievements should be documented.

⁵ Report on Base4NFDI service integration procedures, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15235863>

⁶ Requirements for completion of Integration Phase, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17107044>

More detailed information on service metadata, software quality, usability, and performance indicators is given in additional documents linked to Report on service integration procedures.

Facts may be kept brief in this proposal, but attach a current PDF export from the OpenProject work space with up-to-date and more detailed information on D.Int.1-D.Int.7:

Reference statement: A complete documentation of the results of the Integration Phase can be found in the appended OpenProject export.

a) Service integration and success (D.Int.1)

- Summarise all integrations and / or incubators across NFDI consortia and beyond in numbers. Please link to / refer to more extensive documentation on an online dashboard or a table in the OpenProject report. Try to differentiate between [completed | in progress | planned] or similar.
- Name two specific, practical stories that demonstrate adoption and interoperability of the service. Just give a brief description and refer to the OpenProject report for more detail.
- Briefly outline progress and remaining work for adoption and interoperability; full details will be given in the OpenProject report.

b) Service maturity (D.Int.2)

- Provide keyword evidence that the service moved from a prototype (which provides essential components and has been tested in a limited environment, equivalent to TRL 5-6) to a fully implemented one (that is regularly utilised in the actually intended environment, equivalent to TRL 7-8). For mere technical services, this may be expressed in terms of technology readiness levels (TRL), but the aforementioned report on integration processes provides examples of how to deal with this in non-technical contexts like consultation or training frameworks, metadata and terminology standards, best practices, or general workflows. Please indicate the TRL (or equivalent maturity level) of the current version of your Basic Service framework at the time of application for the Ramp-Up Phase and the targeted TRL by the end of the Integration Phase. If the required maturity to enter the Ramp-Up phase (equivalent TRL 7-8) has not yet been reached at the time of submission, briefly explain how it will be achieved by the end of the current phase.

c) Service sustainability (D.Int.3)

- Briefly summarize progress and open tasks regarding identification of future service providers and required resources (technical, personnel, and financial). Further details will be included in the OpenProject report.

d) Provision of service portfolio metadata (D.Int.4)

- Indicate to which extent the necessary information has been provided and which points still need clarification. Refer to the full documentation in the OpenProject report.

e) Self-assessments of software quality (D.Int.5 - if applicable)

- If there's software developed for the service, state if the quality assessment has been conducted and what issues might require improvement. If none are necessary, just state "The quality self-assessment was conducted and no issues requiring improvement were identified."

f) Concept for usability study (D.Int.6)

- Please indicate whether a usability study for your service is being conducted by Base4NFDI TA2. If applicable, provide the study title and its status (planned, running, or completed) and include a link to results if already available. Further details can be provided in the OpenProject report.

3 Working Concept for the Development of the Basic Service (max 2.5 pages)

Describe the overall concept for the development of the Basic Service with regard to the Ramp-Up Phase in detail. Note that for the Ramp-Up Phase the adoption of a business model, scalability work, development efforts for revisions and actual operation as well as maintenance of the service need to be addressed.

3.1 Ramp-Up Concept

The Ramp-Up Phase focuses on the demonstration that the given service can be established as a sustainable and reliable long-term service, adopting an operating model with dedicated providers and integrating into the NFDI Basic Service portfolio. This includes an initial operational phase to validate support, maintenance, coordination and ongoing development. Key aspects to be addressed include:

- User experience,
- Scalability,
- Descriptions of service capabilities and limitations (if feasible, service levels),
- Securing long-term funding.

By the end of the Ramp-Up Phase, the service should provide clear documentation and guidance on how consortia can incorporate it, building on the results from the Integration Phase. It should also lay out well-defined terms and conditions for using the service. Additionally, the service should also include dedicated privacy-related policies that explain how personal data is processed, stored, and protected within your service operations. This should be entirely separate from any privacy policy used on your public website and will have to be aligned with the respective policies of the institution(s) providing the operational service. Finally, the service must demonstrate GDPR compliance (where applicable) and include a solid strategy for data security, protection, and backup. It is recommended for the service to aim for TRL 9 (or equivalent maturity level) at the end of the Ramp-Up phase. Please indicate the planned maturity of your service components at the end of the funding phase.

If any of these requirements do not apply to your service, e. g., because it is more of an organisational or social service and a TRL is out of scope, or if no backup will be needed, please explain.

While the service does not need to be fully operational at the beginning of the Ramp-Up Phase, commitments from both operating institutions and participating consortia are essential. These commitments should reflect the willingness and ability to operate and/or support the service during the Ramp-Up Phase. Commitments that extend beyond Base4NFDI funding and provide a perspective towards sustainable operation are encouraged. Commitments must be documented in accordance with the Integration deliverables (cf. 2.2.1 above). The proposal needs to include an outlook on who will be responsible for running the service. Please also provide information which conditions would apply for a sustained operation (also see Portfolio Requirements⁷). This includes the commitment to operate the service (see above), estimates of required resources (e.g. staffing, infrastructure, funding), and – if possible – an indication of how long the service could be sustained under current assumptions. In case long-term operation is not currently secured, please describe what would be needed to transfer or phase out the service. Please provide reasons if you cannot provide this information.

Please describe how participating consortia (2-3) plan to adopt the service as part of their ongoing operations. This can include outlines of concrete use cases, workflows, embedding the service beyond incubator projects, or other ways the service will be employed. These descriptions should help demonstrate that the service has a clear user base and will play a meaningful role within NFDI (and beyond).

3.2 Future Development and Outlook

Describe the long-term vision for the service, including a business model outlining costs and potential sources of revenue. If possible, provide a scenario for what will happen and who will take over when the Base4NFDI funding ends. Provide a governance strategy describing how decisions on service operation will be made. It should ensure community involvement. If possible, also outline a strategy for scalability (including international perspectives like EOSC), and alignment with a long-term development plan. Highlight factors critical to sustainability, such as impact, adaptability, and the capacity to deliver added value to the target community.

3.3 Risks and Challenges

Give an update on the risks and challenges that may occur through operations of the service on behalf of the Ramp-Up phase.

⁷ Report on Base4NFDI service integration procedures, see chapter Portfolio-related requirements and accompanying document “Notes on Portfolio Requirements”, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17206953>

4 Support Actions from Base4NFDI and NFDI Sections (ca. 1/2 page)

Base4NFDI will offer support on overarching aspects of service development (e.g., training).

Please specify the additional support you explicitly need from the Sections and from Base4NFDI or any other support. An example is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Support needed from Base4NFDI / Service Stewards / Section

Support from	Work package / Description of contribution	Contact person
Base4NFDI	Support organising workshop/training	Lara Mustermann, Musterinstitut, lara.mustermann@musterinstitut.de
Section Metadata		Lara.mustermann@mustermail.de
...		

5 Work Programme (max. 6 pages)

This section should describe the structure of your work programme for the Ramp-Up phase as it relates to the overall objectives of the proposed Basic Service.

5.1 Overview of Work Packages

The work programme for the Ramp-Up of a Basic Service is divided into different work packages, deliverables, and milestones within. Please add all partners working in a work package and the partners leading the work package.

We expect work packages on sustainability and governance to address long-term strategies, such as business models, community involvement, and scalability. Allocate resources for activities like workshops on service governance, sustainability planning, and collaboration with international initiatives such as EOSC. Ensure that deliverables include plans or agreements on service continuation beyond the funding phase.

Centrally coordinated activities and offerings by Base4NFDI staff, including workshops, meetings and consultative support, help strengthen coordination across services and enhance service teams' capacity and knowledge on topics such as service training and accessibility. Therefore, up to 10 % of personnel resources should be allocated for participation. At the start of the Ramp-Up you will need to present the service to the NFDI Scientific Senate. At the end of the Ramp-Up, this committee will take a strategic vote on whether the service should become a permanent part of the NFDI service portfolio. Therefore, they may set further conditions for development until the end of Ramp-Up, so please allocate some time or a dedicated work package for this.

The requirements for finalisation of Ramp-Up are⁸:

- Sufficient service maturity, e.g. aim TRL 9 for a mere technical service
- Sufficient software quality (if applicable)
- Legal compliance
 - compliance with GDPR
 - description of personal data processing and protection
 - description of service and data privacy measures
 - description of data protection and backup measures
- Sustainability and scalability
 - business model, including information on costs, funding, required resources, and relevant applicable aspects of service operation and maintenance
 - written commitments of the service providers

Similar to Requirements for the completion of the Integration Phase, see 2.2.1 above, Base4NFDI is currently preparing a team-oriented guide providing actionable deliverables and instructions to be used during the Ramp-Up Phase. These will replace the general topics in a future version of this ramp-up template.

Note that deliverables are tangible outcomes of the work (software, documents, plans, designs, training material...), while milestones can signify conceptual changes or specific moments in time. Here the achievement of the goals of one of the development phases and the transition to the next phase is considered a milestone.

Table 3: Overall work programme with work packages, deliverables, milestones, and responsible partner.

Work package	Deliverables (D) and milestones (M)	Responsible partner
1. content	D1.1 D1.2 M1.1 ...	institution
2. other content	D1.1 D1.2 M1.1 ...	Some other institution
...

5.2 Detailed Work Programme

Please provide a detailed description of the work packages, using one subsubsection per work package. Please include a Gantt chart summarising the duration, dependencies, deliverables and milestones of the WPs.

⁸ Report on service ramp-up procedures, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17304387>

5.2.1 WP1**5.2.2 WP2****5.2.3 WP3****6 Funding Request**

List the task area in the table heading and the individual work packages in the table. Add additional lines as necessary.

Table 4: Funding request by work package

	Year 1	Year 2	Total (in €)
Work Package 1			
Work Package 2			
Work Package 3			
...			
Total Project Funds			

List the name of each institution, adding additional lines if necessary.

Table 5: Funding request by institution

	Year 1	Year 2	Total (in €)
Institution	Totals in €		
Lead Institution			
Participating Institution 1			
Participating Institution 2			
Participating Institution 3			
...			
Total Project Funds			

Please note the current staff funding rates of the DFG at the time of application, only on this basis funding is possible⁹. In addition, please keep in mind the maximum budget that can be requested in the Ramp-Up phase (cf. Section I A).

Any proposed instrumentation funding must be explained separately below the table.

Table 6: Funding request by funding category

	Year 1	Year 2	Total (in €)
DFG Funding Category	Totals in €		

⁹ https://www.dfg.de/formulare/60_12/

Staff			
Direct Project Costs			
Total Project Funds			

List the number of **person months** for which funding is requested under the given staff categories of the DFG Personnel Rates.

Table 7: Funding request by staff category

	Year 1	Year 2 (if applicable)
Staff category	Number of person months	Number of person months
Postdoctoral researchers and comparable		
Doctoral researchers and comparable		
...		

On this page you will find a template to confirm the accuracy of the information provided in this application (Principal Investigator) as well as the commitment of all participating institutions (institute directors) listed in section "1 General information". You can reproduce the template accordingly. Please provide confirmation for the lead and every participating institution listed in Table 1.

[NAME OF INSTITUTION]

We herewith certify that we have submitted this proposal to Base4NFDI and that the information provided therein is accurate.

Head of the lead / participating institution

First name last name

City, date, signature

Principal Investigator

First name last name

City, date, signature

III Appendix

The appendix may only include the following information and documents:

a) Bibliography and list of references

Please list all sources and data repositories, information infrastructures and software that you have used to describe the status quo in your proposal. Indicate which sources were written or developed by members of the participating institutions (for example, by highlighting the source in bold).

b) Letters of commitment (LoC) supporting the Basic Service development (cf. section 4 of this form)

Project partners do not need to provide a letter of commitment. Partners are named in the paragraph "1 General Information - Participating Institutions" of this template. Letters of commitment (LoC) for the Ramp-Up phase are requested only in three cases:

- 1) From the intended operators, operating institutions or providers responsible for running the service. The LoC should confirm the institution's commitment to operate the service during the Ramp-Up phase, including details on the resources (e.g. staff, funding, infrastructure) that will be allocated to ensure its operation. The letter should also indicate the willingness to maintain the service beyond the funding phase, or describe any contingency plans in case the service cannot be sustained.
- 2) From the consortia already adopting or going to adopt the service. The LoC should confirm the consortium's plans to expand the use of the service, how they plan to incorporate it into their long-term sustainability plans, and, if possible, the resources required or allocated for this.
- 3) from other persons or institutions - also external to the NFDI - that do not actively participate but contribute to the service in any form.

LoCs can be submitted until two weeks after the application deadline.

Please do not provide generic consortia support letters. General support including the approval of 75% of the NFDI consortia will be requested in a separate process by the Base4NFDI coordination team.