FAQ Application for ERS Projects

Applicant and Application

Who is eligible to apply by submitting project proposals? → *All RWTH members of staff with the necessary scientific qualification (PhD or higher) are eligible to apply for project funding. However the application must be approved by the person responsible for the cost center.*

Is it possible to submit a joint project proposal with partner institutions such as Forschungszentrum Jülich institutes, the Helmholtz Institute, an affiliated institute, or the Fraunhofer Institutes? → *Yes, this is possible. These institutions, however, cannot receive funding from RWTH Aachen. A prerequisite is that the proposal is interdisciplinary.*

Can I submit an ERS project proposal as a member of staff of Forschungszentrum Jülich? → *You can do so if you are at the same time employed at RWTH Aachen and thus are entitled to open an RWTH account.*

What exactly does "Women's Quota" mean? When is a project a "Women's Project"? → *A project is assigned "women's project" status if one of the project applicants, and thus project managers, is a woman.*

What is a suitable team composition? Who is considered a "junior researcher," who a "senior researcher"? → *The ideal team consists of both experienced and early-career researchers. W2/W3 professors are considered senior researchers, while Junior Professors, PDs (Privatdozenten), and postdocs are considered junior researchers.*

Funding / Finances

What is the maximum funding budget for ERS projects? → *Unless otherwise specified in the call for applications, there are no clearly defined budget limits for projects. The total sum of available ERS project funds is distributed among all approved projects. Average project budgets in the past were as follows: Speed Projects €5,000 to €15,000, Seed Fund Projects €50.000 to €70.000, Boost Fund Projects €300.000 to €500.000.*

Is it possible to create full-time positions for projects? → *Yes, you can decide on the use of the approved project funds, i.e. whether to use them for personnel or non-personnel expenditures.*

How can I calculate the costs for members of staff? → *In your calculation of personnel costs, you can refer to the DFG remuneration guidelines. If you want to hire student assistants, you can use the "HiWi-Komfort-Rechner" (Student Assistant Calculator) provided by Division 8.1.*

What type of costs can I claim? → *You can calculate and claim the real (direct) costs incurred by your institute. Overhead costs cannot be claimed.*

Application Documents – Formal Matters

Is there a template for project applications? → *No. You can structure your project proposal according to the list of requirements given in the call for applications.*

Does the specified maximum number of pages include accompanying documents? → *Your application, including all accompanying documents (e.g. bibliography), is not to exceed the maximum number of pages as specified in the call. If this number is exceeded, the application will not be taken into account.*

Does the application have to be signed? → *No, a signature is not mandatory. It makes clear, however, that the official applicant knows the application in detail (e.g. if it has been created by an employee). An original paper document with a signature is not required.*

Is there any disadvantage to writing the application in German? → *This depends on the scientific community of the discipline. If there are a sufficient number of experts in the German-speaking countries who can act as reviewers, this should be no problem.*

Other

Do I have to receive funding for a Seed Fund project to be eligible for Boost Fund support? → *No, the application processes for Seed Funds and Boost Funds are independent of each other. Seed Fund projects however can serve as a basis for later Boost Fund projects.*

Is it possible for applicants to exclude certain reviewers from the review process? → *Yes, please let us know in the comment section of the application portal whether there are any potential reviewers that should not be selected, e.g. for competitive reasons.*