

## 8<sup>th</sup> Call for proposals for Seed Fund Projects “RWTH Start-Up”

### Background

The **Exploratory Research Space @ RWTH Aachen (ERS)** is the central instrument of RWTH to foster interdisciplinary research and to develop emerging fields with the potential to shape the University’s research profile. ERS comprises activities which give a leeway for creativity to both senior and junior researchers and which foster interdisciplinary exchange and discussion. One activity is the funding of **Seed Fund Projects**. The typical duration of a Seed Fund Project is 6 to 12 months. The intention of this special call “RWTH Start-Up” is to attract and keep young researchers with a high potential of excellence.

### 1. Type and aim of projects:

The RWTH Start-Up is a project-bound seed funding to support young researchers at an early stage of their career and to promote their own scientific independency. Proposals describing a well-developed project that is already qualified for third-party funding or applicants holding other scholarships or grants (e.g. Emmy Noether Programme) are not eligible for this Seed Funding.

### 2. Eligibility

This Seed Fund Call is addressed at

- PostDocs, young researchers with a doctoral degree (up to year 5 after PhD), who envisage a career in science (employed at RWTH Aachen University)
- Assistant professors (junior professors, W1), N.B. The amount of basic support will be taken into consideration for determining the funding. (employed at RWTH Aachen University)

### 3. Proposal structure and contents

Proposals must be divided into part A (personal information) and part B (research). Please submit your complete application (2 files) via online submission at <http://portal.ers.rwth-aachen.de>.

Language: English or German

**Part A (file A):** 3 pages max., Arial 11 font size

- CV including the five most important publications;
- Endorsement (2-3 lines) of your head of department outlining his/her agreement to promote your scientific independence (applicable for PostDocs only)
- A short “easy to understand” outline of your research project (one page max.)

**Part B (file B):** 5 pages max., Arial 11 font size,

- Description of your project idea

- State-of-the-art of your research topic and preliminary experiences (including bibliography)
- Work programme
- Budget and schedule

**Please note:** Proposals that do not comply with the formal criteria will be excluded from the reviewing process.

#### **4. Selection and evaluation criteria:**

The projects will be selected and evaluated by an evaluation group consisting of members of the ERS Steering Committee, the Vice-Rector Prof. Klee, two representatives of the junior professors and two representatives of the scientific staff.

Applications will be evaluated along the following criteria:

##### **Part A:**

- Scientific qualification of the applicant
- Emerging scientific independence
- Delineation of the originality of project idea

##### **Part B:**

- Originality, feasibility and relevance of the project idea
- Adequateness of research approach
- Appropriateness of implementation (budget/time schedule)
- Prospects for further funding

The process of evaluation follows a two-step approach.

##### **Step 1:**

Members of the evaluation group will review and evaluate Part A of the proposal. The ERS team will then rank the results. Only proposals with the best ranking will proceed to the second evaluation step.

##### **Step 2:**

The complete proposal (Part A + B) will be reviewed and evaluated by an expert based on the evaluation criteria.

A recommendation of the evaluation group is then sent to the rectorate for final approval.

#### **5. Funding**

The budget for a Seed Fund Project is provided by the Excellence Strategy of the German Federal and State Governments and makes allowances to the allocation model aiming for 30 % share of females. The total budget for all new RWTH Start-Up projects is at most 200.000 €. For each project, a maximum of € 20.000 is available.

130.000 € must be spent in 2020, the rest afterwards. This will require two separate accounts. Funds cannot be transferred from one account to the other.

Eligible costs are: Staff expenses including student assistants, travel and subsistence costs, support for workshops and conferences, consumables and equipment.

**Please note:** due to the type of funding, funded research staff needs to have a mandatory teaching assignment (Lehrverpflichtung) (4 hours per week for full time non-permanent staff)

**6. Reporting:**

A brief report at the end of the project and a final report 18 months after the end of the project.

**7. Deadline for submission: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020**

**8. Project start: May 2020**

**9. Project duration: 6 to 12 months**

**10. Please apply at: <http://portal.ers.rwth-aachen.de>**

**Call:** RWTH Start-Up 2020

For additional information on the selection process, please refer to our website:

<http://www.rwth-aachen.de/ers>

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