

Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung

Information for Applicants

These guidelines apply to scientific project proposals as well as to project descriptions for stipend applications. For all other funding schemes please consult specific guidelines.*

February 10, 2014

*Stipend applications can only be accepted within the framework of competitive calls for proposals (see www.ekfs.de). In addition to the stipend application, a project description following these guidelines must be submitted.

1. Aim and focus of project funding

The EKFS funds excellent research proposals covering all fields of medical research, for both research projects and competitive calls for stipends. The call for proposals is based on an “open-topic” strategy, which follows our conviction that original approaches and novel ideas are not generated top-down, but rather arise from the minds of individual scientists. Complementary to necessarily structured public funding strategies, we see our task as recognizing and supporting excellent novel approaches that are both multidisciplinary and thematically open. Funding decisions are competitive and are based, in part, on internal (EKFS Scientific Board), and external peer review. Decision criteria are scientific excellence, originality and relevance.

2. Formal requirements

The EKFS is dedicated to funding highly ambitious and promising research projects. Only proposals that demonstrate sufficient preparation and scheduling, and that are highest priority for the applicant, will be considered for funding. Therefore, submission of the following documents (where applicable) is **required for processing of the application**:

2.1 Availability of the applicant(s) and necessary scientific infrastructure.

- If the applicant is a professor or independent head of department, an obligatory statement declaring the percentage of work time that will be available for carrying out the proposed research project, is required.
- All other applicants are asked to provide a letter of consent from their supervisors:
 - a) stating the percentage of the applicant’s work capacity that will be available for the proposed research (e.g. leave from clinical work), and
 - b) confirming support for the project (e.g. laboratories, animal facilities, equipment, personnel)

2.2 Legal requirements: please provide copies of relevant approvals (i.e. animal experiment and ethics committee approvals).

2.3 If you are planning *in vitro* experiments in human cell cultures, we strongly advise you to verify the origin of the cell lines used: when, where and how were these cell lines authenticated? If a cell line has been in use in the applicant’s laboratory for more than 6 months, then reauthentication should be performed (Leibniz Institut DMSZ Deutsche Sammlung von Mikroorganismen und Zellkulturen, Braunschweig or ATCC Deutschland, LGC Standards, Wesel).

2.4 Cooperative agreements for all partners whose contribution is critical for the project’s success.

2.5 We welcome **first-time proposals** from young scientists. As minimal requirements for submission, applicants should hold a doctorate and have documented proof of their ability to conduct

independent scientific work as evidenced by peer-reviewed first- or last-authored publication(s). For applicants who are not laboratory heads, a statement from the laboratory, institute, or clinic head should confirm that the necessary scientific infrastructure (laboratory space, equipment, animal facilities etc) and resources will be committed to the project.

2.6 If the **position of the applicant** is applied for, a letter of recommendation by the institute/department head is required. This letter should describe the integration of the proposed project within the institute's research strategy, outline the perspective of both the intended research topic as well as the future work of the applicant within the institute/clinic beyond the proposed funding period as well as detail the support for the implementation of the proposed project.

2.7 If you are submitting a joint application with several co-investigators, a **principal investigator**, who will act as coordinator, should be designated. The principal investigator will be our direct contact person. Additional investigators should be designated as co-investigators. If more than one institution is involved, the principal investigator's institution will be recipient of EKFS funds and will be responsible for subsequent release of planned project funding to partners.

2.8 If the applicant's institution is neither a public university nor a public research institution, please include a short description of the organization (legal status, non-profit status, portfolio).

2.9 Proposals can be submitted in English or German. However, please do not mix languages in one proposal. If your application involves a research field that draws on an international network, an English language proposal that is amenable to international review is requested.

2.10 A proposal (including cover sheet and excluding appendices) should not exceed 20 A4-sized pages (Arial 11, single-spaced or comparable font). Tables and schematic overviews are welcome.

3. Documents for submission

Please structure your proposal into three separate pdfs as defined below and send them to **kontakt@ekfs.de**. Please paginate your individual files.

A Project description (see A for details).

B CVs, publication lists and lists of current third-party grants awarded to all applicants (see below for details).

C Appendices; requirements for project implementation (can be submitted as separate pdf files):

Legal requirements (ethics committee/animal experiment approvals)

Research leave approval(s) (e.g. leave from patient care)

Cooperative agreement(s)

A Project description

1. General information

1.1 Project title

1.2 Applicant and applicant institution

Please give the applicant's complete postal address and contact information (incl. valid e-mail address). Please designate the main applicant (i.e. principal investigator).

1.3 Project duration (months)

1.4 Requested funding

(total amount; for funding details see 4.0 below)

2 Scientific description of the project

2.1 Summary

Short summary of the aims and expected results of the project (0.5 page).

2.2 State of the art

Short review of the scientific context of the proposed project, including an assessment of the competitiveness of the proposed approach (2 pages).

2.3 Preliminary work

Summary of applicant's preliminary work and results that have laid the foundation for the project. Please comment on the availability or status of implementing cell lines (i.e. genetic constructs), mouse strains, mouse models, and tabulate specific experimental models or techniques (5 pages).. Please cite five of the most important project-relevant publications.

2.4 Work plan

2.4.1 Hypotheses and derived workpackages: an overview.

2.4.2 Detailed work plan, including experimental and/or study design, biometrical planning (overview of experimental groups and sample size calculations) and analysis, as well as a clear and comprehensive description of materials, methods, and work flow. This section is the centerpiece of the proposal (10 pages).

2.5 Time Schedule

The time schedule should give an overview of work packages and – if possible – include milestones and defined results.

2.6 Significance of expected results for the field and for the practical application of results

Description of the potential scientific and clinical significance of the project, including expected results (0.5 pages).

2.7 References relevant to the application (please provide complete references).

3 Organizational requirements

3.1 Description of the team, of allocated tasks and responsibilities, as well as of available scientific infrastructure

Division of project competencies/roles and tasks (principal investigator, additional institutionally funded investigators; given as percent of available work capacity), as well as additional dedicated institutional personnel to be financed by EKFS funding.

In particular, please justify staff applied for, in terms of expected contribution to the implementation of the project.

4 Planned funding of the project

4.1 Planned total cost of the project

4.2 Breakdown of total costs

- from institutional funding dedicated to the project
- from awarded, or applied for, external funding sources (please include copies of approvals)
- from funding applied for, from the EKFS (total sum in Euro)

4.3 Breakdown of EKFS funding applied for

4.3.1 Personnel costs (in Euro)

Please specify the intended period of employment and salary level (e.g. according TVöD or TVL categories), including all of the normal social security contributions to be covered by the employer. Only precise cost-related personnel data will enable an accurate calculation, and in turn, authorization of project funding. PhD student costs should be allocated 65% of a researcher position (postdoctoral). Supplemental allowances, such as those granted by the public service, will generally not be covered. Fifty percent of medical insurance premiums will be covered, according to a maximum of up to 50% of the respective AOK premium.

4.3.2 Funding of technical equipment, instrumentation (Euro)

Only funding for technical equipment and instrumentation may be applied for that is exclusively project-specific, and not part of an applicant's basic institutional infrastructure.

If specific technical equipment is applied for, the applicant should justify selection according to verification of market availability and suitability (device type and accessories). For individual equipment costs that exceed 2,500.- €, a detailed list of all possible cost estimates should be submitted.

Equipment funds applied for (costs including VAT, transport, etc.) should be presented in a clear and concise manner. If a large device costing more than 25,000.- € is applied for, then the applicant should include lease or rental estimates for the duration of the project.

4.3.3 Consumables (Euro)

Please specify as exactly as possible, a detailed list of required consumables.

4.4 Funding schedule

Please prepare a funding schedule, which shows quarterly installments required (i.e. precise funding release).

To avoid loss of interest on revenue, the EKFS will transfer funds at the beginning of the annual quarter, within which approved funds are needed.

4.5 Information on subsequent funding

Provide an outline of the planned continuation of the project (e.g. tasks, projects) and funding after completion of the proposed schedule.

5 Declaration

Was this project or a similar project previously submitted and rejected by another funding agency? If so, please inform us about the reasons for rejection including reviews, if possible. This information will not influence the evaluation or funding decision of your application. Our aim here is to optimize our information base and ease the burden of the peer review system.

With their signatures, the applicants and co-applicants commit themselves to following the revised principles of "Good Scientific Practice" as defined by the DFG's "Empfehlungen zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis", 2013.

6 Signatures of applicants

7 List of appendices

see B and C

B Applicant(s)

For the principal investigator, co-investigators as well as for research personnel subject to the applied EKFS funding (if known):

- Short CV (2 pages).
- List of publications for the current year, and the four years prior to the application (i.e. only peer-reviewed original papers and reviews arranged in two lists); including journal impact factors. Please provide complete references with full list of authors and set applicant names in boldface for each citation. Please do not attach pdfs of manuscripts or papers to your application.
- List of ongoing third-party funded projects (title, funding period, funding amount) along with copies of grant approvals.

C Requirements for implementation (attachments)

(if necessary, these files can be arranged as individual pdfs):

1. Official permits (animal experiment approvals, ethics committee approvals)

If the project involves work with animals or with human material or humans, animal experiment and ethics committee approvals covering the entire work plan of the project need to be obtained from the relevant authorities.

Proposals that do not include approvals, or at the very least, evidence of filing for an approval of the responsible institutional review board or for animal experiment permits from the responsible authority (acknowledgement of receipt and reference number), will not be processed.

A statement from your internal animal welfare officer is not sufficient.

We know that our requirements exceed those of other funding agencies on this point. However, our foundation is exclusively dedicated to funding excellent, highly competitive projects that address fascinating and pressing research questions, and that can be rapidly implemented.

2. Research leave approval

In order to ensure the practicability of the proposed work plan, we require confirmation of the applicant's clinical head or supervisor, indicating the percentage of your work time - free from patient care - that you will be available to work on the project. If the applicant is a full professor, a confirmation is not needed.

3. Cooperative agreements

All cooperation partners that will make a defined and critical contribution to the proposed project should be verified by the submission of relevant cooperative agreements.