Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung

Information for First and Second Applicants

as of 16 October 2019

1. Objective and focus of project funding

The objective of this call for tenders is to give outstanding young scientists in medical research employed at German research institutions the opportunity to become scientifically independent at an early stage. By independently conceiving and conducting a promising research project, the aim is to lay the cornerstone for a viable research profile and a separate work group.

First and second applications may be submitted for all fields of medical research. The projects are selected on a competitive basis in an internal (academic committee at EKFS) and/or an external peer review process. This process recognises both previous scientific (and clinical, if applicable) achievements, in particular any publications authored by the candidate, as well as the scientific quality, originality and relevance of the proposed project.

As a general rule, it is not possible to apply for one's own position.

2. Formal prerequisites

2.1. Applicant

Applications may be submitted by graduate physicians or scientists working in medical research who are employed at a university hospital, a university or an extramural research institution in Germany.

First applicants must be younger than 38 years old. This age limit may be modified in justified individual cases to be clarified in advance, due to family commitments (such as pregnancy, parental leave or caring for relatives), military or civil service, or issues of a comparable nature.

First original publications as lead author are required. As a general rule, applicants will have continued their scientific work after their PhD, during their time as a postdoctoral fellow, or alongside their further medical training.

The acquisition of one separate funding project in peer-reviewed procedures, the acquisition of intramural funding or smaller external subproject funding (e.g. as co-applicant) shall not be grounds for exclusion for application. The same shall apply for personal scholarships that have been awarded without material resources. Scientists who have acquired more than one funded project as project managers in peer-reviewed procedures from inter alia Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung, DFG, BMBF, Krebshilfe and the EU shall, however, not be eligible to make an application in this procedure.

2.2. Cover letter

A cover letter from the clinical or institute director in charge is a key component of the application (Part C of the application documents). The letter must contain an assessment of the applicant's academic prospects, an assessment of the project's scientific potential, as well as binding commitments to support the project from resources at the hospital or institute. See the Notes on Application and Application Format Template, Part C.

2.3. Approvals of all investigations planned within the scope of the proposed project (in particular animal testing approval and ethics committee vote).

2.4. Proof of origin and authentication of cell lines used.

2.5. A power analysis and biometric sample size planning which convincingly demonstrate the predictability of statistically significant results is a requirement for a review of an application.

2.6. Commitments from all co-operating partners critical for the success of the project.

2.7. In the event that application deals with a clinical study, presentation of the study protocol

2.8. The previously available option of having a second (as a rule, more experienced) scientist as co-applicant is no longer applicable for applications submitted as of 1 October 2018. This is intended to underscore applicants' self-reliance and accountability within the funding line for first- and second-time applicants. A letter of support from a scientific or scholastic mentor (e.g. work group leader or department head) can be included as enclosure to the application in the event that this person is not identical with the director at the hospital, clinic or institute. This letter of mentorship does not function as a substitute for the obligatory accompanying letter from the director at the hospital, clinic or institute (see 2.2 above).

2.9. If the institution making the application is not a university or a public extramural research institution, please provide a brief description of the institution (legal form, non-profit status, performance).

2.10. Applications may be submitted in German or English (native-speaker quality only, please). Please avoid using a mixture of languages. If your application relates to a field of research that is very strongly networked at a national level, please submit your application in English to enable the involvement of foreign experts, as appropriate.

2.11. The application (including cover letter, excluding appendices) should not exceed 20 pages conforming to the German DIN A4 size format (in Arial 11 pt, single-spaced or similar font type). Inserted tables and illustrative diagrams are welcome.

3. Application documents

Please structure your application into 3 separate pdf documents (A, B, C), and please email these as pdf files to kontakt@ekfs.de. Please do not forget to number the pages.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt within a week, please check if we have received your application.

A project description (please use the structure outlined below, including the subheadings)

B CVs, publications and list of the applicants' current external sources of funding (see below for formats and details)

C Notes on the implementation requirements (separate pdf files may also be created for this, if necessary):

- Cover letter from the hospital or institute director
- Approvals (animal testing approval, ethics committee vote)
- Proof of authenticity of the cell lines to be used
- Co-operation commitments
- Study protocols

A: Project description

1. General information

1.1. Project title

1.2. Applicant and institution
Mailing address and contact details (e-mail address) of the applicant

1.3. **Project duration** in months

1.4. Requested funds
(sum total here; details under 4.)

2. Scientific project description

2.1 Summary
Brief summary of the objective and expected findings of the project (0.5 pages).

2.2 State of research
Brief outline of the scientific context of the project, including an assessment of the competitiveness of the chosen approach (max. 2 pages)

2.3 Own preliminary work
Summary of own preliminary work and findings underlying the proposed project; if applicable, include a statement on the availability of cell lines (i.e. of genetic constructs), mouse lines, animal models, established, specific methodological approaches (5 pages).

Cite your maximum 5 most important project-related publications and list them at the end of the section (see Appendix B for method of citation).

2.4 Work plan

2.4.1 Outline of hypothesis/hypotheses and derived work packages

2.4.2 A detailed work plan that clearly and comprehensibly presents the trial or study design, including biometric planning (overview of trial groups, determination of sample size) and evaluation, as well as materials, methods, trial or study procedure. This is the core of the application. (10 pages)

2.5 Schedule

The schedule should include the most important steps and – if possible – milestones and defined results.

2.6 Significance of the project for the specialist field and for application of the findings in practice

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

2.7 Literature regarding the application (complete citations please, applicant bold; quotation marks in text: Rakoff-Nahoum et al. 2015)

Format template:

Rakoff-Nahoum S, Kong Y, Kleinstein SH, Subramanian S, Ahern PP, Gordon JI, **Medzhitov R (applicant bold)**. Analysis of gene-environment interactions in postnatal development of the mammalian intestine. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A 2015; 112: 1929-936

3. Organisational requirements

3.1. Description of work group, allocation of responsibilities in project and available scientific infrastructure

Distribution of roles and responsibilities and, if possible, name all persons participating in the project:

- Applicant and any other institutionally funded contributors with binding indication of the proportionate working hours they may be able to devote to the project, in %
- Employees to be financed from this foundation's funds

Specifically requested human resources must be justified here with respect to the project's execution. As a general rule, the applicant's own position cannot be applied for.

4. Planned funding of the project

4.1. Total planned expenditure for the project

4.2. Breakdown of overall costs

- Funds provided from the institution's basic funding
- External funding applied for from or granted by another party (please enclose copies of approval notices)
- Funding applied for at Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung (total amount in EUR)

4.3. Breakdown of funds applied for at EKFS

4.3.1. Personnel resources (in EUR)

The intended employment period, salary grade (e.g. concrete definition according to the German "TVöD" [civil service collective agreement] or "TVL" [civil service collective agreement for federal states]), as well as social security contributions usually payable by the employer etc. should be indicated. Only precise details of personnel costs will enable the calculation of any funds to be approved. PhD positions may be set at up to 65% of an academic post (postdoc).

Grants, as provided for under civil service collective bargaining law, are not granted as a general rule. At best, 50% of health insurance contributions may be assumed, but no more than up to 50% of the respective AOK (major German health insurer) contribution at most.

4.3.2. Funds for equipment investments (in EUR)

The only equipment investments that may be financed from this foundation's funds are those that are exclusively project-specific and not part of basic equipment.

If project-specific equipment has to be applied for, the applicant should check the suitability of the equipment available on the market before drafting the application and justify the choice (device type and accessories). In the case of equipment with individual acquisition costs of over EUR 2,500, several detailed cost estimates should be submitted if possible.

Investment funds being applied for (prices, including VAT, transport costs, etc.) must be presented as a clear breakdown. If large equipment with acquisition costs of over EUR 25,000 are applied for, the applicant must also submit offers for leasing or renting the equipment for the duration of the application period.

4.3.3. Consumables (in EUR)

The requirement must be specified as precisely as possible, stating the costs and compiling them in detail.

4.4. Cost schedule

Preparation of a cost schedule from which it is clear when instalments are required (precise call dates) for which quarter in which amount.
In order to avoid interest losses for the foundation, this foundation shall not transfer the funds until the beginning of the relevant quarter in which the funds are needed for the approved purpose.

4.5. Information on follow-up financing

Outline the further planning beyond the end of the intended project duration.

5. Declaration

Declaration as to whether the submitted or a similar project application has previously been submitted to another sponsor. If the project application has previously been rejected by other sponsors, please inform us of the reasons for this rejection or regarding expert opinions, if possible. This request shall not prejudice the project's chances of funding. It is merely intended to optimise our information situation and provide some relief for the expert review system.

By signing, the applicant and co-applicants undertake to comply with the "Recommendations for ensuring good scientific practice" (*Empfehlungen zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis*) issued by DFG (German Research Foundation), revised in 2013.

6. Voluntary declaration of consent for storage of your data

We request the following (voluntary) declaration of consent from you to enable us to continue to notify you of our calls for tenders and activities in future:

I hereby consent to my personal address and contact details (name, address, telephone number, fax, e-mail) being stored and used for future notifications of calls for tenders, events and publications issued by Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung.

This consent has been given voluntarily and may be informally revoked at any time by notifying Else Kröner- Fresenius-Stiftung, Am Pilgerrain 15, 61352 Bad Homburg v.d.H., Germany.

You can find the GDPR data protection information on our website under the category Application.

7. Signature of the project manager

8. List of appendices
according to B and C

B: Applicant

For the applicant and human resources (if they are known by name) to be financed from EKFS funds, please enclose separately for each:

1. CV (max. 3 pages)

2. List of publications from the current year and the past four years in accordance with the template on the home page (do not enclose publications or manuscripts): https://www.ekfs.de/en/scientific-funding/funding-lines/first-applications

3. List of current and completed external funding (applicant, title, sponsor, duration and amount of funding), plus copies of approval notices. Please make a statement if you have no external funding.

C: Notes on the implementation requirements

(separate pdf files may also be submitted for this, if necessary):

1. **Cover letter**

A cover letter from the hospital or institute director in charge is a key component of the application (Part C of the application documents). This letter should answer the following questions:

- Does the candidate have a proven successful career as a Clinician Scientist or medical research scientist?
- What are the candidate's medium-term prospects at the relevant hospital or institute?
- How important is the proposed project in the context of the research of the institute or the hospital?
- How important is the project for the candidate's personal development?
- From what percentage of working hours will the applicant be released from medical care or other institute responsibilities towards implementation of the project?
- Is it possible for 1/3 of the total expenditure for the project to be provided in the form of human and material resources from institutional funding?

2. **Voluntary declaration of consent of** the institute or hospital director for the storage of

data according to the template on the website

3. **Approvals** (animal testing approval, ethics committee vote)
   Animal testing approvals and ethics committee votes must be obtained prior to the application for all experiments or studies planned as part of the project.

   Applications for which a positive decision or at least proof of an ongoing application to the ethics committee or the state authority responsible for animal testing (confirmation of receipt with file reference number) has not been submitted shall not be processed. An opinion from the internal animal protection officer shall not suffice.

4. **Proof of origin and authentication of cell lines used**
   When, where and how were the cell lines used authenticated? If the cell line has been used for longer than six months in the applicant laboratory, re-authentication shall be required (Leibniz Institute DMSZ – German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures in Brunswick [German: Braunschweig] or ATCC Deutschland, LGC Standards, Wesel)

5. **Co-operation commitments**
   All co-operations that specifically contribute to implementation of the project must be documented with a confirmation of co-operation.

6. **Study protocol in the event of clinical studies**