9th Call for proposals for interdisciplinary Seed Fund Projects

Background
The Exploratory Research Space @ RWTH Aachen (ERS) is a section within the university that supports the generation of new and unconventional ideas. It will comprise 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.

1. Type and aim of projects:
The proposed projects should identify and explore new interdisciplinary research fields or develop new methods and methodologies between interdisciplinary research topics. The topics should be new, creative and can be of high risk. They must not already be addressed by national or international public funding programs.

2. Selection and evaluation criteria:
The projects will be selected and evaluated by an evaluation group. The evaluation process may involve external experts.
The selection criteria for submitted proposals will be
- Originality (new, creative, explorative),
- Interdisciplinary (participation of researchers from different faculties and disciplines with strongly differing research topics),
- Subsidiarity (funding through other sources is not yet possible),
- Team structure (senior and/or high-potential young researchers),
- Potential impact on the research strategy and structure of RWTH Aachen,
- Adequateness of research approach.

Major evaluation criteria after project completion will be the quality of obtained research results and the future perspectives of the research topic as described in a final report which has to be provided 18 months after project closure:
- A promising proposed third-party funded follow-up project (DFG, BMBF, EU, …),
- Publications in peer reviewed journals,
- Granted patents or promising patent applications.

3. Funding
The budget for a Seed Fund Project is provided by the “Hans Hermann Voss-Stiftung” and the excellence initiative of the German federal and state governments and makes allowances to the allocation model aiming for 30 % share of females funded by the Institutional Strategy. The total budget for all new Seed Fund Projects is at most 800,000 €. Eligible costs are: Staff expenses, travel and subsistence costs, support for workshops and conferences, hiring students to work on the project, consumables and equipment.
4. General conditions

Research Partners: typically 2-3 researchers from different faculties and disciplines; we strongly encourage the participation of young scientists (junior professor, group leader, research fellow, etc.) who are scientifically independent and are leading a research group.

The researchers should not be part of the same institution.

Joint Proposals with partners from Forschungszentrum Juelich (FZJ) are welcome. The research topics and the expertise of the FZJ partners must be different from those of the RWTH partners and they have to complement each other. The funding for the partners from FZJ needs to be provided by their institutes and cannot be covered by RWTH Aachen University.

Each research team (professor with his/her group) can participate in a maximum of 3 Seed Fund Project Proposals.

Progress evaluation: final report

5. Proposal structure and content

Length of proposal: 10 pages max., type size: Arial 11, line spacing: 1.5

- Project partners and principle investigators
- Summary
- Current State-of-the-Art
- Relevant work of the applicants
- Goals and approach (methodology)
- Working plan
- Financial plan
- Expected long term impact (targeted third party funding, implementation of new scientific infrastructure, new significantly visible, interdisciplinary competences, action plan to achieve these strategic goals)
- References

Language: English or German

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

6. Deadline for submission: 20th June 2017

7. Project start: between November 2017 and January 2018

8. Project duration: 6 to 12 months

   Call: Seed Fund 2017
For additional information on the selection process, please refer to our website:
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/ers

Contact:
Dr.-Ing. Vera Eckers                        Tel. 0241 80 90492
Exploratory Research Space                  E-mail: ers@ers.rwth-aachen.de
RWTH Aachen
Templergraben 55, 52056 Aachen