

ERS-Forum: Support for New Research Ideas

The **Exploratory Research Space @ RWTH Aachen (ERS)** is a structure to support the generation of new and unconventional research ideas. ERS-Forum regularly organizes meetings and events aiming at overcoming the frontiers between different disciplines and giving leeway to both senior and junior researchers for creativity and fostering interdisciplinary exchange and discussion.

1. Types of Measures

The call is open for all interdisciplinary research topics. The topics should be new, creative and can be of high risk. They should not already be addressed by national or international public funding programs. The proposed measures should aim at the identification and exploration of new interdisciplinary research fields or the development of new methods and methodologies between interdisciplinary research topics. Activities that can be supported by ERS-Forum are, e.g., meetings of small core groups, presentations, workshops, colloquia and symposia. Different types of ERS workshops can be distinguished from information, strategy and creativity workshops to “open space” and future labs managed by a professional moderator.

2. Selection and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals are reviewed by the members of the ERS Steering Committee. Evaluation criteria are:

- originality and interdisciplinary of the research topic
- adequateness of proposed activity to further develop this topic

The proposal should clearly address the subject: Why is the topic important, what is the driving force for the intended research (scientific challenge, possible applications, societal needs, ...), what is the “incentive tick”?

Furthermore, the goal of the proposed activity must be defined, e.g., a joined research proposal (EU project, DFG Collaborative Research Centre, ...), establishing a new research focus at RWTH Aachen University, organization of a thematically focused conference or new series of symposia etc.

For evaluation after completion of the supported activity, a short report on results and follow-up activities is requested.

3. Funding

The budget of ERS-Forum is provided by the excellence initiative of the German federal and state governments. The support is intended to be “incentive money” promoting initiatives and activities for the development of new research topics that cannot be funded by other sources. Eligible costs are: rent for meeting venue, external moderation, travel costs for invited speakers, support of workshops and meetings etc.

4. General Conditions

Research partners: at least 2 researchers from different faculties and disciplines
Progress evaluation: report (approx. 1 page) on outcome and/or follow-up measures contemporary to supported measure

5. Proposal Structure and Content

Length of proposal: 2 pages max., type size: Arial 11, line spacing: 1.5

- Project partners
- Summary
- Background, motivation and approach of proposed activity
- Possible agenda for proposed activity
- Expected long term impact
- List of possible participants
- Cost frame

Language: English or German

6. Further Information and Application

This is an open call. Please submit your proposal any time via email to:

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We strongly recommend to contact us before submitting a proposal.