

IMF – Proposal Preparation Instructions

Research Project Proposals

I. General Information

1. Junior scientists who are already **postdocs** and work at the University Medical School Münster or at the University Hospital Münster (UKM) as their **main occupation** are eligible to apply for funding. Priority will be given to applications from early-stage researchers (ESRs). Project applications from early-stage researchers (ESRs) together with non-ESRs receive a lower rating. Appointed professors are not eligible to apply for funding for a research project.
2. Proposals can be submitted every year until **1st April** and until **1st October** (submission deadlines).
3. The proposal, excluding publication list and CV, should be no more than **20 pages** in length (including the list of references). It should be self-explanatory and not require reviewers to read the literature that is either quoted or enclosed.
4. Proposals must be written **in English**.
5. The IMF's funding decisions are based on evaluations made by scientific reviewers working without compensation. They form their judgment on the basis of the information presented in the proposal. It is therefore in your own interest to work out a clearly written proposal.
6. Relevant criteria for the **evaluation of project applications** by the IMF commission:
 - innovation of the research project
 - early-stage researcher
 - own preliminary work
 - stringency of the work programme
 - competence of applicants / scientific environment
 - prospect of third-party funding following IMF funding
7. Applicants may request funding for a period of **up to three years**. Please state under item *1.5 Application Period* whether you request funding for one, two or three years. Notice: In the case of a project period of two years or more the applicant is obliged to submit a request of external follow-up financing for the IMF project, e. g. to the *German Research Foundation* (DFG) or a comparable peer-reviewed funding organization. If we do not receive a confirmation of receipt of the application for third-party funding two and a half year after the start of the IMF project, the applicant will be excluded from a further application for IMF funding for three years.
8. The IMF commission asks you to
 - answer all relevant questions fully, according to general scientific practices, and correctly describe your own preliminary work and that of others;
 - adhere to the numbering system of these guidelines and repeat the complete headline in each section;
 - use the following basic formats for the whole text: font type Arial, font size 11 pt., line spacing „Multiple 1.15“

- submit a **signed original** of the proposal (incl. any annexes) to the office of the IMF (punched and without staples, on A4 paper);
- submit an **electronic version** of the complete proposal (including attachments) as a **PDF file** by e-mail to beate.loesing@ukmuenster.de, and a PDF file containing the **short version of the proposal** with the following content:
 - the first page with the *General Information* (item 1.1 – 1.5)
 - the *summary* of the proposal (item 1.6)
 - a *curriculum vitae* (in tabular form) of each applicant
 - a list of the *most relevant publications*, in this field of research, of the last five years for each applicant (maximum 10 publications each)

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II. Proposal Format

1. General information

Proposal for a start-up financing for a research project

Please state whether this is a new proposal or a revised proposal.

Important note: A revision will only be possible if suggested by the IMF commission which will be communicated to you in the notice of rejection. In case of submission of a revised proposal you should take into account the points of concern by the reviewers and/or the IMF commission; they will be conveyed to you on your request by the Chairman/Chairwoman of the IMF board. These points of concern should be discussed in a separate point-by-point reply.

1.1 Applicants

In case of multiple applicants, please mention first the person who will act as principal investigator, assuming responsibility for the IMF for the overall management of the project and being accountable for the use of the IMF funds granted.

Please specify the following information for each applicant and/or co-applicant:

- First name, last name, academic title
- Employment status / duration of contract if on a fixed-term contract*
- Date of birth, and nationality
- Institution and department (full name)
- Work address
- Telephone number
- Fax number
- E-mail address
- Home address and telephone number

Please attach a **tabular CV** of each applicant with the proposal.

**If your fixed-term contract will expire before the end of the requested funding duration please enclose a confirmation letter from the head of the clinic or institute in which she/he gives her/his binding assurance that your employment contract will be extended until the end of project funding in case IMF funding is granted.*

1.2 Topic

Please give a brief and precise description of the project, not exceeding 140 characters.

1.3 Keywords

Please enter some project-relevant keywords that summarize the main themes or concepts of your research topic

1.4 Research area and field of work

Please include your discipline and your field of specialization, so the project can be categorised with regard to its main focus.

1.5 Anticipated total duration

Please indicate:

- the planned project start
- the probable overall duration of the research project

1.6 Application period

Please state the period for which funding is requested (up to 36 months).

1.7 Summary

Please summarize the main goals of the project. This should not exceed one DIN-A 4 page in length.

2. State of the art and preliminary work

2.1 State of the art

Please explain briefly and precisely the state of the art in your field in its direct relationship to your project. This description should make clear in which context you situate your own research and in what areas you intend to make an innovative, promising contribution.

2.2 Preliminary work

Indicate the current state of your preliminary work. This description must be concise and understandable without referring to additional literature. Demonstrate that you are able to successfully implement the planned project by presenting your own preliminary work. You should refer to any relevant publications of your own, too. If the work relevant to the project has not yet been published, it makes sense to provide a more detailed description. Manuscripts that have been submitted but not yet accepted for publication may also be included.

Please attach a **list with a maximum of 10 project- and topic-related publications** of the last five years of each applicant. It serves as an important basis for assessing your planned research project. If you have not published in the proposed research area, please list the 10 most important publications of each applicant.

3. Objectives and work programme

3.1 Objectives

Please give a concise description of your project's research programme and the scientific objectives.

3.2 Work programme

Please give a detailed account of the steps planned during the proposed funding period. (For experimental projects, a schedule detailing all planned experiments should be provided.).

The quality of the work programme is critical to the success of a funding proposal. You should therefore pay special attention to the design of the work programme. It may be helpful to know that this normally comprises half the text of the entire application. The work programme should clearly state why the funds are needed and how they will be used, providing details on individual items where applicable.

Please provide a detailed description of the methods that you plan to use in the project: What methods are already available? What methods need to be developed? What assistance is needed from outside your own group/institute? (Instrumentation should be mentioned in section II, 4.2)

3.3 Experiments involving humans or human materials

Experiments involving humans, including identifiable samples taken from humans and research using patient data, must comply with the June 1964 Declaration of Helsinki (entitled "Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects"), as last revised, concluded by the World Medical Association. Please note that the regulations of the German Embryo Protection Law (*Embryonenschutzgesetz*) and Stem Cell Act (*Stamzellgesetz*), and the laws concerning pharmaceutical (§§ 40-42 *Arzneimittelgesetz*) and medical products (§§ 17-19 *Medizinproduktegesetz*), in their current forms must also be observed.

Please describe the ethical and legal aspects of your project in a form accessible to peer review:

- treatment or experiment,
- criteria for selecting test persons,
- description of potential risks and precautions taken,
- method of informed consent.

A statement from the local ethics committee is required for all projects involving human subjects. The use of human material obtained for diagnostic purposes also requires a statement by the chair of the local ethics committee. Please enclose a copy of the statement by the relevant ethics committee. In case this statement has not yet be obtained, please contact the local ethics committee at the same time as you submit the proposal to the IMF, in order to accelerate the required statement. If your IMF-proposal is granted, the funds may be released only if the IMF receives **a copy of the statement from the local ethics committee**.

Research involving human embryonic stem cells

Proposals for research involving human embryonic stem cells can only be funded if the authorization required by § 6 of the Stem Cell Act has been granted. The IMF commission therefore recommends you contact the approval authorities (Robert Koch Institute, Berlin) stated in § 7, para. 1 clause 1 of the Stem Cell Act at the same time as you submit the proposal to the IMF, in order to accelerate a decision on the proposal. If your proposal is approved, the funds earmarked for work with human embryonic stem cells will remain locked until the IMF receives confirmation of approval by the Robert Koch Institute.

3.4 Experiments with animals

Proposed animal experiments must be described in the work programme in a form suitable for peer review. The IMF commission expects that the regulations of the *Animal Welfare Act* (*Tierschutzgesetz*) be observed. For animal experiments that require approval by the local authorities (LANUV NRW), the IMF commission recommends that you seek the necessary approval either prior to submitting your proposal, or at the latest when you submit your proposal to the IMF. Research work may only start once approval has been obtained. In case your IMF proposal is granted, the funds may be released only if the IMF receives a copy of the official approval for the animal experiments. **The approval must be available to us at the latest one year after the date of the grant letter, otherwise the promised funds will be forfeited.**

3.5 Experiments with recombinant DNA

If you plan experiments involving recombinant DNA, you must observe the *Gesetz zur Regelung von Fragen der Gentechnik* of 20 June 1990 (*Bundesgesetzblatt*, 1990 I, page 1080). Research work may not commence until the required approval, according to this law and the relevant decrees, has been obtained.

4. Funds requested

The maximum grant is EUR 70.000 per year. Please specify the exact time period and the requested funding amounts separately for each year.

4.1 Staff

Notice: Applicants may not apply for their own salary support in their research proposals. The following information is required:

- a) For all **scientific staff** and **technical assistants** to be paid according to the applicable salary scales (TV-L), please state
 - ⇒ how long the staff member will be employed in the project,
 - ⇒ the salary class according to TV-L (PhD student* = TV-L **E13** 65 % - usually up to pay grade level two; technical assistant = TV-L **E9** up to 100 % - usually up to pay grade level three).

** Note: The scientific staff council of the WWU does no longer agree to recruit doctoral candidates with an employment duration of less than 3 years. If applying only for a two-year-funding, it is necessary to specify a cost center of the clinic/institute to which the personnel costs for the PhD student can be posted in the 3rd year of his employment.*
- b) For **student assistants** or **graduate assistants**, please state
 - ⇒ if you plan to recruit a student assistant with or without a *Bachelor degree* or a graduate assistant (after completing studies),
 - ⇒ how long the student or the graduate assistant will be employed in the project,
 - ⇒ the weekly hours of work.

An important criterion for the approval of funding for assistants without degree is their qualified involvement in the project. This must be justified in the proposal.

Please provide a brief description of the tasks for each proposed IMF-funded staff member. The tasks must correspond to those referred to in the work programme. Please also indicate the date when payment from the IMF funds should commence. If the names of proposed co-workers are available, please list them in your proposal.

4.2 Scientific instrumentation

- a) Please specify all requested instrumentation with an indication of the purchase price including VAT and other expenses. Please list the information and prices as follows, and mark the relevant items in the offers (which must also be enclosed):

Instrument A (type)

Offer by dated.....

Accessories

(Listed separately by brief reference. Mark the relevant items in the offer.)

Instrument B (type)

Etc.

Total purchase price 4.2

_____ **EUR**

Please explain why this instrumentation is essential to the project and justify its necessity in relation to the core support furnished by the institution. Requested instrumentation must be described in sufficient detail (i.e. technical specification) to assure that the capabilities meet the requirements described in the work programme (e.g. measuring field, sensitivity, etc.). In addition, please justify the need for the accessories as requested. Please state the total period of instrumentation use in the scope of the proposed research project and, where applicable, possible use by other scientists.

- b) If existing instrumentation and computing facilities required by your project are only accessible to you by paying a fee, please quote these costs and give details.
- c) Funds for the **development of a software/app** can only be applied for on the condition that this service is either provided by an institution of the University of Münster or, in the case of necessary outsourcing, the manufacturer confirms in writing that the developed program will be made available as open source software.

4.3 Consumables

Please explain the need for each individual item (e.g. chemicals, glassware, etc.):

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.....
.....

4.4 Travel costs

Funding for travel expenses will only be granted in exceptional cases and if travelling is absolutely necessary for carrying out the project. **Participation in conferences will not be funded.**

Please explain the necessity for the different kinds of travel costs, and quote the amount needed during the grant period:

Total 4.4 EUR

4.5 Other costs

Please explain the need for each individual item:

(e.g. services rendered by third parties, compensation for test persons, laboratory animals [species and number], project-specific software, fees for the positive evaluation of the project by the Ethics Committee of the Medical Association Westfalen-Lippe)

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5. Prerequisites for carrying out the project

What resources, including other third-party funding, do you anticipate will be available to you for this project (excluding the funding requested in this application)? What other conditions have been met? In answering these questions, please provide the following information:

5.1 Composition of the project group

- a) Please specify the names, academic titles and employment grades of everyone who will be working on the planned project, but will not be paid from the project funds, and mention the number of technical staff and student assistants involved in the project.
- b) Please state a unique **description of the work share** of each researcher involved in submitting the proposal, and indicate **how many hours per week** each one will be able to work on the project.

5.2 Cooperation with other scientists

- a) Please mention those scientists, both at home and abroad (apart from those listed in 1.1) with whom you are cooperating or have agreed to cooperate with on this particular project, or with whom you will coordinate this work, and enclose respective letters of intent for the collaboration.
- b) Please list all scientists and academics, both at home and abroad, with whom you have collaborated on joint scientific projects within the past three years. (This will assist the Board of the IMF commission in avoiding potential conflicts of interest during the review process.)

5.3 Scientific equipment

Please list larger instruments that will be available to you for the project. These may include large computer facilities, should you anticipate needing substantial amounts of computer time.

If you are applying for instruments that are available at your institution, but are not at the project's disposal, please explain why this is the case.

5.4 Running costs for materials (being covered by the budget of the clinic/institute)

Please state the annual amount available from the institution's budget, or any other third party (please list separately), to pay for the research that your project is a part of. Use estimates where applicable.

5.5 Other requirements

Please state other preconditions that are not covered by the questions in numbers 5.1 to 5.4 (if applicable).

6. Prospects for development

Please provide an outlook for the future development of the project after the initial funding by the IMF also with regard to a possible follow-up financing by a third-party donor such as, for example, the German Research Foundation (DFG).

7. Declarations

7.1 *Proposal submitted elsewhere*

If you have submitted the same request for funding to **other institutions**, please mention this here. The same applies if instruments, as listed under section 4.2, have been, or will be, requested from other sources (e. g. within a Collaborative Research Centre [SFB]).

If this is not the case, please include the following statement:

“I have not requested funding for this project from any other sources (in particular from no institution within the Medical School of Münster such as Interdisciplinary Center for Clinical Research [IZKF] or SFB). In the event that I submit such a request, I will inform the IMF immediately.”

7.2 *Previous funding by the IMF*

Please make a declaration stating whether you have received a start-up financing for a research project from the IMF over the last four years. If that is the case, please include the following information: the topic of the IMF-funded project, and, if appropriate, the scientific publications and the third-party fundings resulting from the IMF research project. If you don't have received any funding by the IMF it is sufficient to note “not applicable”.

7.3 *Delimitation from other research projects*

If any member of the research group listed under point 5.1 works on a project with a similar research topic, please explain how your research project constitutes a new independent project and how it differs from similar projects (if necessary on a separate sheet). Otherwise it is sufficient to note “not applicable”.

7.4 *Third-party funding of the applicant(s)*

Please indicate whether you receive other third-party fundings at the time of proposal submission. If that is the case, please provide, as an attachment, **a list showing all current third-party fundings** stating the topic and the eligibility period of the funded project(s). If you don't receive any third-party funding it is sufficient to note “not applicable”.

7.5 *Support by head of research group*

If you are a member, and not the head of a research group, please enclose a letter by the research group leader (mentioned under point 5.1) indicating that she/he explicitly supports you in your own independent research. Otherwise it is sufficient to note “*Not applicable; I am the head of the research group*”.

7.6 *Additional information about applicants*

Here you can indicate career breaks, unconventional career paths, and major life events that have led to unavoidable delays in your academic career (such as escape, migration, long-term illness, childcare responsibilities, caring for relatives). This may be taken into account in favor of the applicant during the review and evaluation process, particularly with regard to classification as a young scientist. Otherwise it is sufficient to note “not applicable”.

8. Signature(s)

You, as the applicant(s) submitting the proposal, are required to sign it.

9. List of references / bibliography

10. List of attachments

Please list all proposal attachments

Annex to the guidelines

Guidelines for the Presentation of Publication Performance in IMF Applications

Please list your publications according to the following categories.

1. Original Research Articles in peer-reviewed Journals
2. Reviews in peer-reviewed Journals
3. Book Contributions and Books
4. Abstracts
5. Letters to the Editor
6. Articles in non-peer-reviewed Journals (e. g. Articles on preprint servers)