Public Health Research Funding: Programmes, Procedures and Success Rates

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German Research Foundation DFG
Who Funds Public Health Research in Germany?
Institutional and Project Funding

Institutional Funding
- Leibniz-Association
- Helmholtz-Association
- Federal States/Universities

Federal Ministry of Health (BMG)

Project Funding:
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
- German Research Foundation (DFG)
- Charities/Foundations
What is the DFG?
Germany’s central self-governing research funding organisation

The DFG serves **all branches of science and the humanities** by funding research projects and facilitating cooperation among researchers.

![Pie chart showing funding in 2012 by scientific discipline]

- **Engineering Sciences** €440.7 million (21.5%)
- **Humanities and Social Sciences** €319.0 million (15.5%)
- **Natural Sciences** €500.8 million (24.4%)
- **Life Sciences** €791.2 million (38.6%)

Roundtable Discussion “Public Health Research in Germany: Criteria and Structures”
Bonn, 20-21 January 2014
Funding Instruments
Bottom up approach, open to all research topics

► Individual careers

► Individual projects

► Joint projects / Coordinated programmes

► International projects
## Individual Careers
### From PhD to Professorship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studies</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Postdoc Period</th>
<th>Achievement of eligibility for tenure</th>
<th>Preparation for scientific mgmt position</th>
<th>Professorship or other scientific mgmt position</th>
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<td>Emmy Noether Programme</td>
<td>Reinhart Koselleck Projects</td>
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<td>Heisenberg professorship</td>
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<td>Research Training Group fellowship</td>
<td>Research fellowship (abroad)</td>
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<td>Research fellowship (abroad)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research in a Research Training Group</td>
<td>Research Training Group position</td>
<td>Temp. principal investigator position (Germany)</td>
<td>Temp. principal investigator position (Germany)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student assistant in DFG project</td>
<td>Position in DFG project</td>
<td>Position in DFG project</td>
<td>Position in DFG project</td>
<td>Position in DFG project</td>
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### Research in a Research Training Group
- Research Training Group fellowship
- Research fellowship (abroad)
- Temp. principal investigator position (Germany)
- Student assistant in DFG project
- Position in DFG project

### Professorship or other scientific mgmt position
- Emmy Noether Programme
- Heisenberg professorship
- Heisenberg fellowship
- Reinhart Koselleck Projects
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Award
Projects can be submitted at any time and on any research topic

Proposal

Formal examination

Reviewer selection

(written) Review

Reviewers

- Project quality
- Applicants’ qualifications
- Aims & work programme
- Employment opportunities
- Planned allocation of funding

Draft of funding recommendation

Assessment

Review Board

- Assessment of reviewer selection
- Proposal and review
- Comparative merit and funding volume

Communication of funding recommendation

Decision

Joint Committee

- Cross-subject comparison

Decision letter, Reviewers’ recommendations

Notification

Further inquiries
Funding Rates* in the Individual Grants Programme (Medicine)

* The funding rate (or success rate) was calculated by dividing the number of awards by the number of proposals reviewed.

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Individual Projects - Success Rates

205-01 Epidemiology, Medical Biometry, Medical Informatics

205-02 Public Health, Health Services Research, Social Medicine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010-2013</th>
<th>Number of Proposals Reviewed</th>
<th>Funding Rate</th>
<th>Amount of Funding (Euro)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>205-01</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9.34 Mio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205-02</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>5.55 Mio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>5,579</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>402 Mio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Fellowships</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Examples
“Population-based Hormone Receptor-specific Incidence Trends of Breast Cancer in Germany” – Applicants: Ulrike Bandemer-Greulich, Jutta Engel, Andreas Stang, Christa Stegmaier

“Use of population data bases with double sampling for choice-based sample surveys and time-to-event data” – Applicant: Iris Pigeot-Kübler

„Zweiphasige Designs für die empirische epidemiologische Forschung“ – Applicant: Iris Pigeot-Kübler (Transfer Project)

“Der Einfluß von Migrations- und Akkulturationsprozessen auf Schwangerschaft und Geburt: Perinataldaten von Migrantinnen und deutschen Frauen im Vergleich“ – Applicant: Matthias David

„Die Bedeutung von Krankheitserfahrungen und Krankheitsvorstellungen für die sekundäre Prävention des Ovarialkarzinoms“ – Applicant: Susanne Brandner

„Allergien und Lungenerkrankungen im Erwachsenenalter. Beitrag der deutschen Kohorten Hamburg und Erfurt zum Internationalen Projekt zu Atemwegserkrankungen.“ – Applicants: Joachim Heinrich, Helgo Magnussen, Dennis Nowak
(International) Research Training Groups
Localised programmes for PhD-Training, for example GRK793 „Epidemiology of Communicable and Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases and their Interrelationship“, Heidelberg

Research Units with joint topical focus
flexible location, usually 5-10 projects
For example FOR 655 “Prioritising in Medicine” or FOR 534 “Statistical Modeling and Data Analysis in Clinical Epidemiology”, Freiburg

Collaborative Research Centres
broader topical focus, max. 3 locations, usually 12-25 projects

Excellence Initiative
Priority Programmes
Open National Networks and Project Funding

► Annual selection of suggested topics

► Emerging fields or topics

► 12-15 topical calls for projects per year

► Usually 15-40 projects per call

► Call repeated after 2-3 years

for example SPP 1292 „Survey Methodology“
What are the DFG's selection criteria?

Generic Criteria

DFG reviewers judge proposals according to

- scientific quality of the project
- applicants’ qualifications
- aims and work programme
- planned allocation of funding
- quality and added value of cooperation
- programme-specific criteria

- Generizability, preliminary work, feasibility, study design, analysis plan, (data sharing, ethics, GCP, GEP)

in coordinated programmes
International Projects

Funding: DFG

Lead Agency (D-A-CH-L)

Binational-/Multinational Agreements or Calls
(e.g. ESRC, ANR, NSFC, DIP)

Individual Solutions

Developing Countries

Essential Contribution
(Research Unit, Priority Programme)

Funding: Partner Organisation

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In a Nutshell

- DFG funds Public Health Research
- DFG offers „Bottom up“ funding instruments
- Public Health individual grants have comparable success rates
- Coordinated projects less successfull
Thank you very much for your attention!

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For more information

- on the DFG: www.dfg.de  
- on DFG-funded projects: www.dfg.de/gepris/  
- on over 17,000 German research institutes: www.dfg.de/rex