



# DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

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**Your grant.  
Your research.  
Your career.**

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**Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V.**



**Germany's largest independent research funding organisation**  
3.9 € billion annual budget

**DFG members**

99 leading universities, non-university research institutions, scientific associations, academies

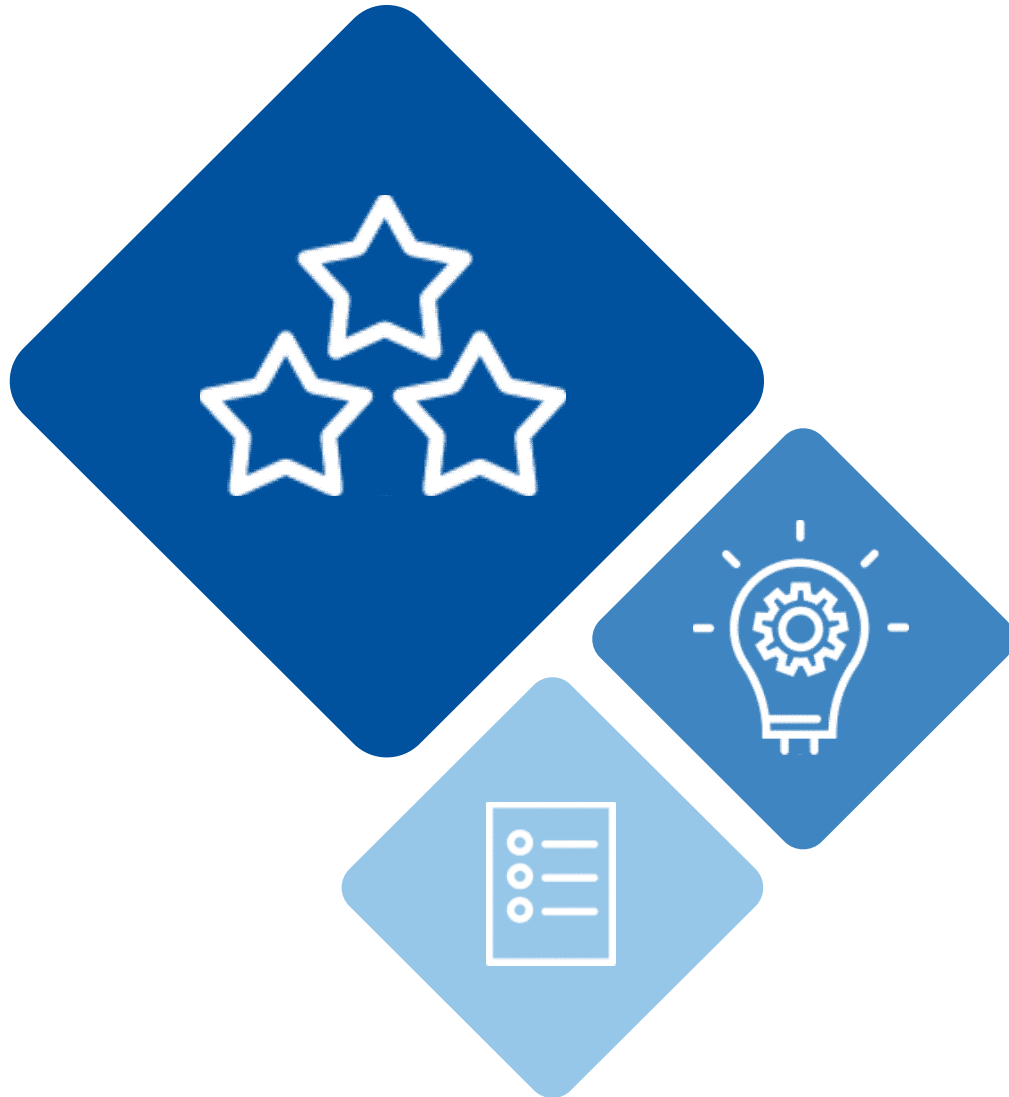
**Independent association**  
under private law



**Funding**  
knowledge-driven research

**Researchers have the majority**  
in decision-making committees

**DFG's Independence**  
guarantees academic freedom



## Funding **Knowledge-Driven Research**

The DFG selects and funds **high-quality research** and enables fair, science-led competition

## **Strategic (Funding) Initiatives**

The DFG adopts **strategic funding** initiatives to support specific research fields or to respond to acute research needs

## Shaping **Conditions & Standards**

The DFG helps shape sound **conditions and standards** of academic research, e.g. for **Early Career Researchers**



**Any discipline, any topic, any time**

Wide **variety** of project and cooperation formats

**All career stages** after the PhD, promoting early career researchers

**Transparent, anti-bias** review process

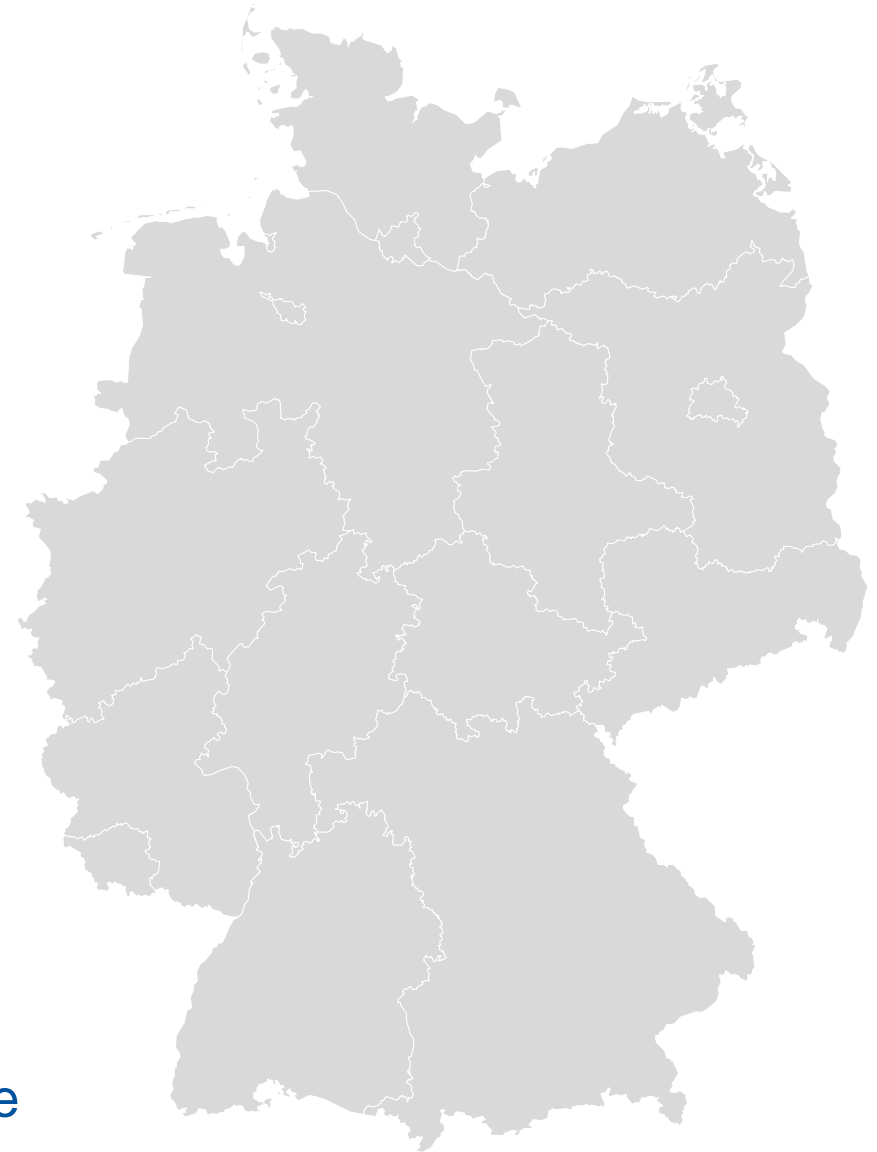
## Who is eligible to apply for DFG funding?

### Researchers

...who have completed their scientific training,  
i.e. **who hold a doctorate\***

...who (would like to) work  
**in Germany**

\*earliest date: upon submission to the examination office



# DFG Funding 2024



**30.500**  
Individual Projects

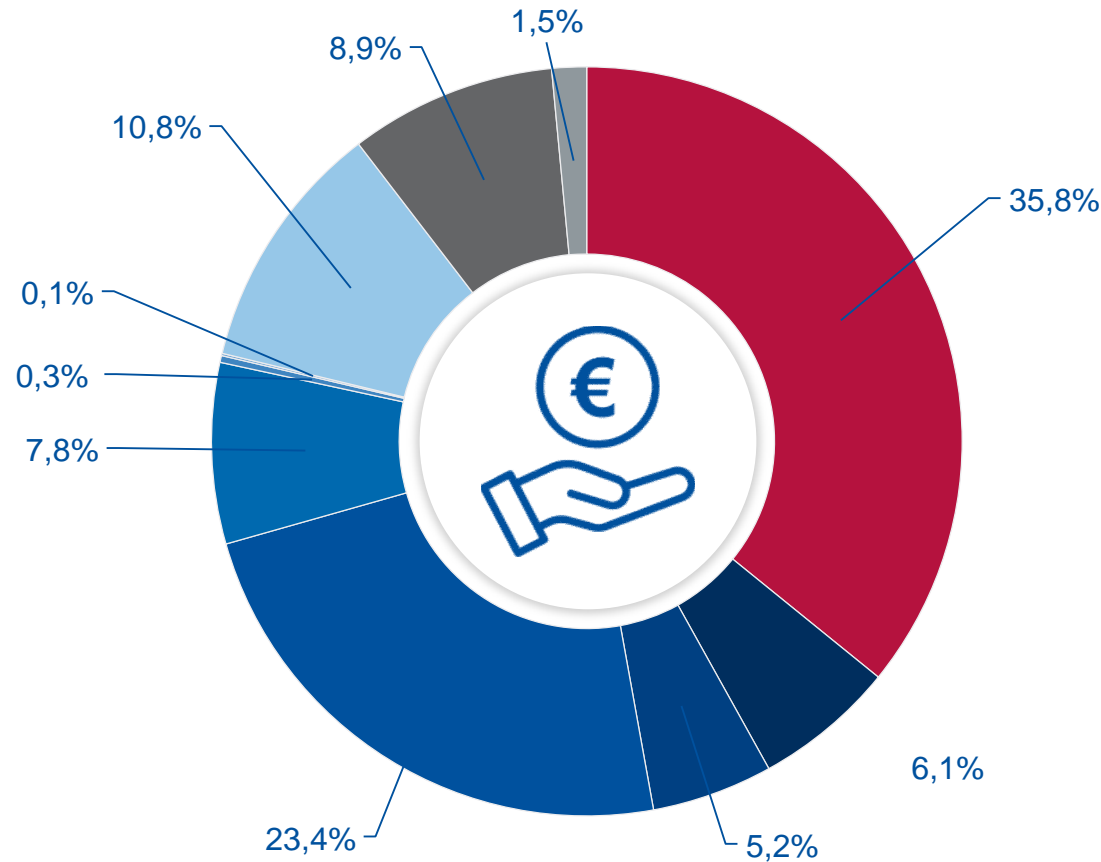


**993**  
Coordinated projects



**3,9 Billion €**  
Budget for research projects

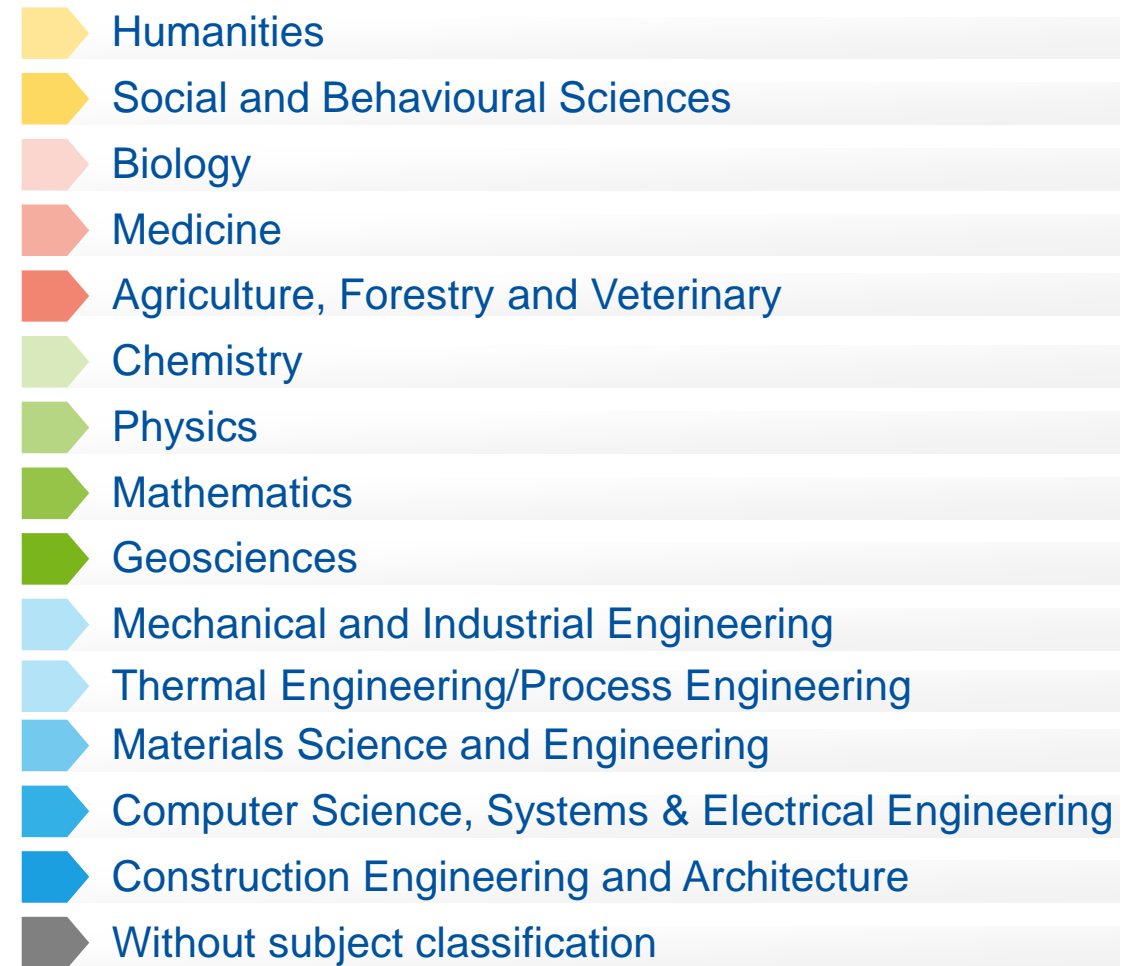
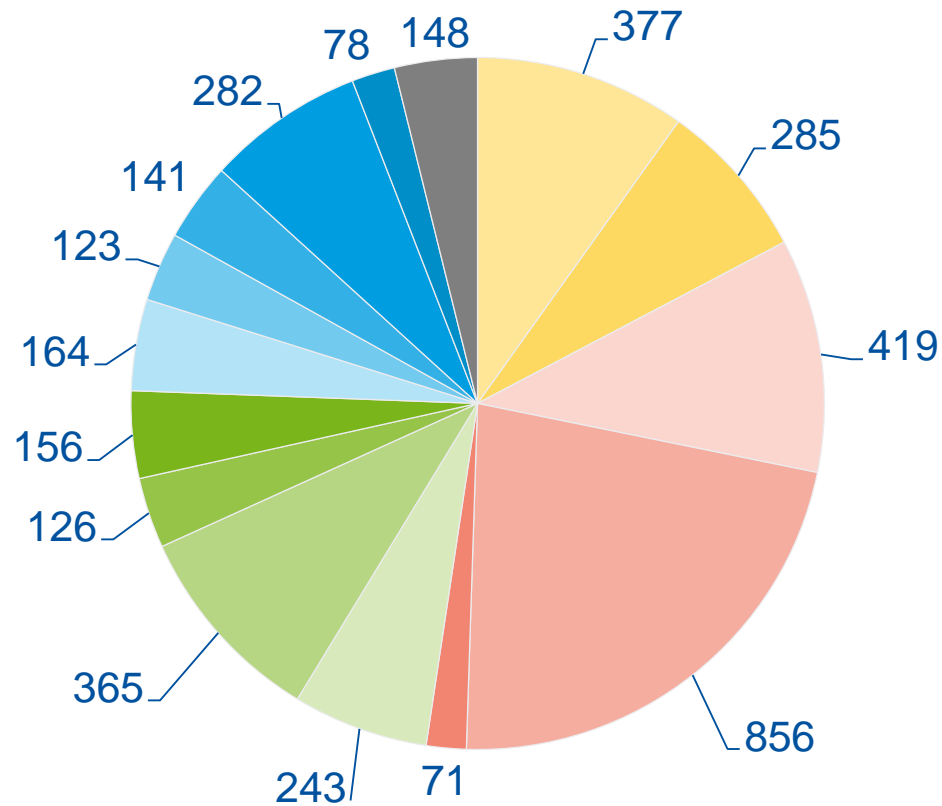
## Research funding by programme for 2025 (in Mio. € und %)



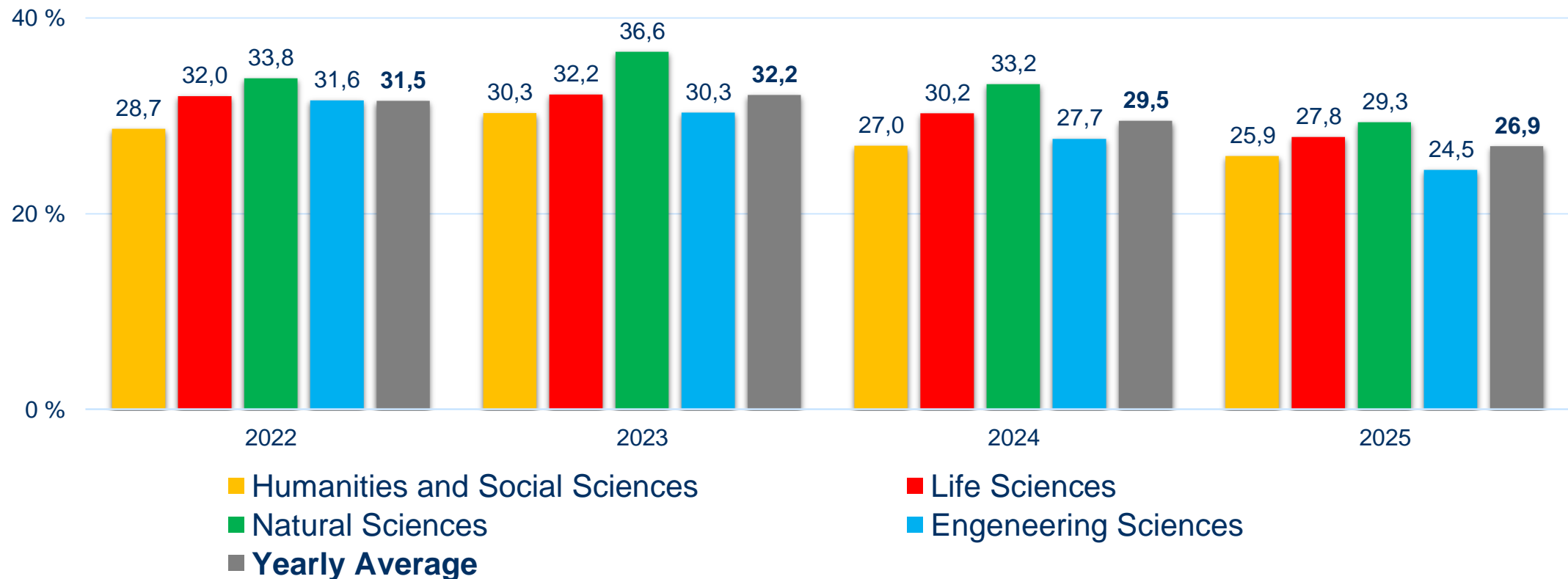
- Individual Grants: 1.373,0 Mio. €
- Research Units: 235,0 Mio. €
- Priority Programmes: 200,9 Mio. €
- Collaborative Research Centers: 897,1 Mio. €
- Research Training Groups: 298,2 Mio. €
- Research Impulses: 12,9 Mio. €
- DFG Research Centers: 5,0 Mio. €
- Excellence Strategy: 413,3 Mio. €
- Infrastructure funds: 342,9 Mio. €
- Prizes, Other: 57,7 Mio. €

## DFG Funding

by Subject Area (in €m) in 2025



## Funding rates\* in the individual grants programmes by scientific discipline 2022 to 2025 (in %)



\* The funding rate (or success rate) was calculated by dividing the number of awards by the number of proposals reviewed.  
 Source: New Individual grants



## DFG Funding for Early Career Researchers

## Tailored funding programmes for every career phase



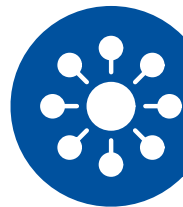
Walter Benjamin  
Programme



Emmy Noether  
Programme



Heisenberg  
Programme



Individual Research Grant  
with Temporary Position for PI

R1



first-stage,  
PhD researcher

R2

recognised, not yet  
independent postdoc

R3

established,  
independent researcher

R4

leading researcher,  
professor

## Position in a DFG-funded project



### What?

Position for (post-)doctoral researchers at universities and research institutes in Germany



### How long?

Depends on the scope of the project, typically three years



### Where to apply?

Directly to the project's PI  
(person who receives funding through DFG)



### Where to search?

<https://gepris.dfg.de>

## Tailored funding programmes for every career phase



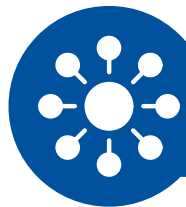
Walter Benjamin  
Programme



Emmy Noether  
Programme

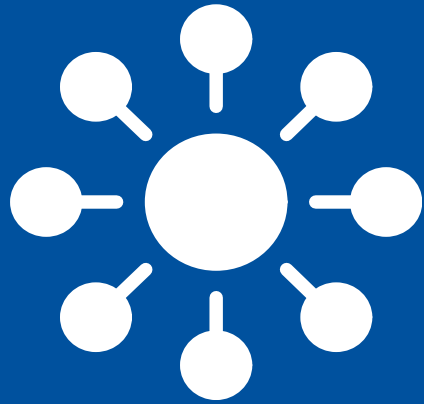


Heisenberg  
Programme



Individual Research Grant  
with Temporary Position for PI

R1	R2	R3	R4
first-stage, PhD researcher	recognised, not yet independent postdoc	established, independent researcher	leading researcher, professor



## Individual Research Grant

incl. Temporary Position for the  
Principal Investigator

(Sachbeihilfe inkl. Eigener Stelle)

## Individual Research Grant

To conduct a **thematically and time-limited** research project...

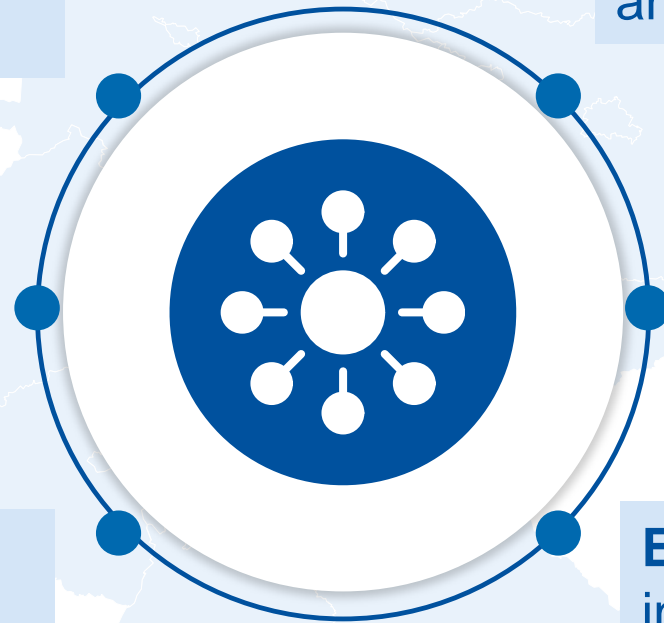
... of **high scientific quality and originality.**

Funding for **up to three years**

**Funds:** everything needed for the project. If necessary:  
**Temporary Position for Principal Investigator = „Eigene Stelle“**

Host institution of your choice  
**in Germany**

**Employment** through host institution





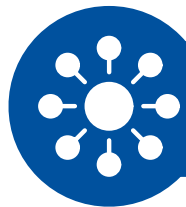
Walter Benjamin  
Programme



Emmy Noether  
Programme



Heisenberg  
Programme



Individual Research Grant  
with Temporary Position for PI

R1	R2	R3	R4
first-stage, PhD researcher	recognised, not yet independent postdoc	established, independent researcher	leading researcher, professor



# Walter Benjamin Programme

## Mobility

Move to a new  
research institution

Experience  
**career support**

## Autonomy

Conduct your own  
research project

Come to/stay **in Germany**  
or **go abroad** – or both



Funding for **up to two years**

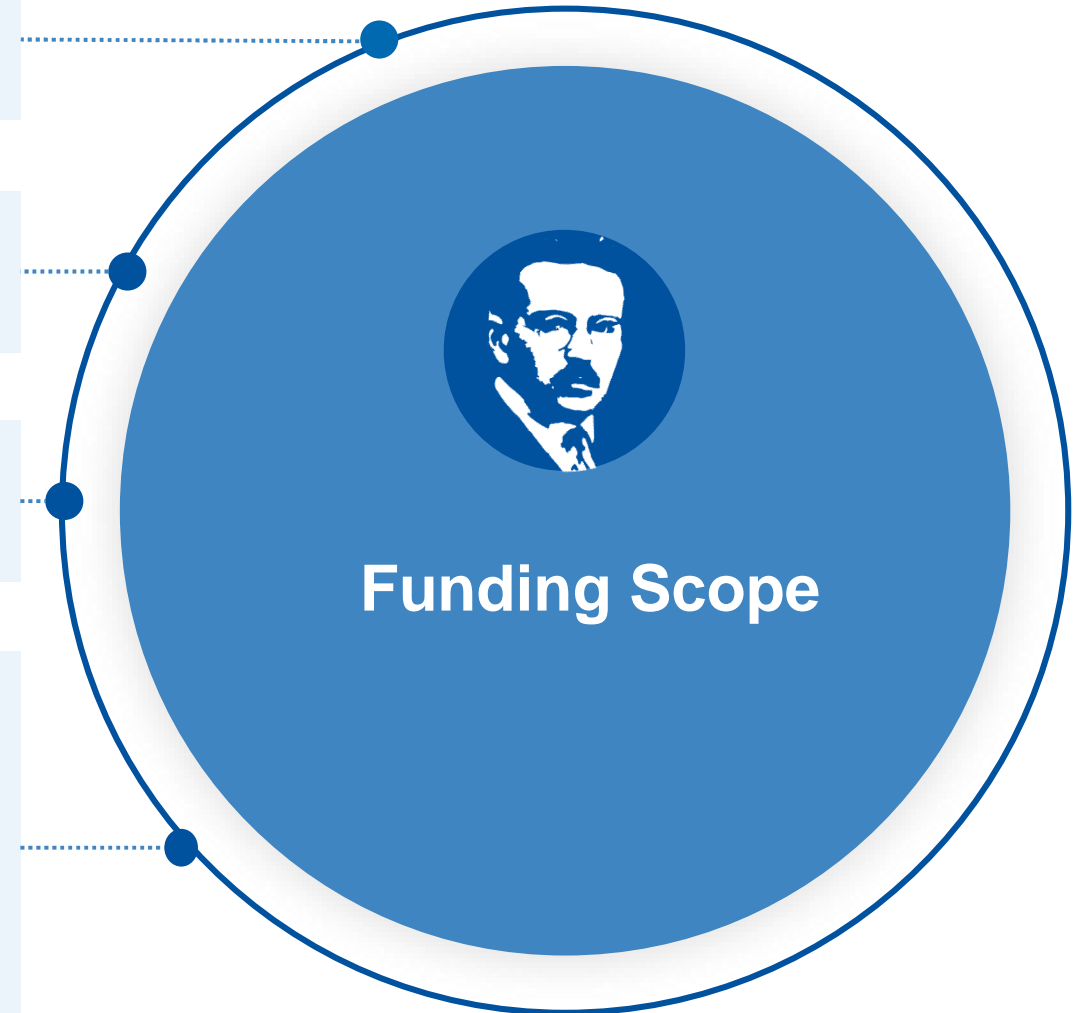
**Abroad or in Germany**

– or combining stays at different places

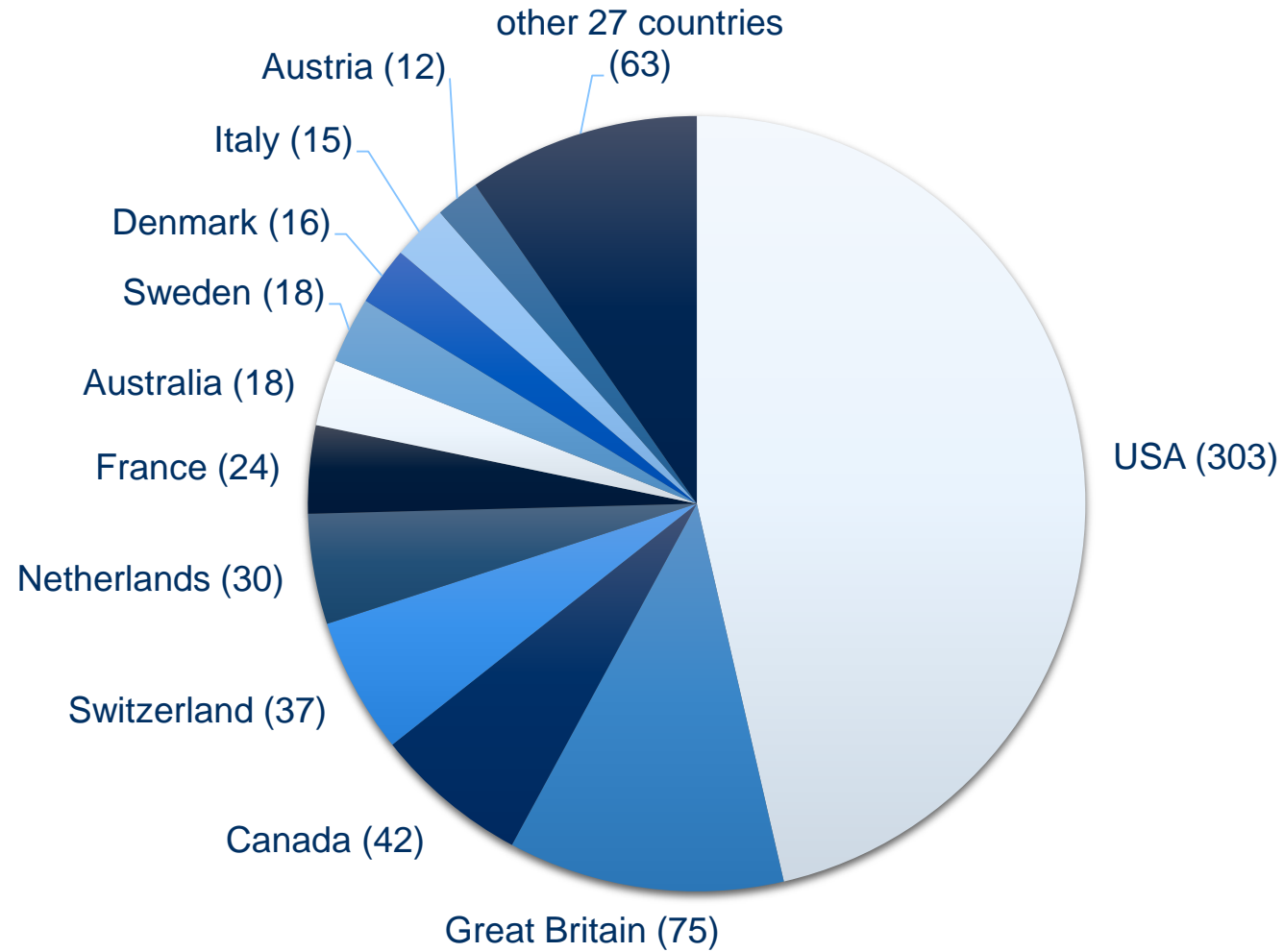
**In Germany: Position** at host institution  
+ allowance for direct project costs (250€/month)

**Abroad: Fellowship** (2.187€/month)  
+ allowance for direct project costs (312€/month)  
+ further allowances for cost of living, purchase power equalisation, children (if applicable)

→ Use the [award calculator](#)



## Destinations for Research Fellowships Abroad 2025



## Temporary Positions for Principle Investigators (Individual Research Grant)

## Walter Benjamin Position

### Commonalities

Enables the realisation of research projects in Germany that are limited in time and topic

### Differences

Focus on **project**

All career phases after the doctorate

Independent project management

Mobility not condition for eligibility

Funding period generally 3 years  
(extension option)

Possibility of a stay abroad for one third  
of the funding period

Focus on **applicant**

Exclusively **early** career phase after doctorate

“Mentored” research

**Mobility required**

Funding period max. 2 years (extension only in  
exceptional cases)

Possibility of a stay abroad for a maximum of 3  
months



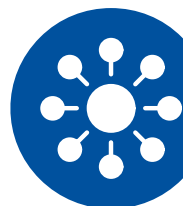
Walter Benjamin  
Programme



Emmy Noether  
Programme



Heisenberg  
Programme



Individual Research Grant  
with Temporary Position

# Emmy Noether Programme



## Funding Aims

Path to **early academic independence** and...

... qualification for **professorial appointment**

... by leading one's **own independent junior research group**

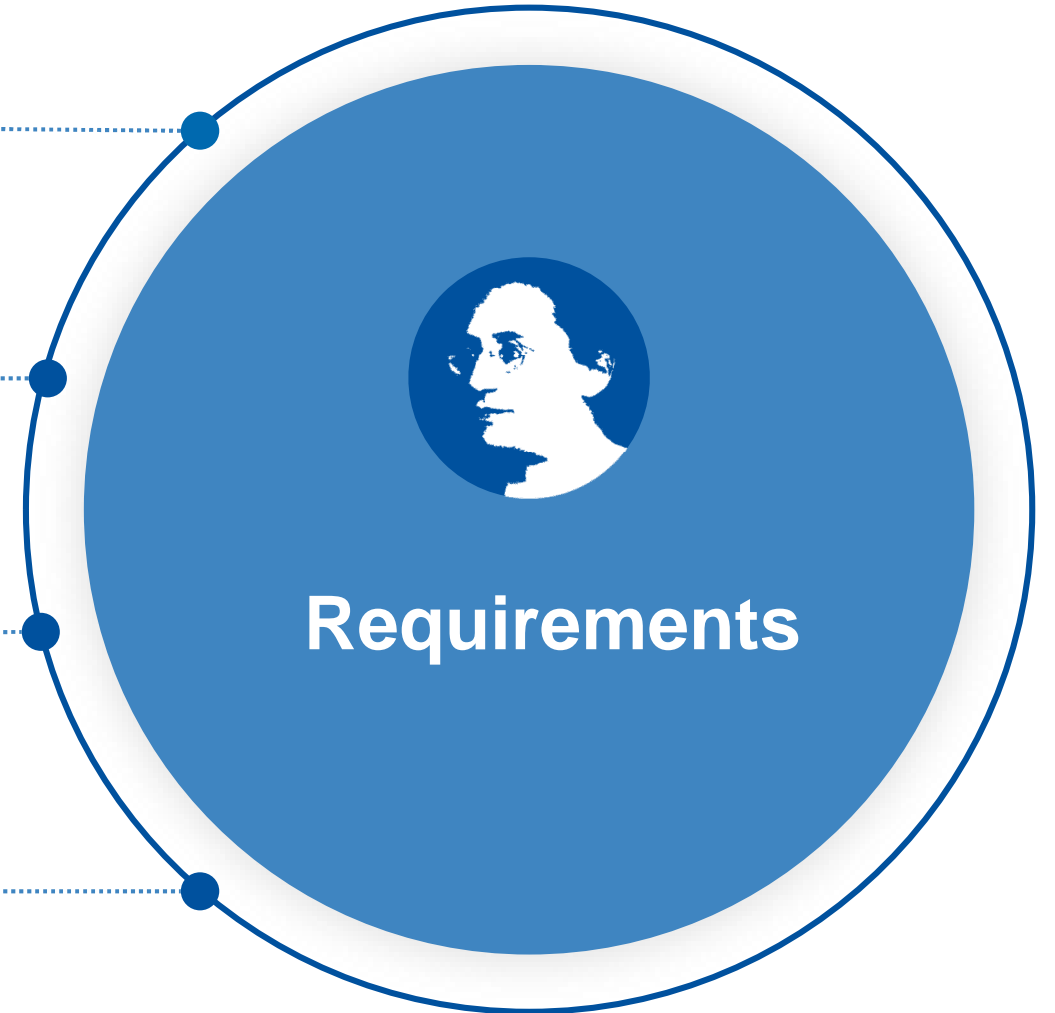


Outstanding **research profile**

2-4 years of **postdoctoral experience**

Excellent **research project**

Substantial **international research experience**



## Funding scope

Funding for your own  
**Junior Research Group**

Funding for **six years**

**Host institution** in Germany  
→ name more than one in your  
proposal → **negotiate**

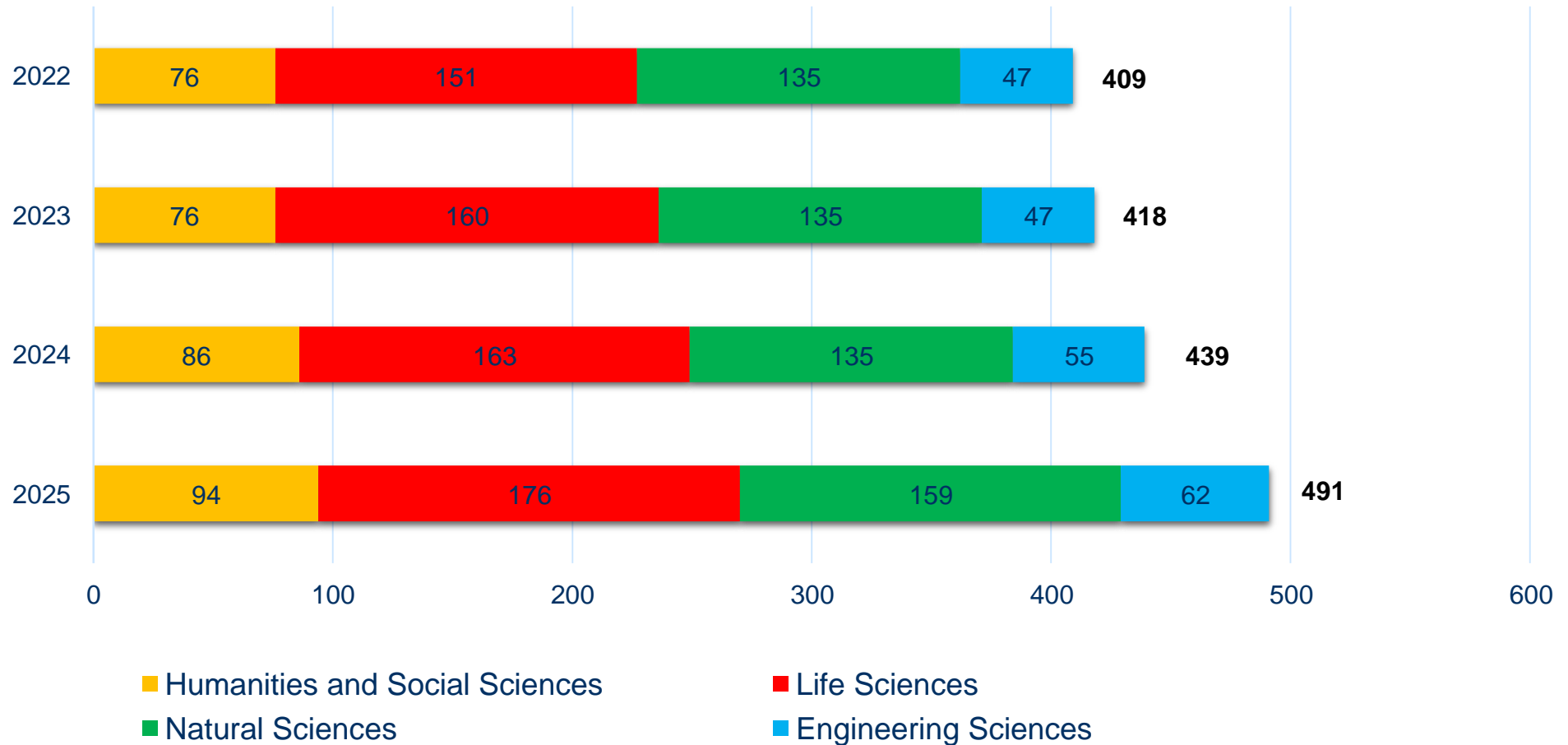


**Employment** in junior group  
leader position at host institution  
(E15 TV-L scheme or tenure  
track professorship)

**Flexible** funds for  
staff, consumables, travel...

**Family allowance** possible

## Number of Running Emmy Noether Groups by Discipline 2022-2025

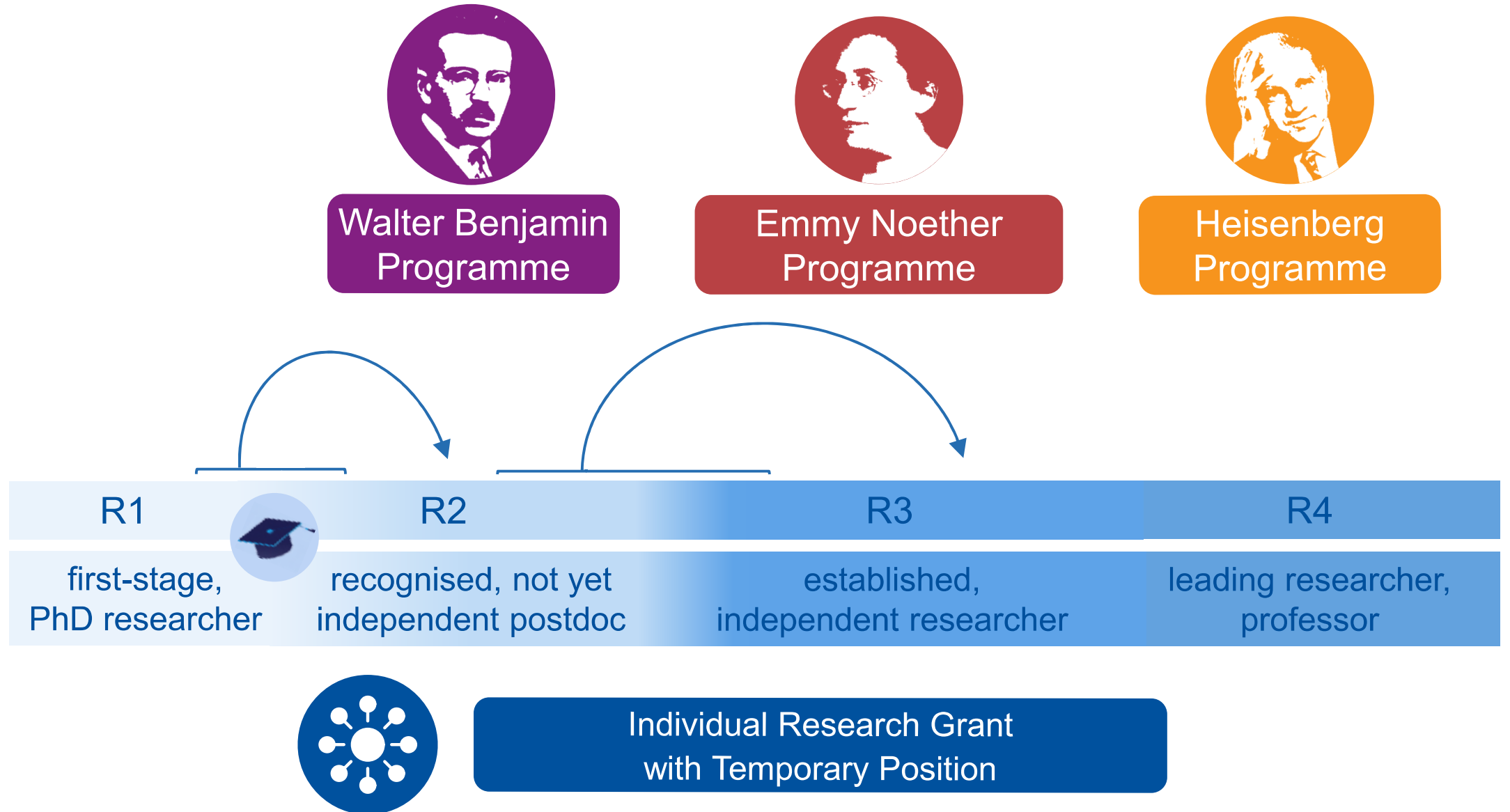


emmy  
noether  
Jahrestreffen 25



## Emmy Noether Jahrestreffen

Yearly Meeting of  
Grantees & Alumni  
in Potsdam





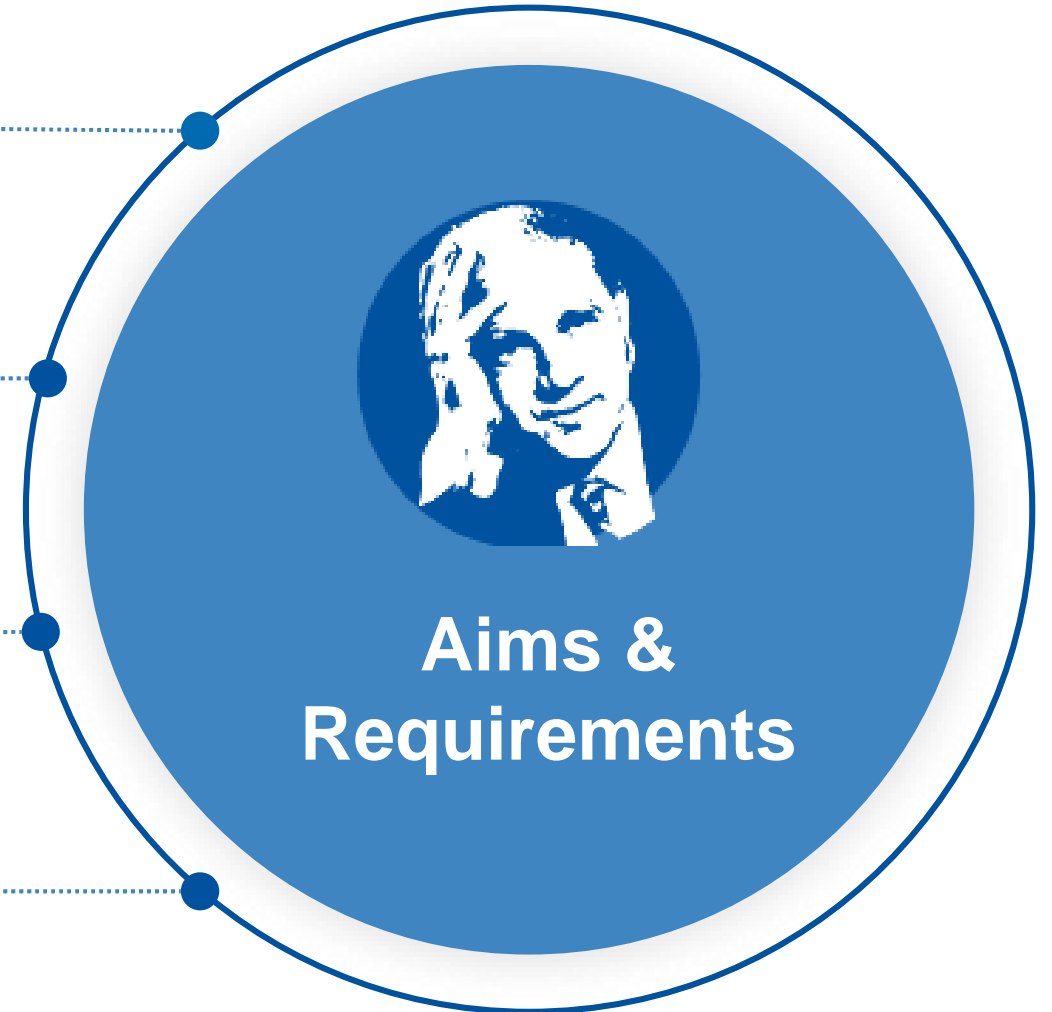
# Heisenberg Programme

Enabling **outstanding researchers...**

...who are **eligible for professorial appointment...**

...to prepare for a **senior academic role...**

...while **continuing their research.**

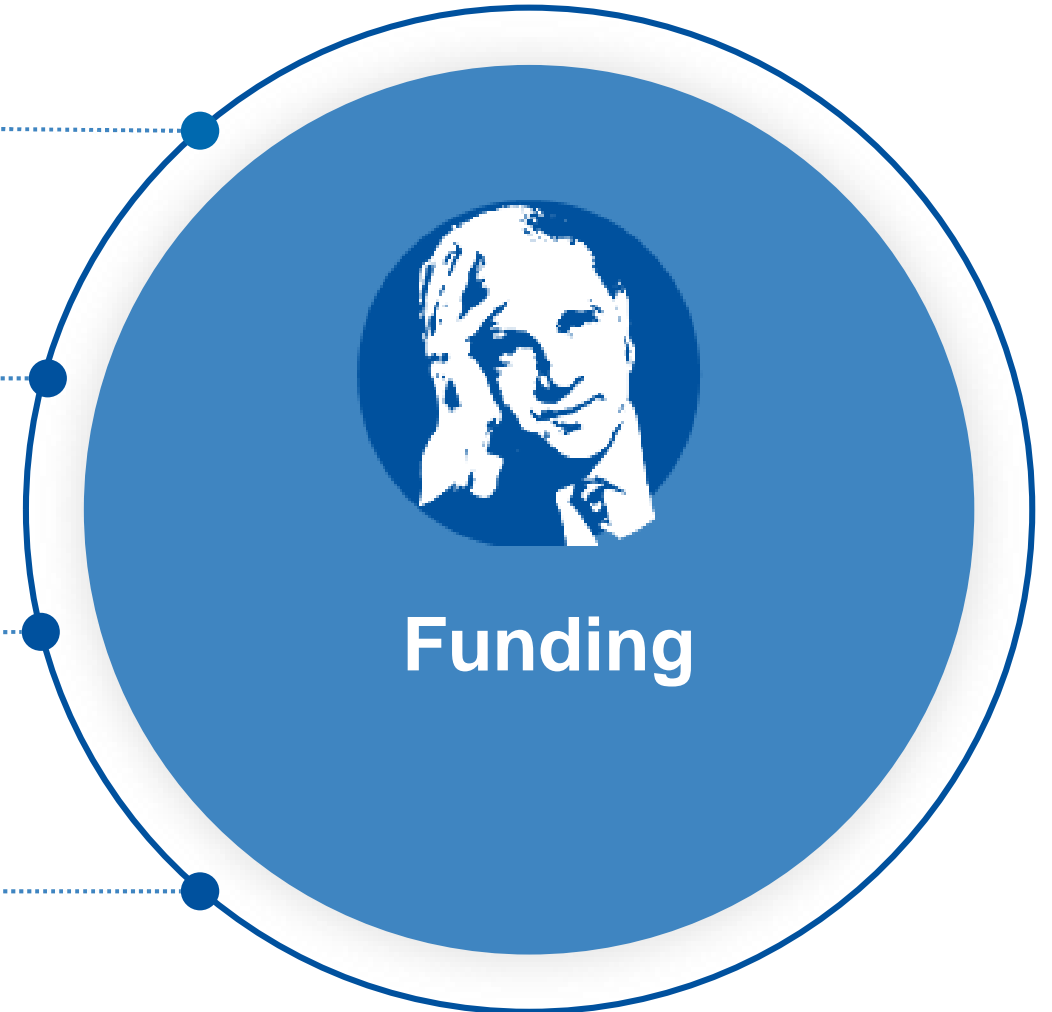


Funding for **up to five years**

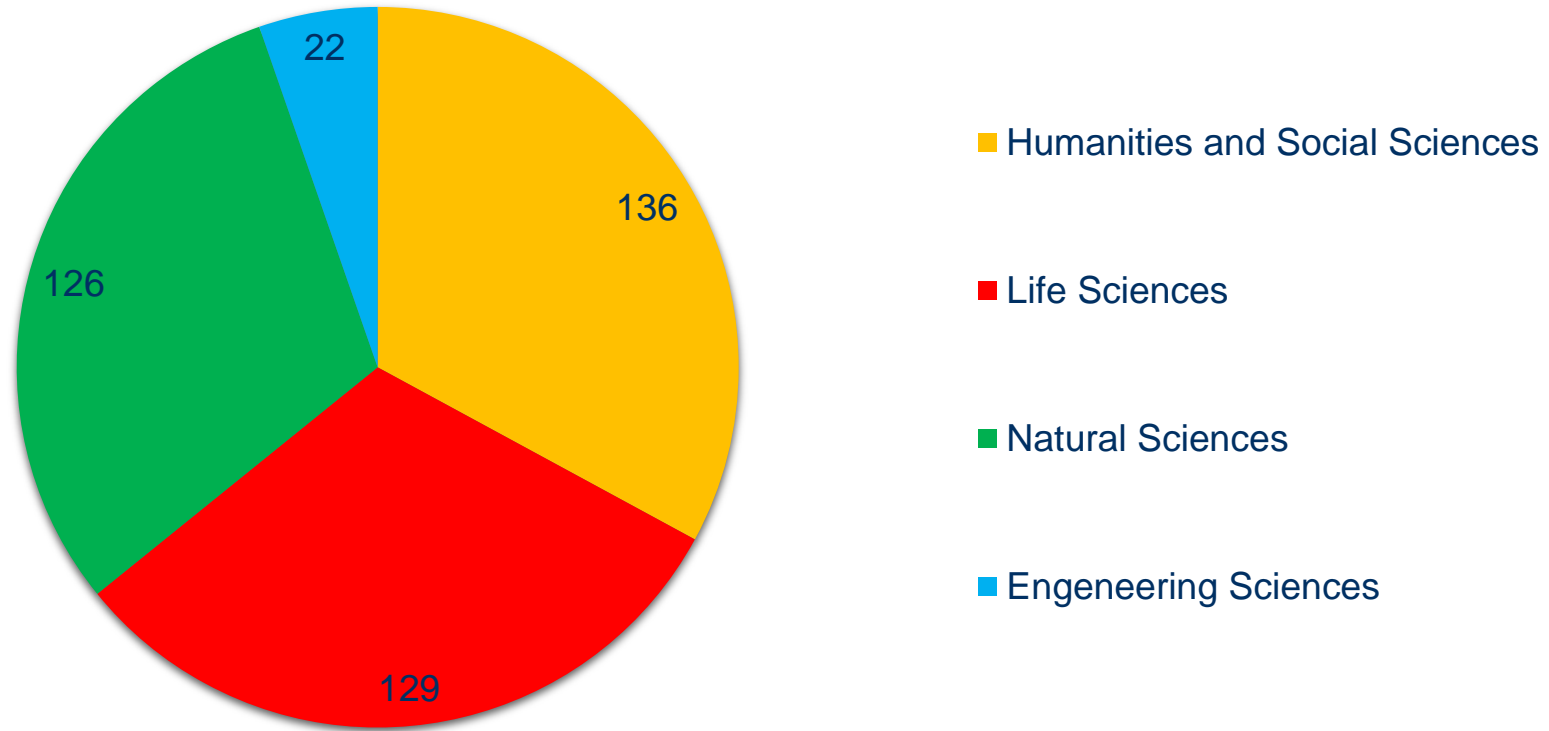
Funding options:  
**fellowship | position | professorship**

**Additional flexible funding** €1,000 or €312  
per month

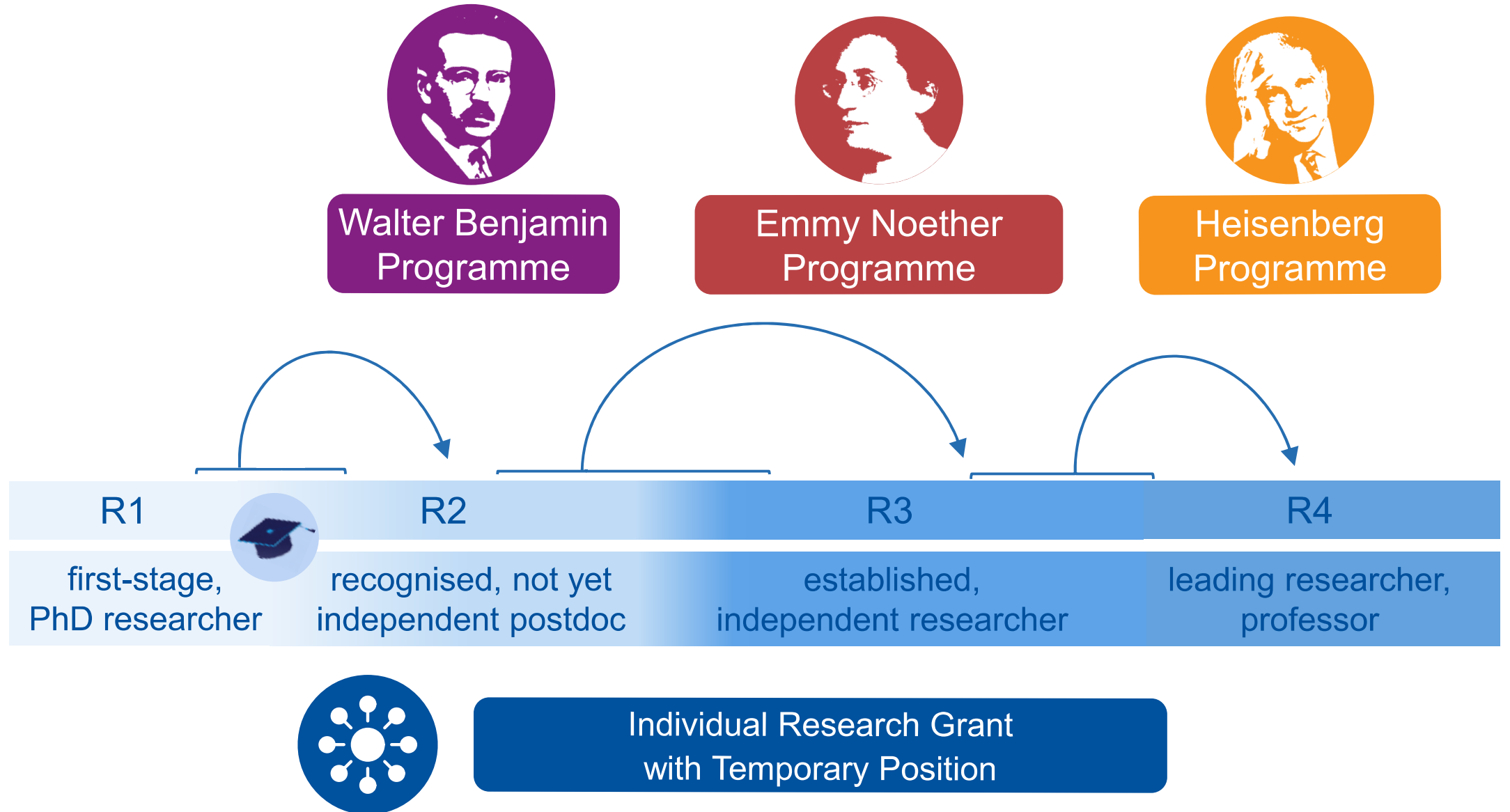
Can be **combined** with a **research grant**  
proposal



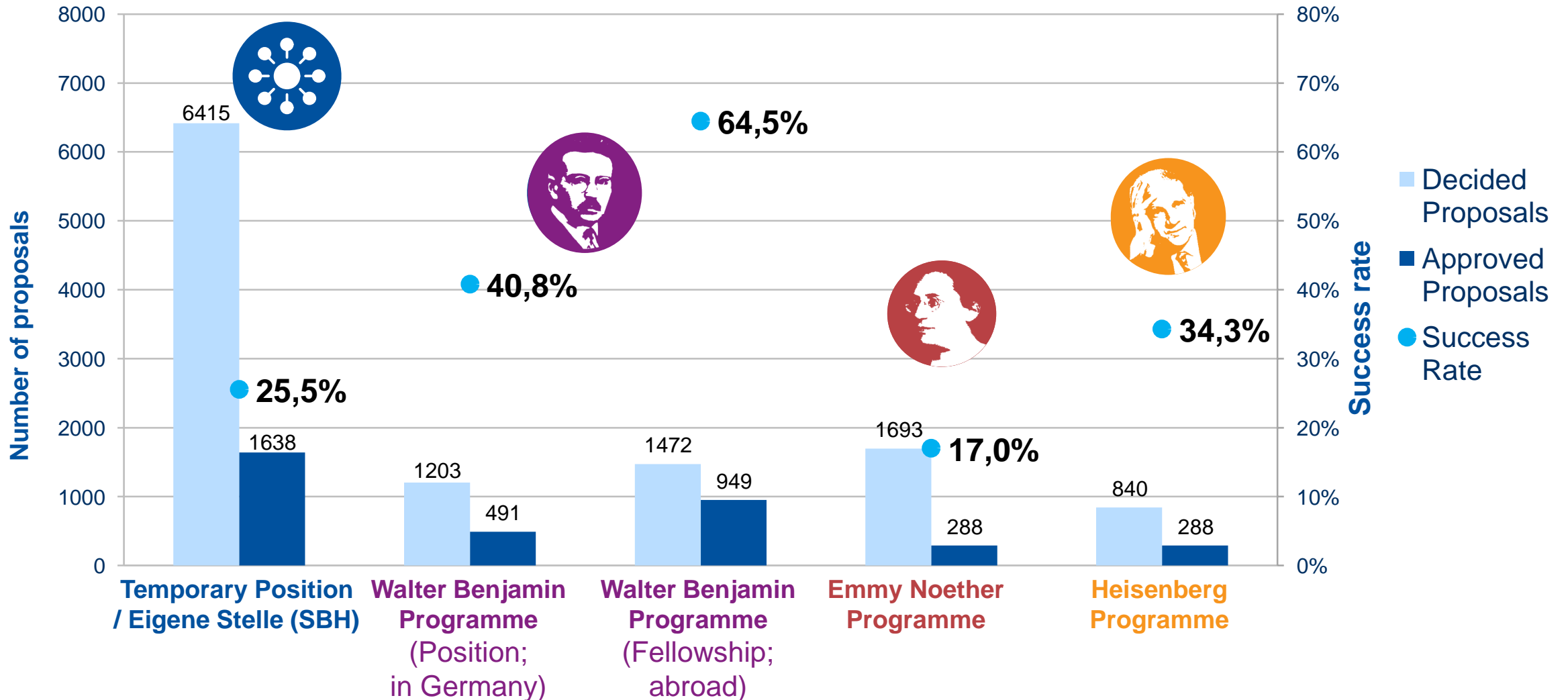
## Number of Heisenberg-Grantees by Discipline in 2025



**Heisenberg Programme (413)**



## Numbers of Proposals and Success Rates\* in Programmes for ECR (aggregated; 2022 to 2025)





## From Submission to Decision

## Support for equity and diversity in DFG funding

### Standard allowance for E&D

- *lump sum requested* at the time of proposal submission;
- flexible, e.g. for awareness-raising on diversity topics, career mentoring for women, student assistant support for parents, ...
- Available to all project staff



### All Positions funded through DFG in Germany

- Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz (BEEG)
- Individual solutions (e.g., part-time, temporary pauses) in consultation with the DFG head office

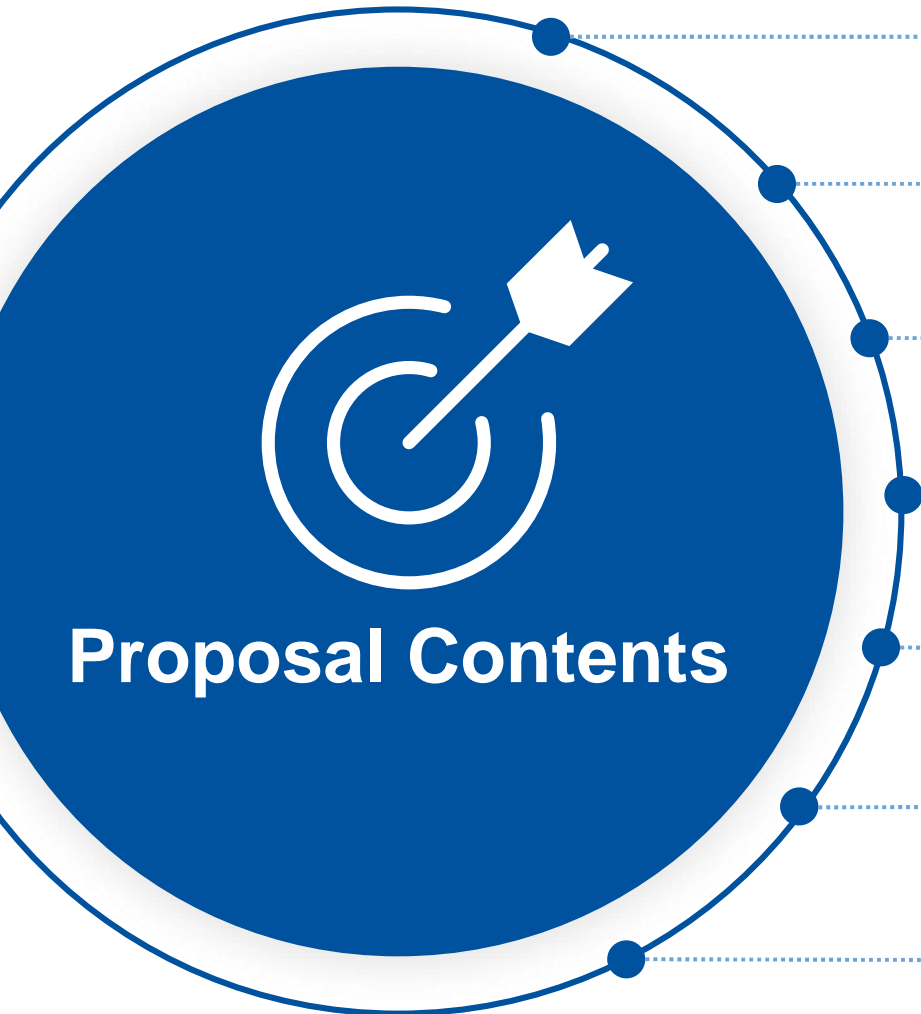
### Walter Benjamin fellowship

- Child allowance
- Fellowship extension
- Reimbursement of childcare costs
- Combination of measures



### Emmy Noether programme

- 4-year deadline extended for caregiving or illness
- If applicable, *family allowance* for Emmy Noether group leaders



What is the **knowledge gap** you would like to fill?

Why are the expected results **novel and relevant**?

**Who is going to do what?** Why?

What's your **concrete, realistic and feasible plan** to answer your research question?

How are you going to manage setbacks? What's your **plan b**?

**Why are you the right person** to successfully manage this project?

Why is the **host institution** ideal for your project?

Carefully read and follow the **guidelines and proposal instructions**

Decide on the proposal **language**:  
English or German

Necessary information can be found  
on the **DFG website**

**Questions?** Ask for support



## Questions? Ask for help



### **On Eligibility**

[procedures-researchcareers@dfg.de](mailto:procedures-researchcareers@dfg.de)

### **On General Topics**

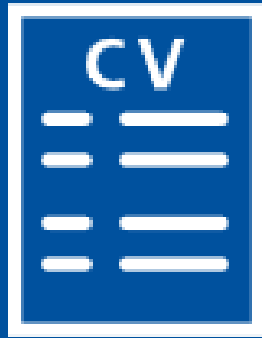
[info-researchcareers@dfg.de](mailto:info-researchcareers@dfg.de)

### **On Equity & Diversity**

[chancengleichheit@dfg.de](mailto:chancengleichheit@dfg.de)

### **With a Subject-Specific Focus**

<https://www.dfg.de/en/about-us/head-office/programme-contacts>



## Preparing your CV



Follow the [DFG CV Template](#)



**Include qualifications, engagement & awards**

also: organization of scientific meetings, review activities etc.



**Mention time away from research**

Relating e.g. to family, illness or dependent care; no details required



**List your most important scientific contributions**

Comment on your own contribution to a publication / study / database / software



No **upper limits**

Needs to be **realistic and justified** by the project

DFG funds **only supplemental, project-specific needs** (vs. existing resources at your institution)

Seek **advice** from other grant applicants, recipients, institutions

Average **personnel rates** on DFG website



## Before submission



### Put yourself in the reviewers shoes

Consult the [“General Guidelines for the Written Review”](#) for reviewers



### Seek honest criticism from colleagues



### Plan on a feasible timeline

on average, the time to decision is approx. six months

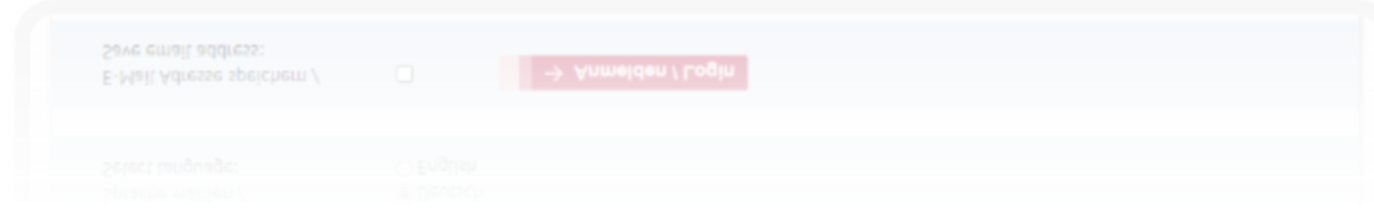


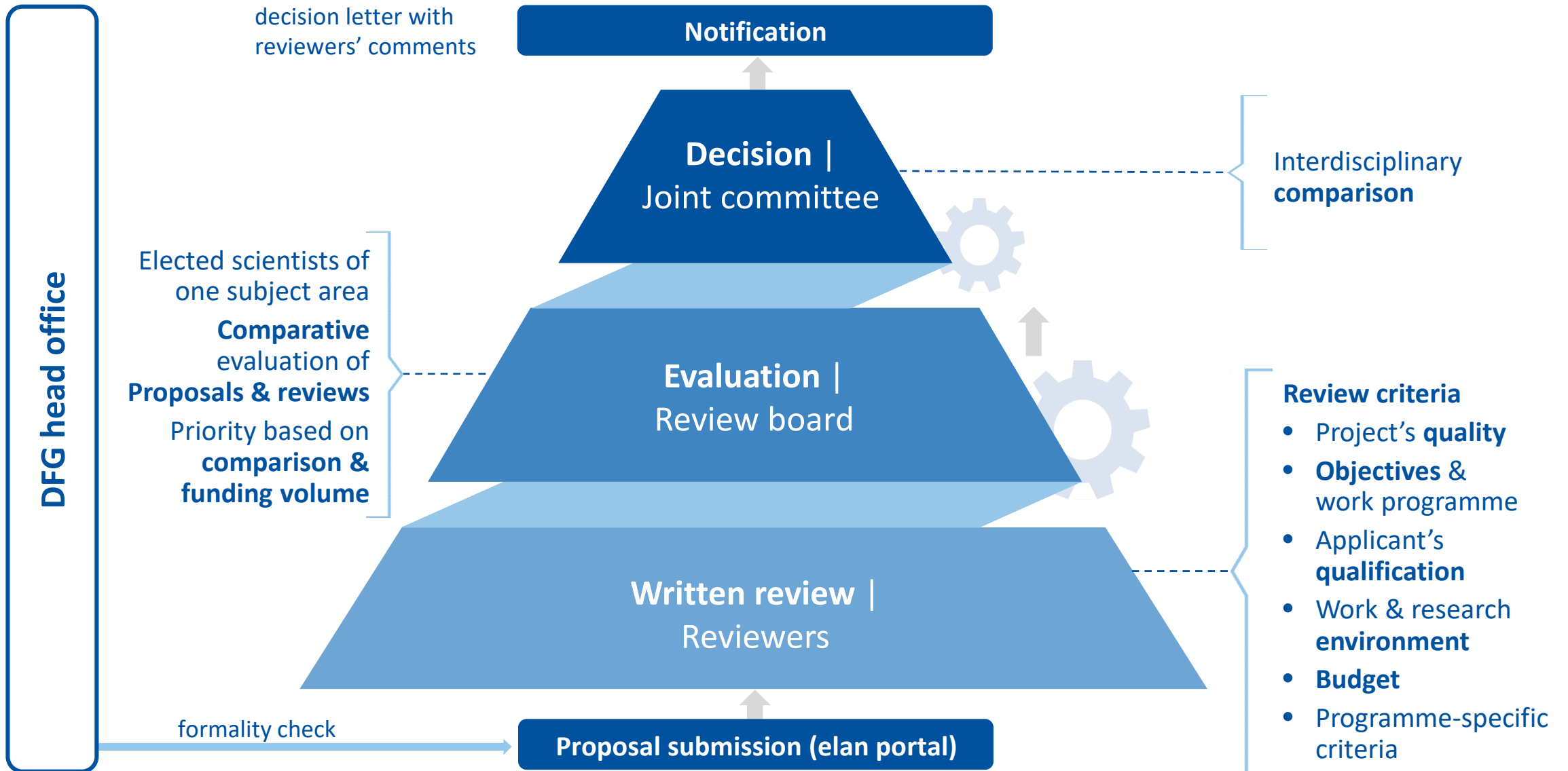
### Inform DFG Head Office

in case a conflict of interest or competitive scenario exists

## Submitting your proposal via *elan*

The screenshot shows the login interface for the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) system. At the top left, the DFG logo is displayed next to the text "Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft". Below this is a decorative blue bar with varying shades. The main heading is "Anmeldung / Login". The form contains four rows of input fields: 1. "E-Mail Adresse / Email address:" with a text input field. 2. "Kennwort / Password:" with a password input field. 3. "Sprache wählen / Select language:" with two radio button options: "Deutsch" (selected) and "English". 4. "E-Mail Adresse speichern / Save email address:" with a checkbox. To the right of the checkbox is a red button with a white arrow and the text "Anmelden / Login".







## **49 Review Boards**

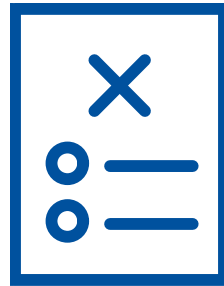
Elections every four years  
by the community of  
~ 150,000 researchers in  
Germany



**FACHKOLLEGIENWAHL  
2027**

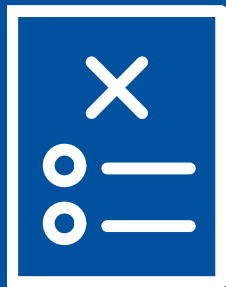
**DFG**

### Common reasons for proposal rejection



- Comparatively low expected gain of knowledge
- Missing / unconvincing
  - Focus
  - Proof-of-concept
  - Hypotheses
- Doubts about the applicant's expertise
- Concerns regarding the feasibility of the planned project
- Open questions regarding the work plan / not enough detail

In case your proposal is not successful...



## Don't be discouraged

Unfortunately, the majority of proposals cannot be funded.



## Take the reviewers's comments seriously, but not personally



## Consider the reviewers's comments

They might give you some pointers for reworking and resubmitting your proposal



## Consult the DFG Head Office

If you need advice or feel treated unfairly

**In case your proposal is successful...**



## **Congratulations!**

Download the decision letter; project starts with first request for funds (within 12 months after decision)



## **Contact us at an early stage**

For location or personal changes, family situation, extensions etc..



## **Final report**

Due three months after project end. Obligation to submit a report.



**More questions?**  
[info@researchcareers@dfg.de](mailto:info@researchcareers@dfg.de)

**Orientation for early-career researchers:**  
[www.dfg.de/research\\_careers](http://www.dfg.de/research_careers)

**Proposal Submission – A How-To Guide:**  
[www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/individual\\_grants\\_programmes](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes)

**GEPRIS – database with all DFG-funded projects:**  
[gepris.dfg.de/en](http://gepris.dfg.de/en)

**Profiles of 25,000 German research institutes:**  
[www.gerit.org](http://www.gerit.org)



**DFG** Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft



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Mastodon | @dfg\_public



Instagram | dfg\_public



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