

DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs

Anna Boehme
Anjana Buckow
Ina von der Beck



POSTDOC
APPRECIATION
WEEK *Germany*



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

Contents

1. The DFG
2. Funding Opportunities for Early Career Researchers
3. From Submission to Decision



Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V.

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

DFG members

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

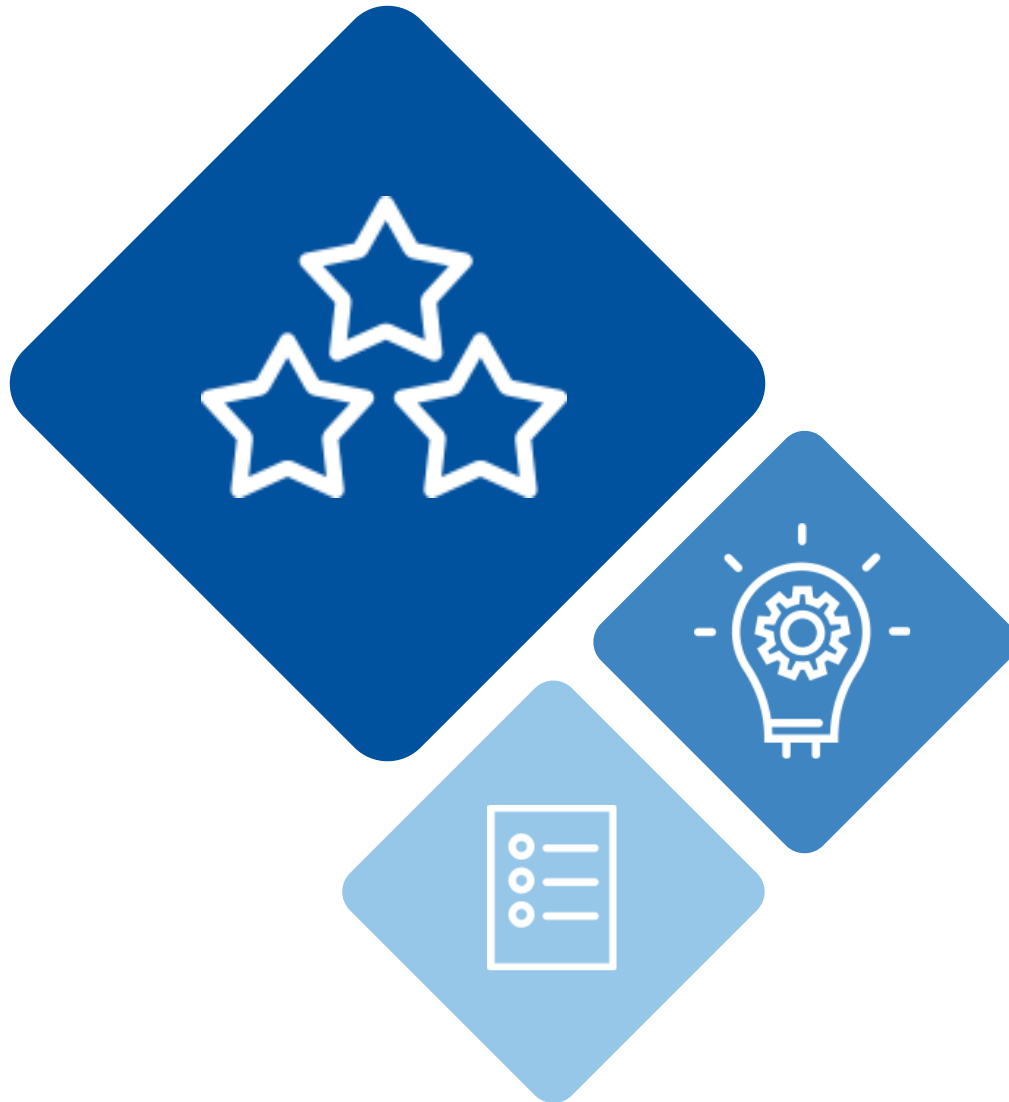
Independent association
under private law



Funding
knowledge-driven
research

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

DFG's Independence
guarantees academic
freedom



Funding **Knowledge-Driven Research**

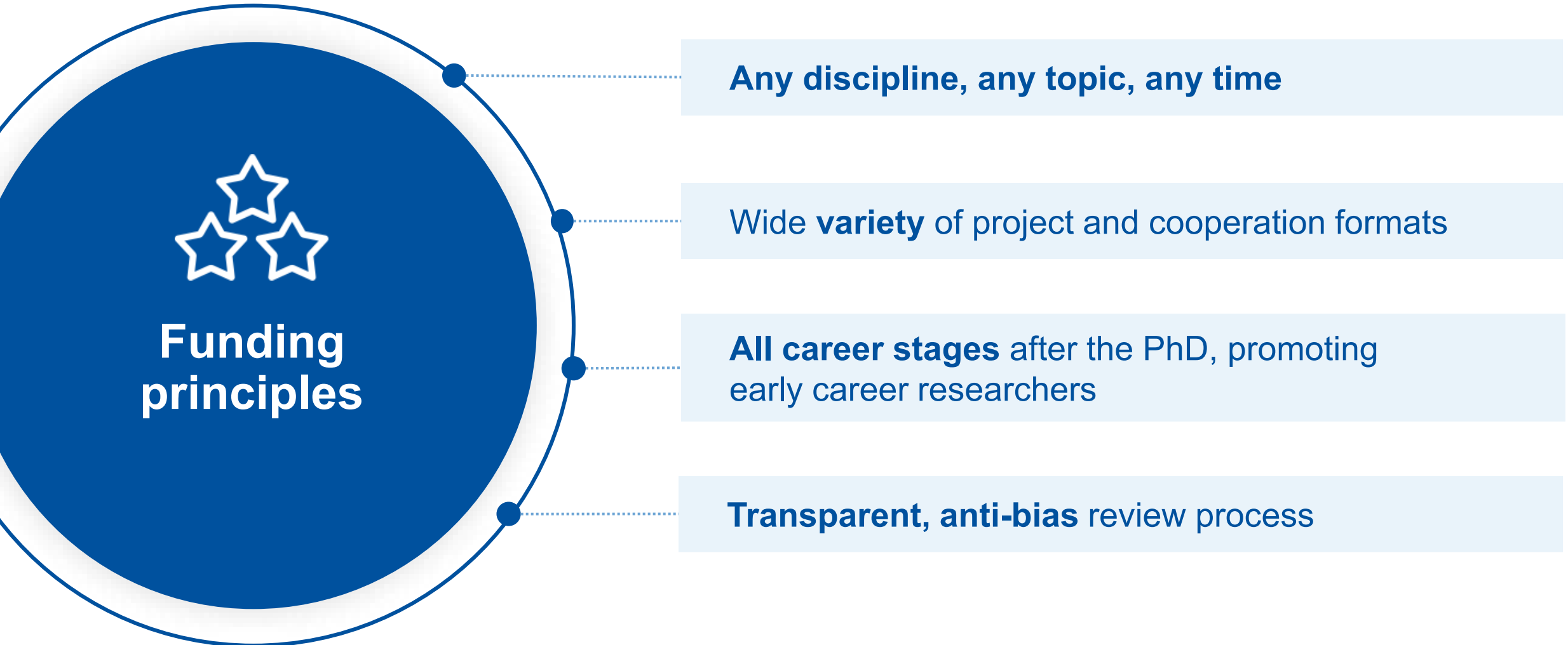
The DFG selects and funds **high-quality research** and enables fair, science-led competition

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**



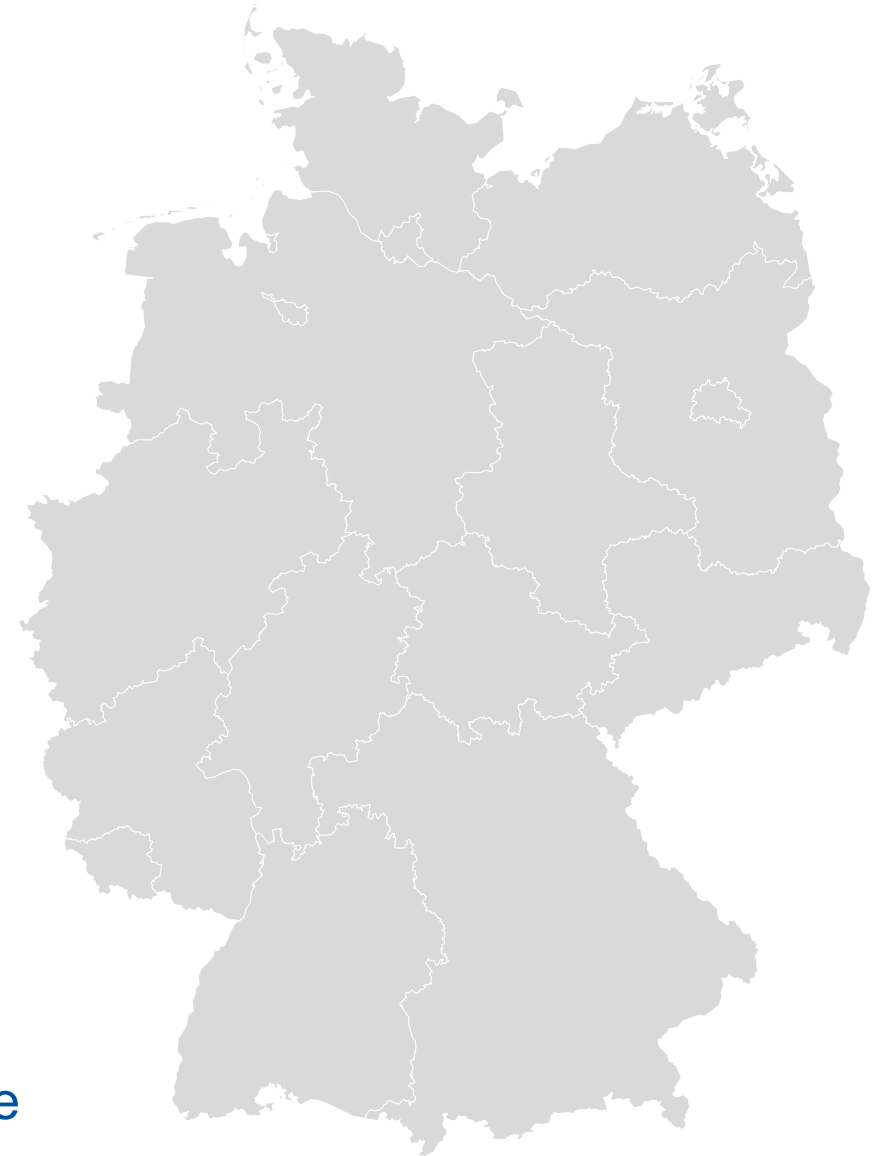
Who is eligible to apply for DFG funding?

Researchers

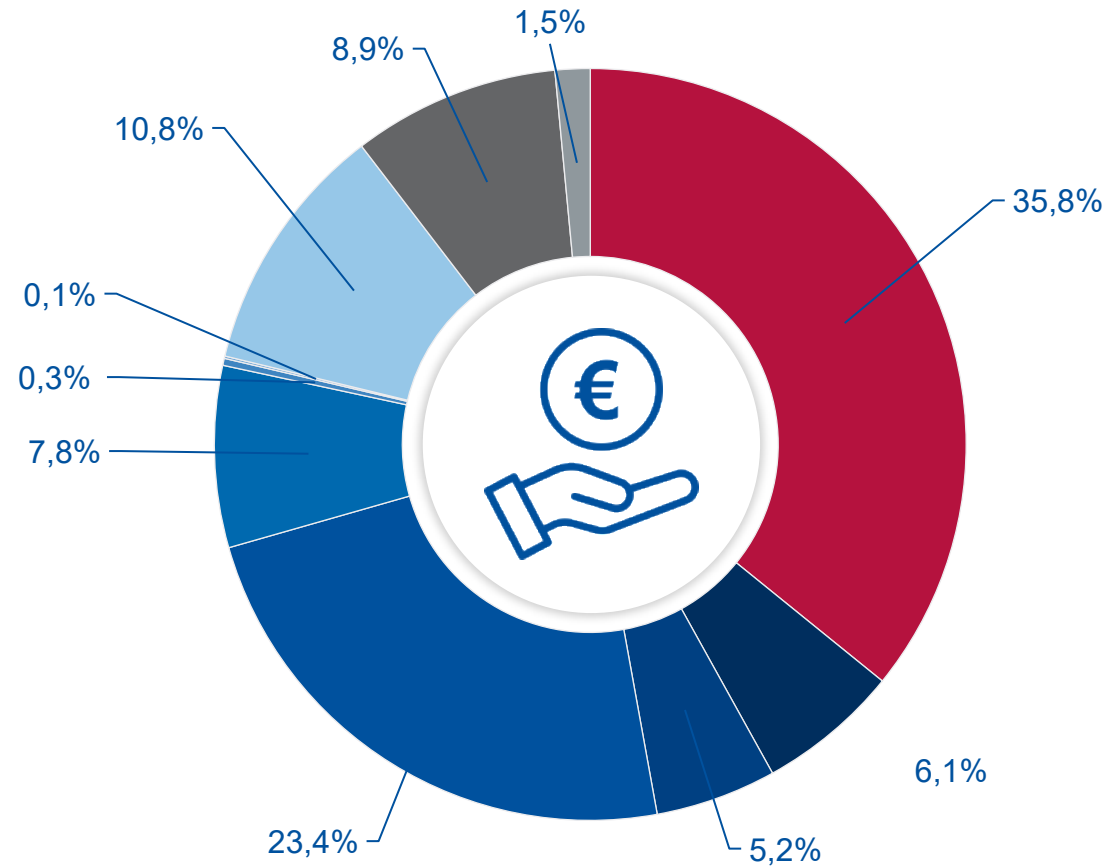
...who have completed their scientific training,
i.e. **who hold a doctorate***

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

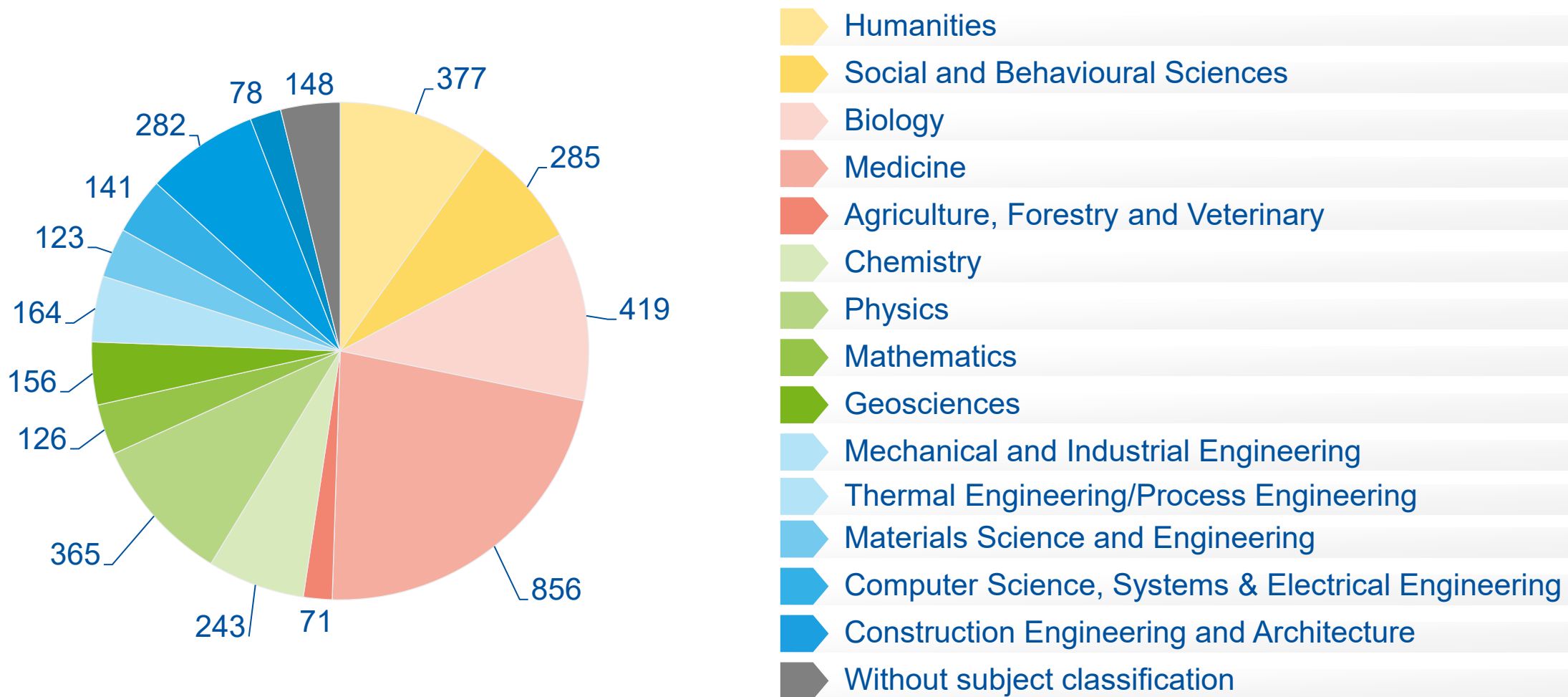
*earliest date: upon submission to the examination office



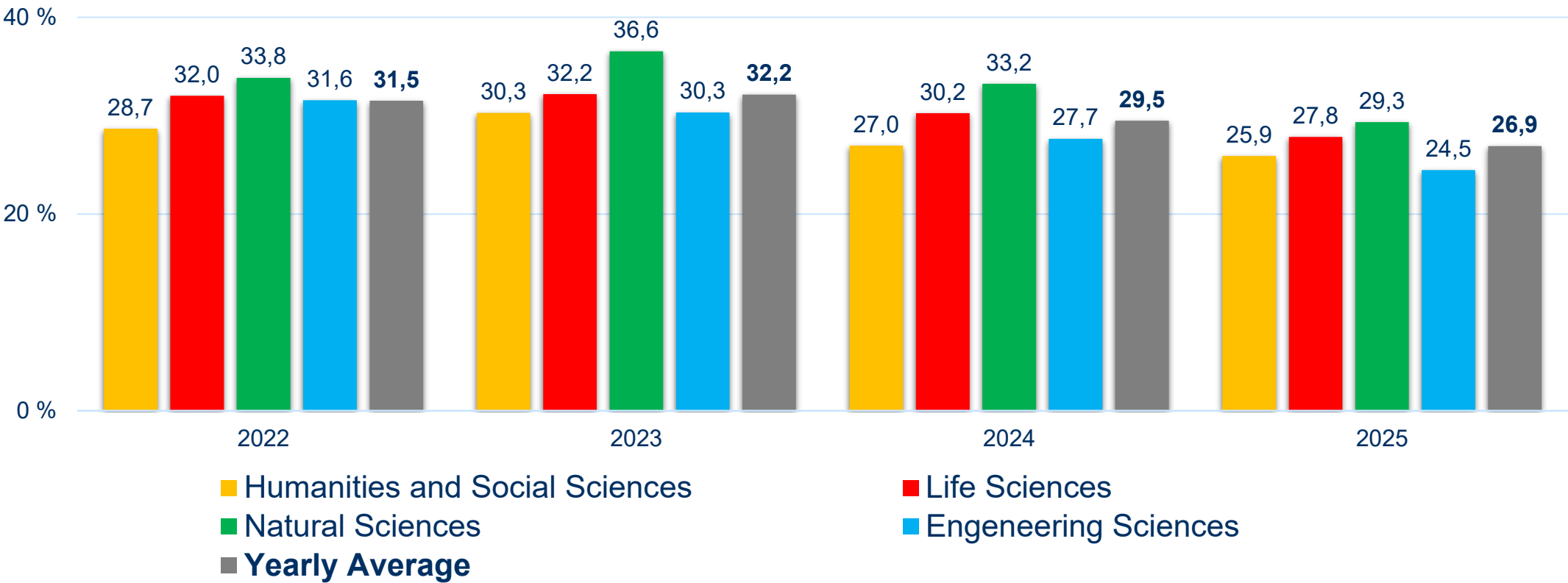
2025 (in Mio. € and %)



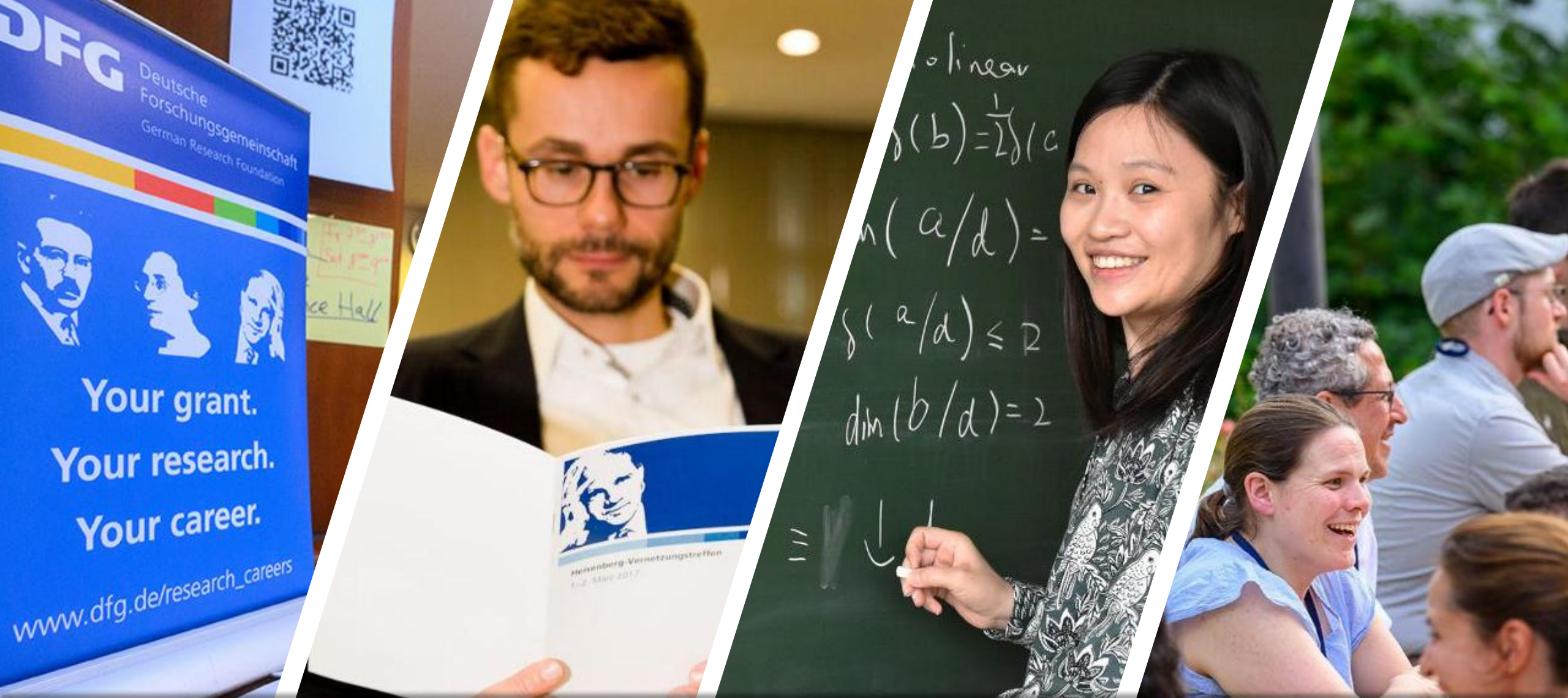
- Individual Grants: 1.373,0 Mio. €
- Research Units: 235,0 Mio. €
- Priority Programmes: 200,9 Mio. €
- Collaborative Research Centers: 897,1 Mio. €
- Research Training Groups: 298,2 Mio. €
- Research Impulses: 12,9 Mio. €
- DFG Research Centers: 5,0 Mio. €
- Excellence Strategy: 413,3 Mio. €
- Infrastructure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



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



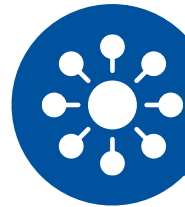
Walter Benjamin
Programme



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



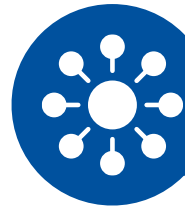
Walter Benjamin
Programme



Emmy Noether
Programme



Heisenberg
Programme



Individual Research Grant
with Temporary Position for PI

R1



first-stage,
PhD researcher

R2

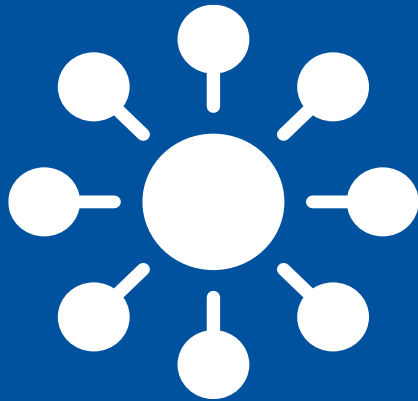
recognised, not yet
independent postdoc

R3

established,
independent researcher

R4

leading researcher,
professor



Individual Research Grant

incl. Temporary Position for the
Principal Investigator

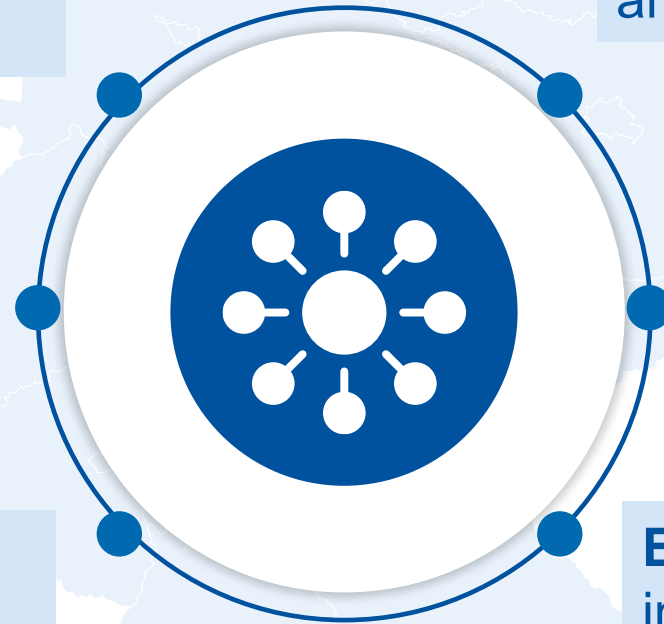
(Sachbeihilfe inkl. Eigene Stelle)

Individual Research Grant

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

Funding for **up to three years**

Host institution of your choice
in Germany



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

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

Employment through host institution



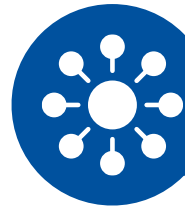
Walter Benjamin
Programme



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



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



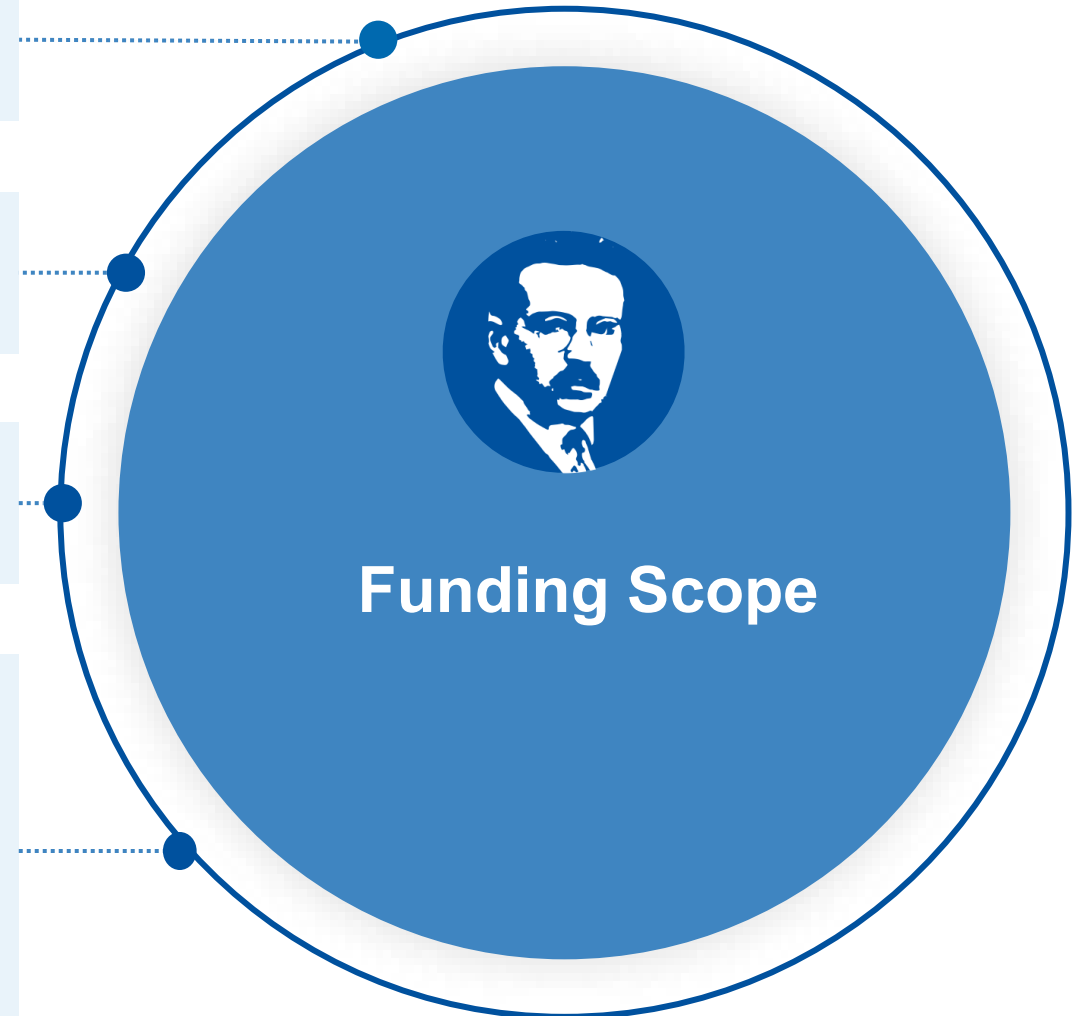
Funding for **up to two years**

Abroad or in Germany
– or combining stays at different places

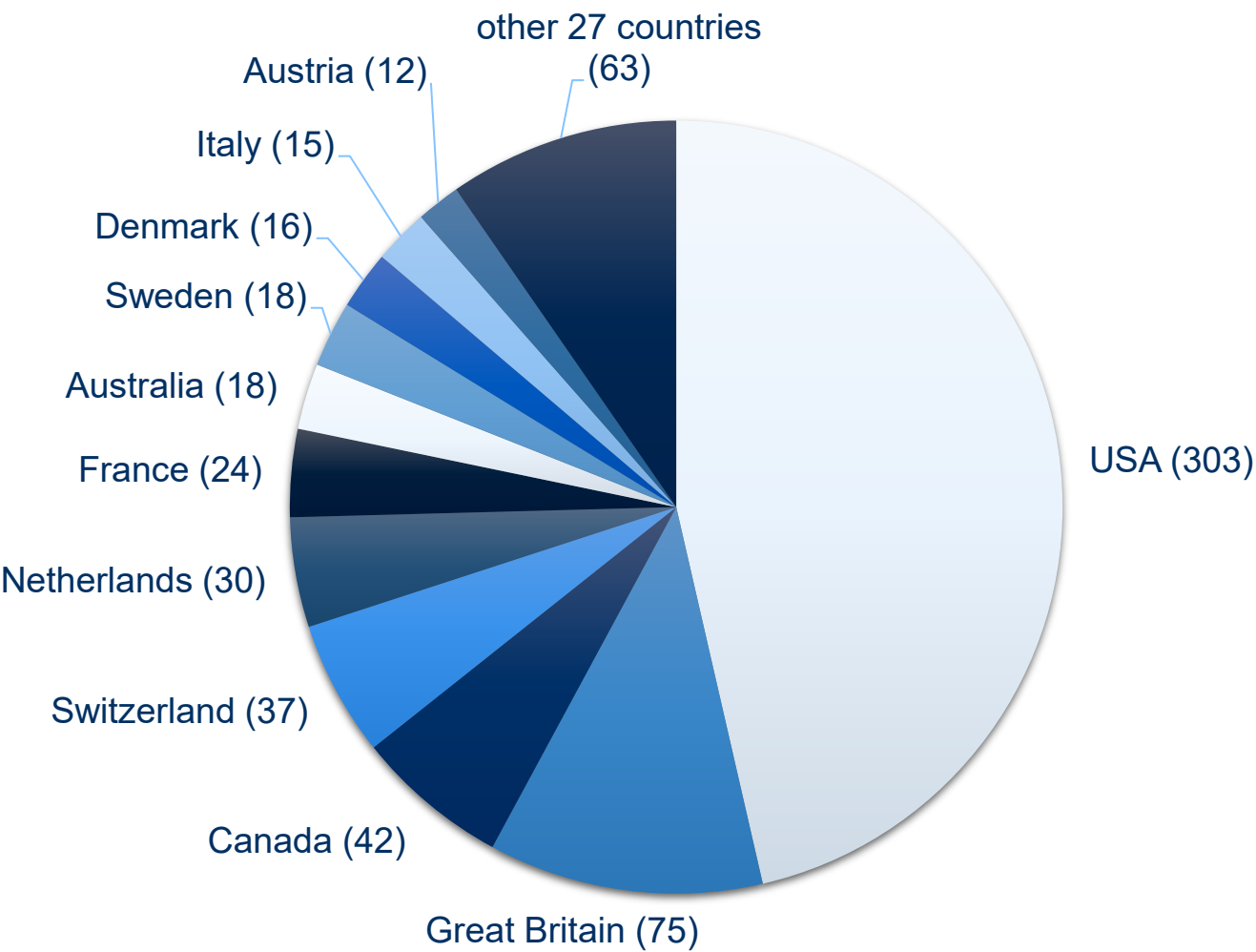
In Germany: Position at host institution
+ allowance for direct project costs (250€/month)

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

Enable 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 a 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**

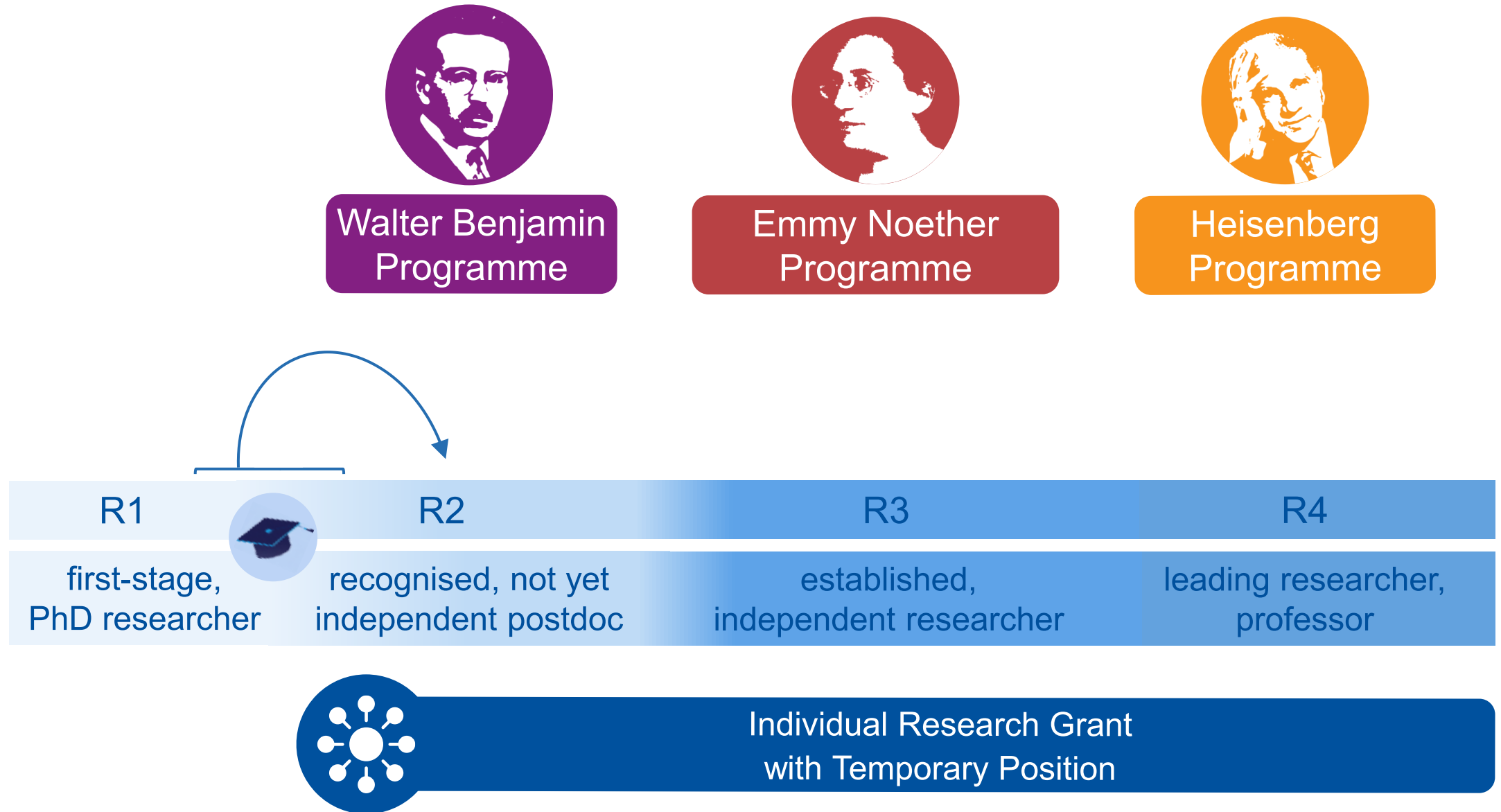
Exclusively early career phase after doctorate

“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



Emmy Noether Programme



Funding Aims

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

... qualification **for professorial appointment**

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

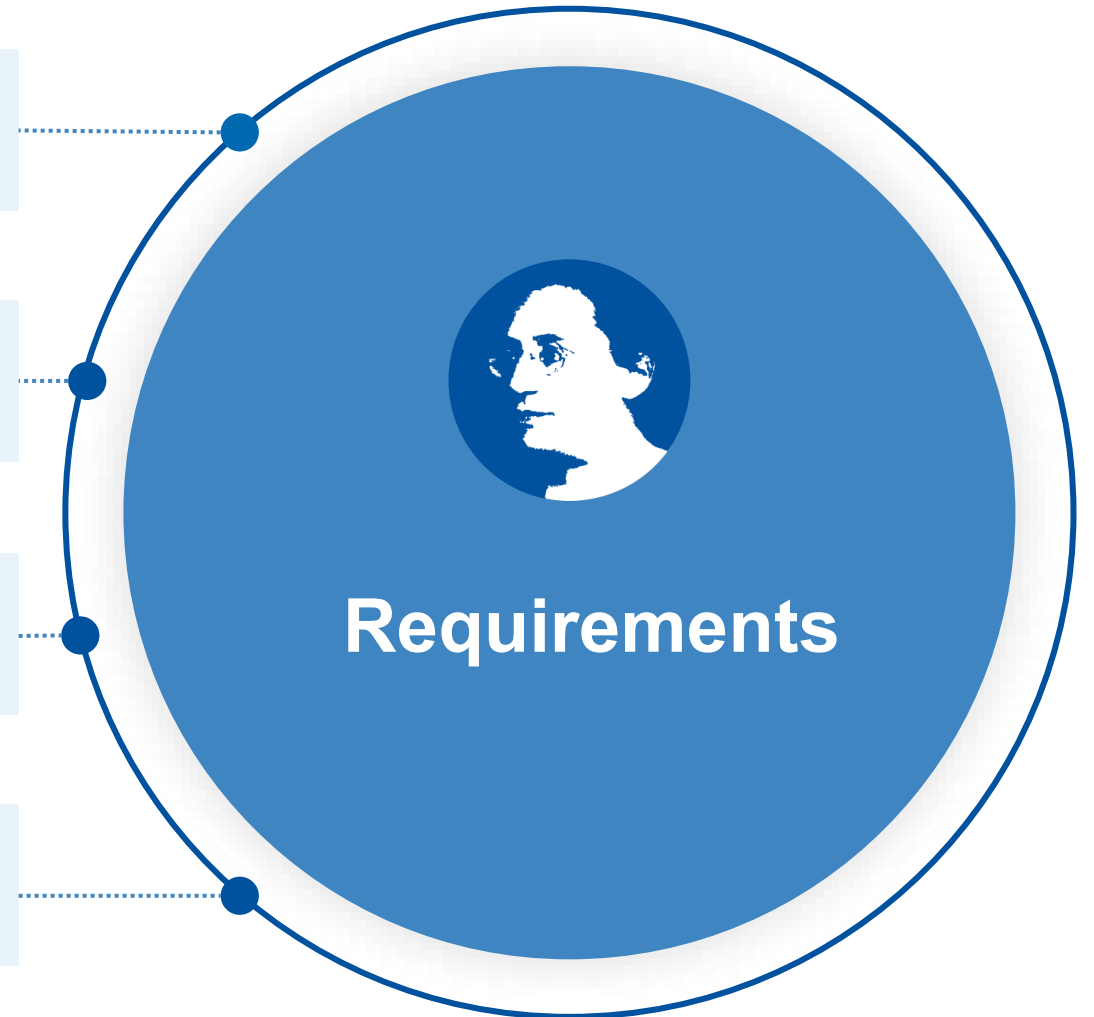


Outstanding **research profile**

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**



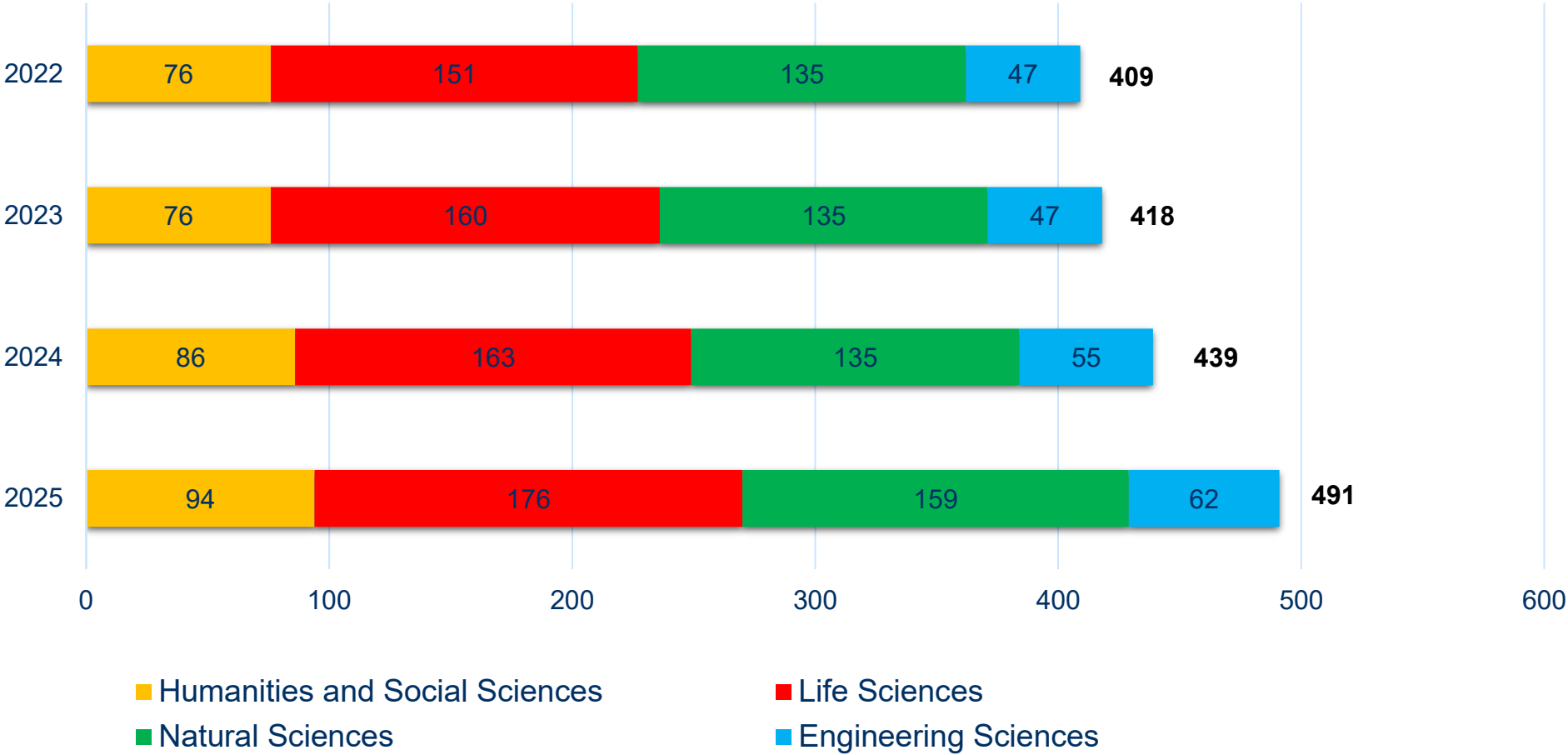
Employment in junior group
leader position at host institution
(E15 TV-L scheme or tenure
track professorship)

Flexible funds for
staff, consumables, travel...

Family allowance possible

Number of Running Emmy Noether Groups by Discipline

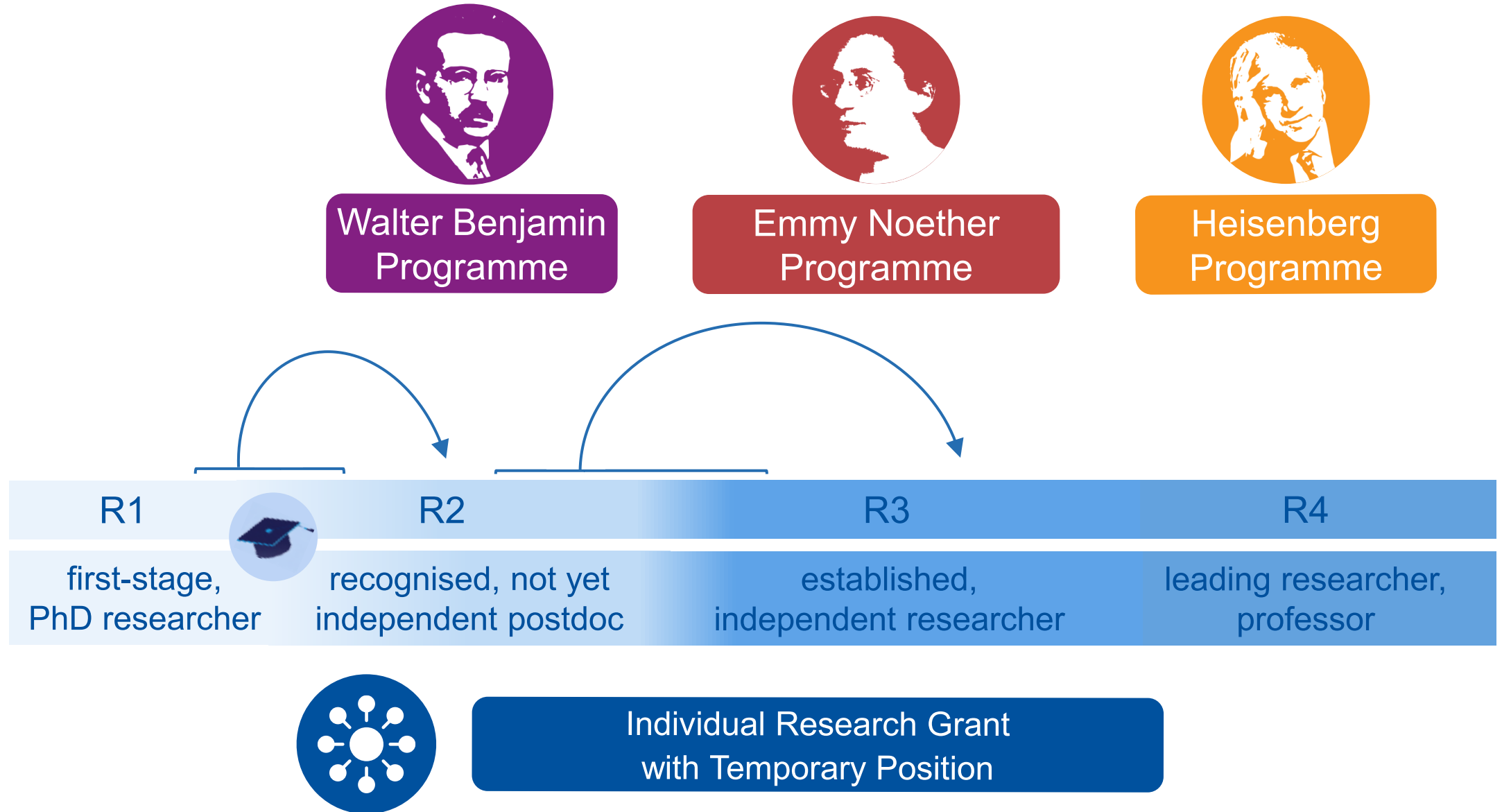
2022-2025





Emmy Noether Jahrestreffen

Yearly Meeting of
Grantees & Alumni
in Potsdam





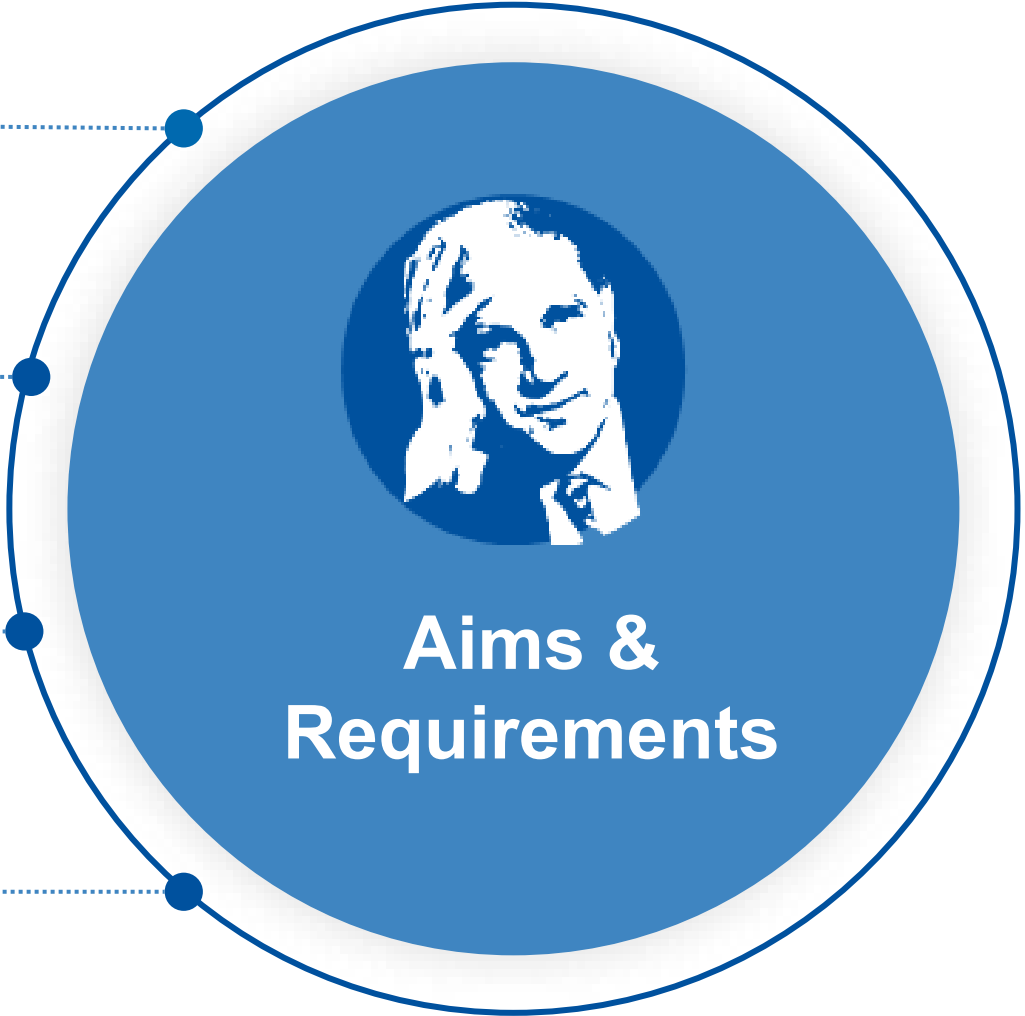
Heisenberg Programme

Enabling **outstanding researchers...**

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

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

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



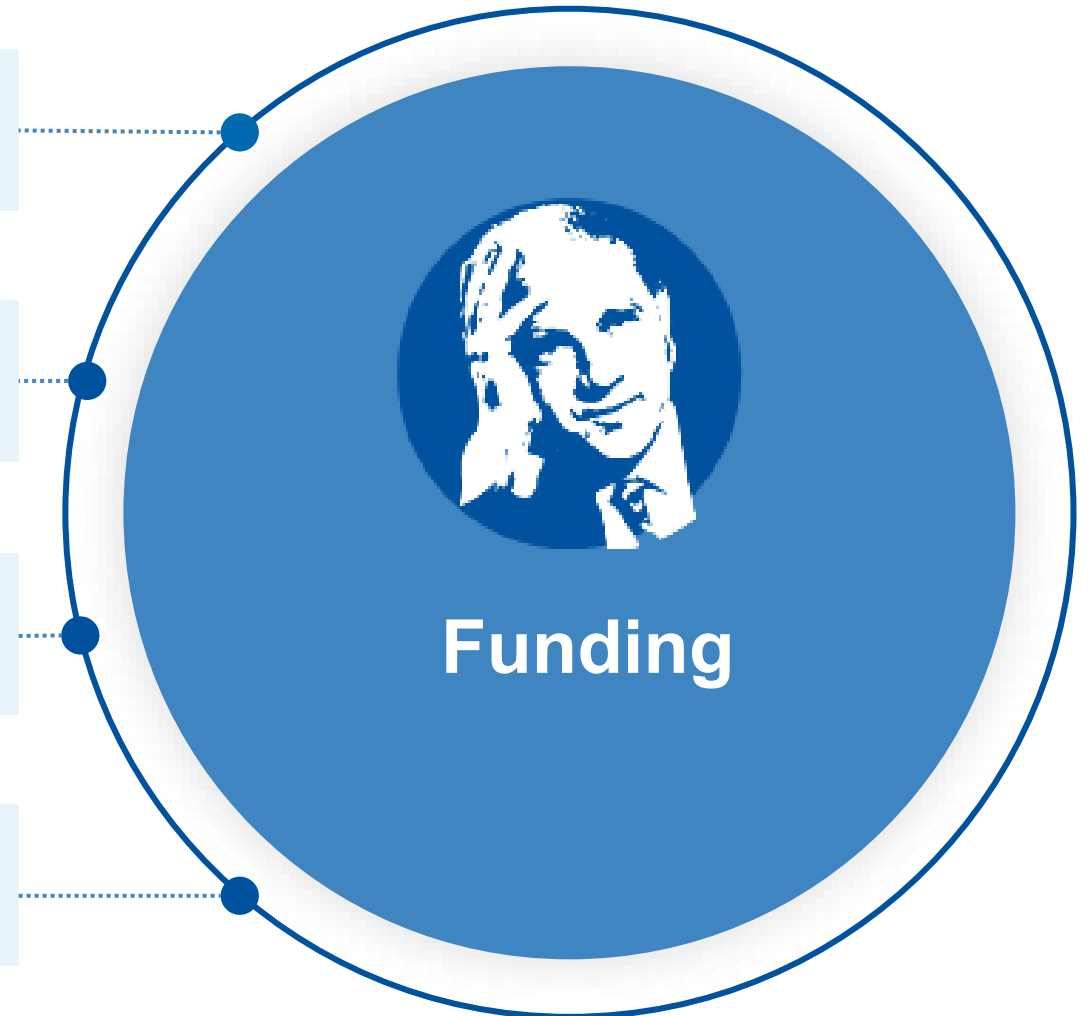
**Aims &
Requirements**

Funding for **up to five years**

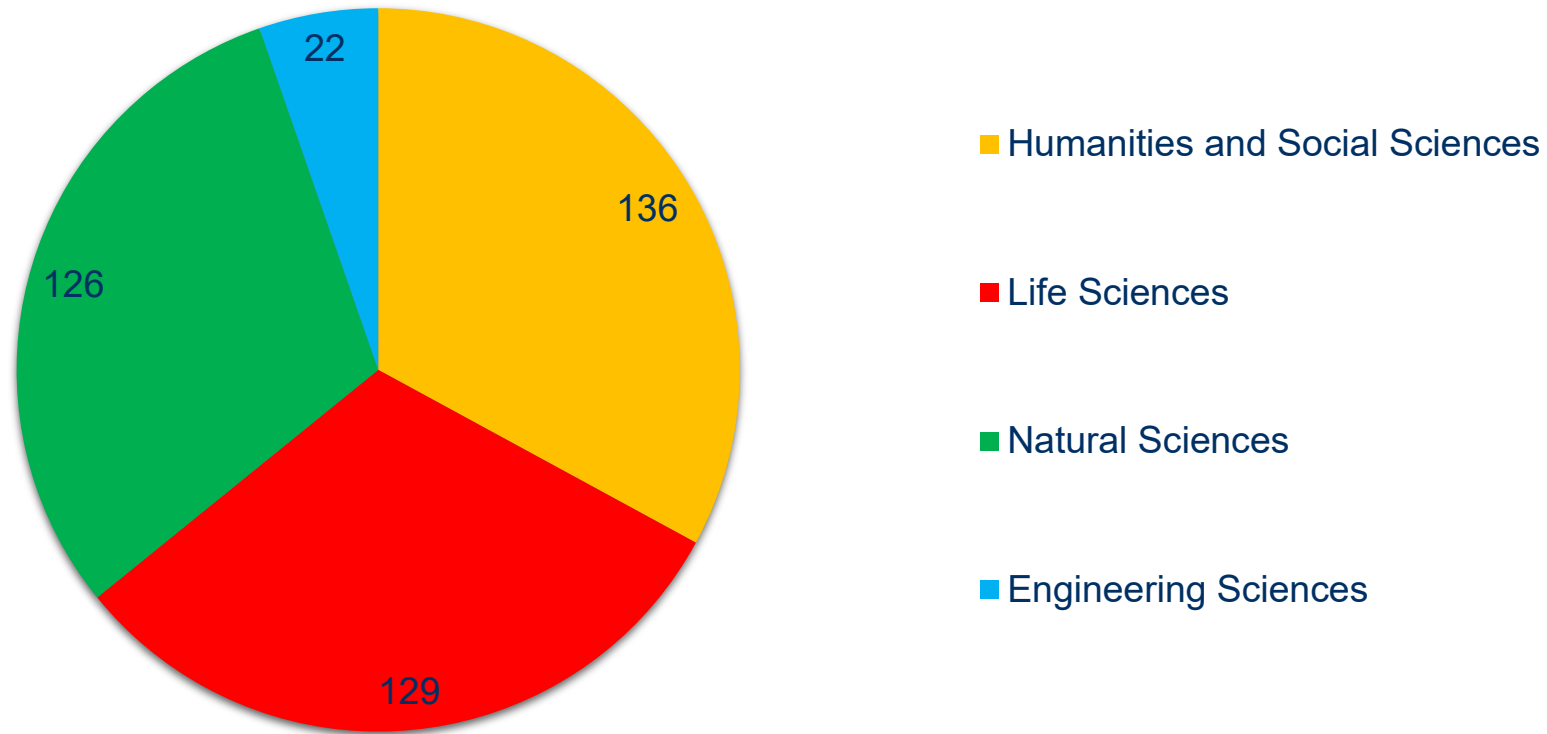
Funding options:
fellowship | position | professorship

Additional flexible funding €1,000 or €1,313
per month

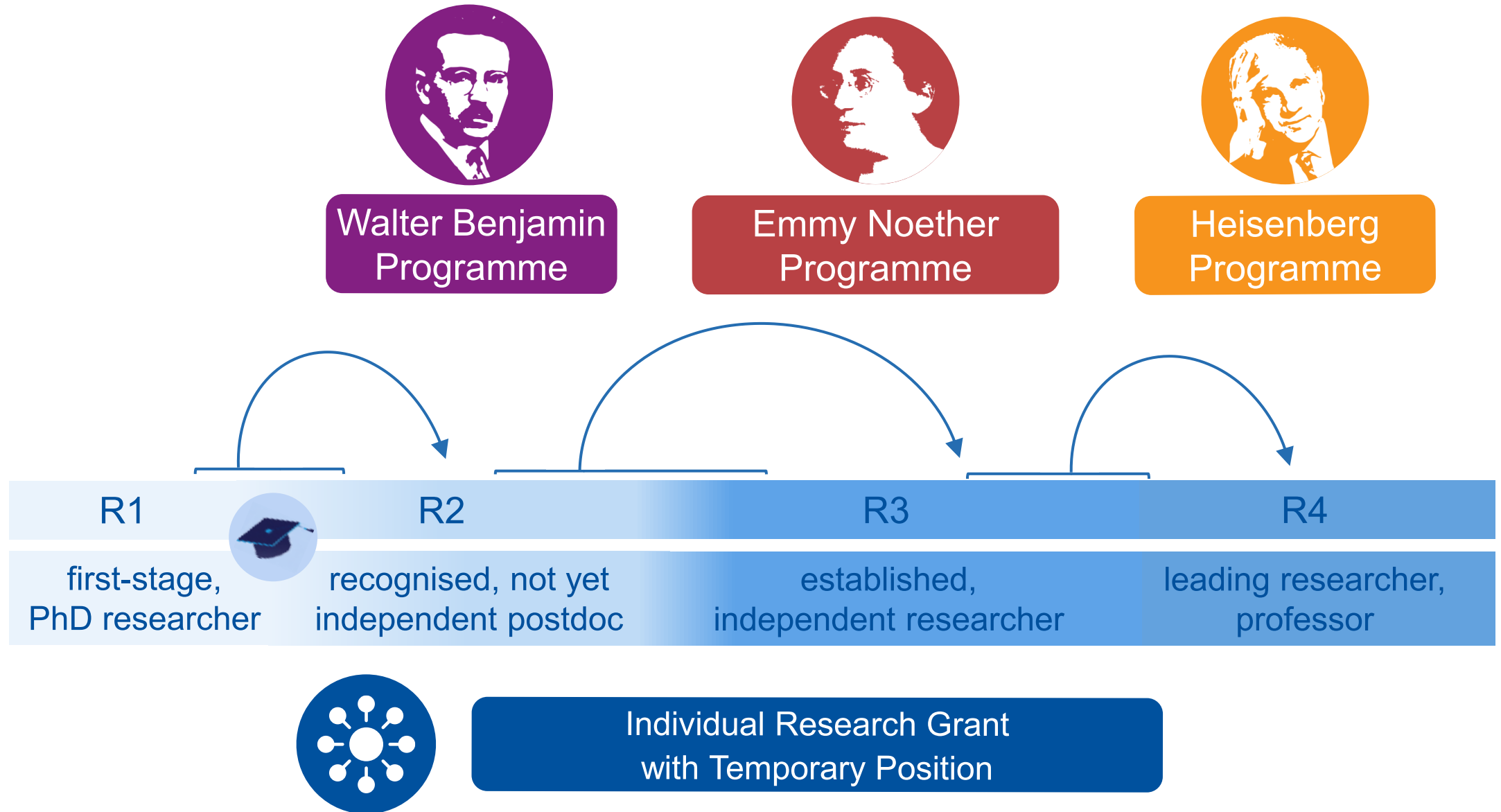
Can be **combined** with a **research grant**
proposal



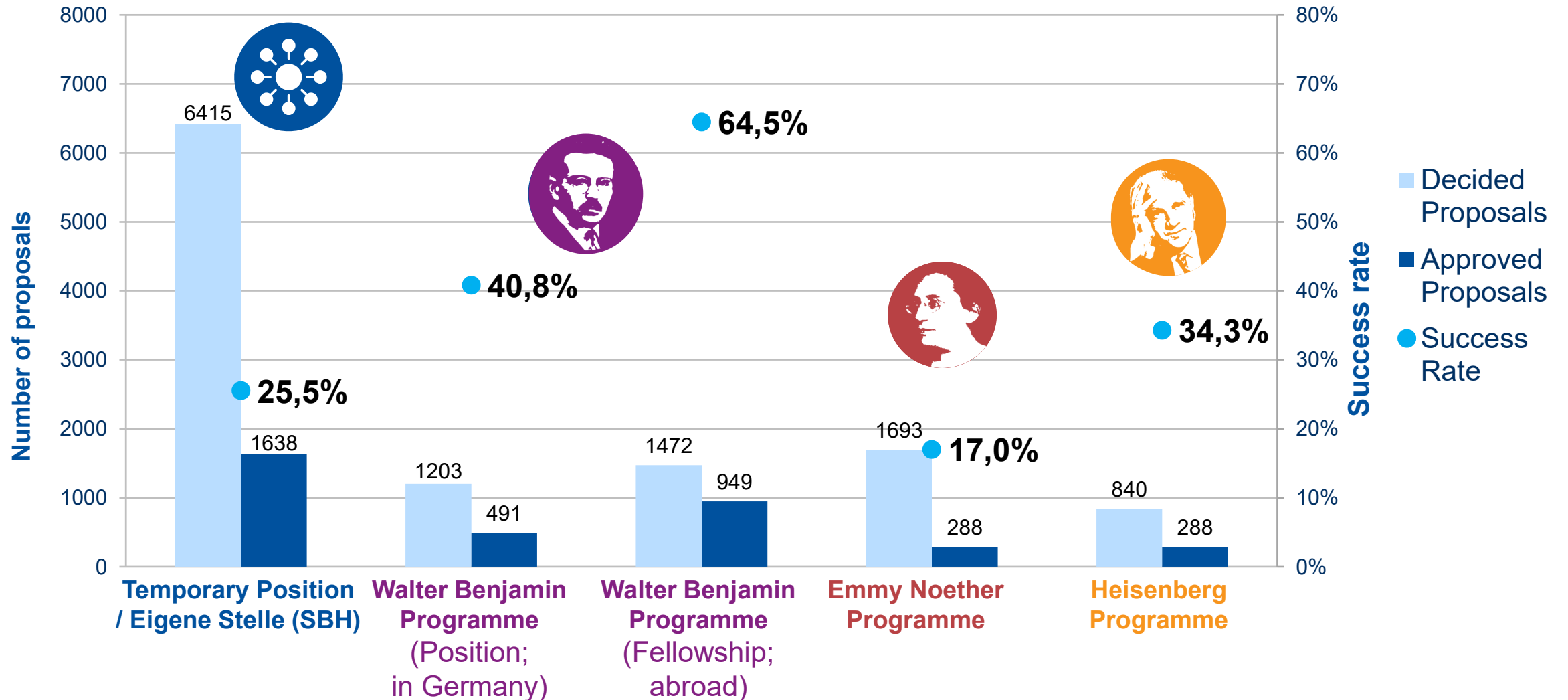
Number of Heisenberg Grantees by Discipline in 2025



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

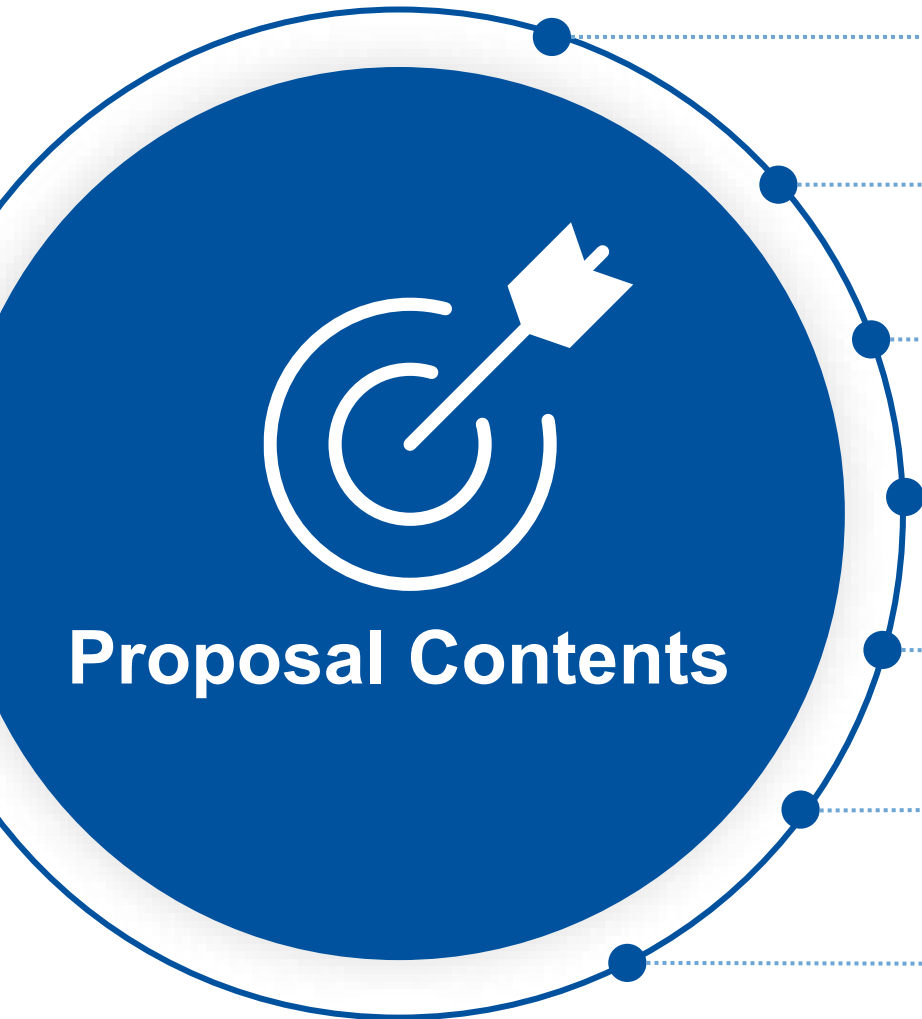
Walter Benjamin fellowship

- 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?

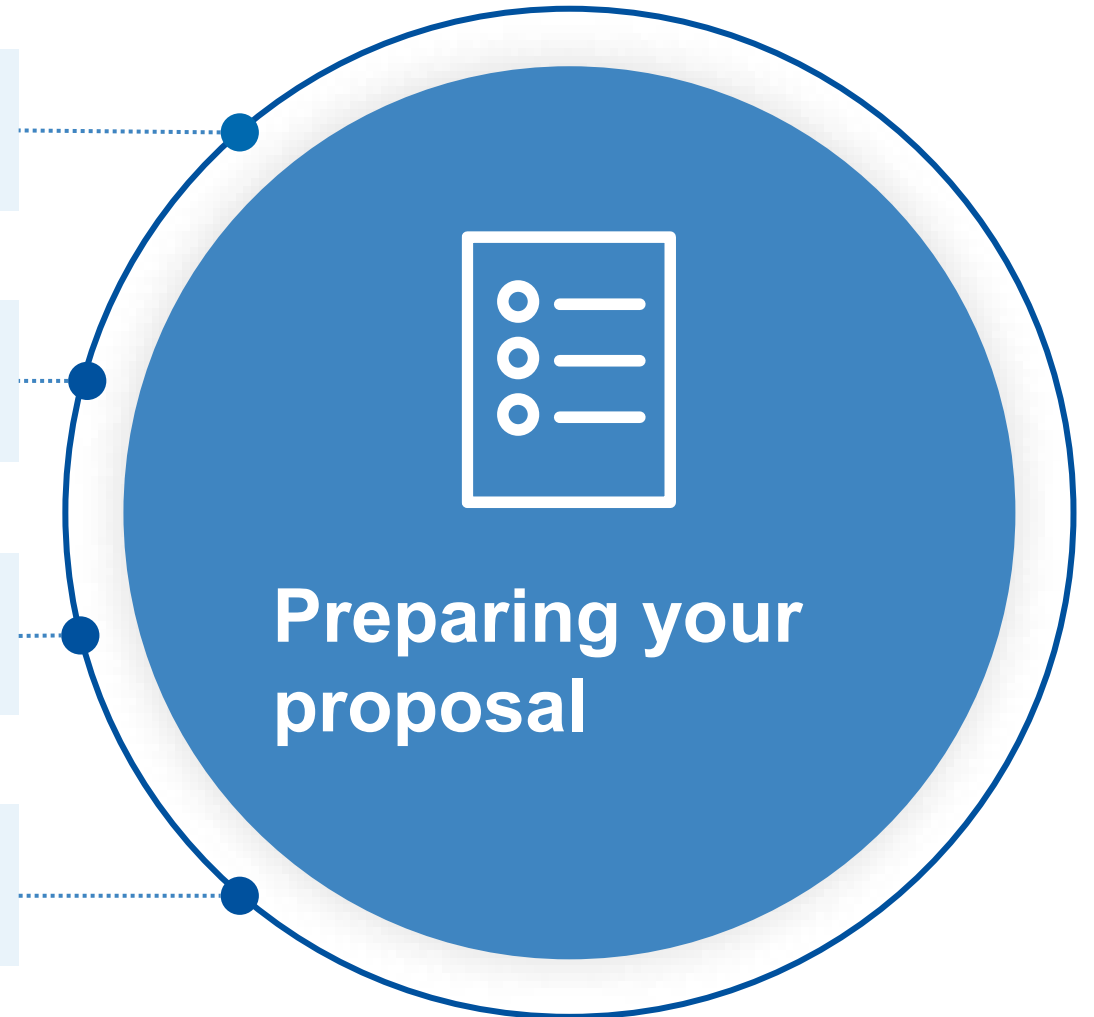
Why is the **host institution** ideal for your project?

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



You are welcome to contact us!



On Eligibility

procedures-researchcareers@dfg.de

On General Topics

info-researchcareers@dfg.de

On Equity & Diversity

chancengleichheit@dfg.de

With a Subject-Specific Focus

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



Preparing your CV



Use the [DFG CV Template](#)



Include qualifications, activities, engagement & awards

also: organization of scientific meetings, review activities, supervision experience...



Mention time away from research

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



List your scientific contributions

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

AI in proposal preparation

- Generally permitted
- Obligation to disclose use of LLMs
- Questions?
KI@dfg.de



AI in the review process

- Allowed given adherence to these principles:
 - confidentiality,
 - transparency,
 - quality assurance,
 - responsibility
- [Guideline on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Review Process](#)

Side note: Please double check AI information on DFG content with rules & guidelines on our website!



No **upper limits**

(for Individual Research Grant & Emmy Noether Programme)

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

DFGDeutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft

Anmeldung / Login

E-Mail Adresse /
Email address:

Kennwort /
Password:

Sprache wählen /
Select language:

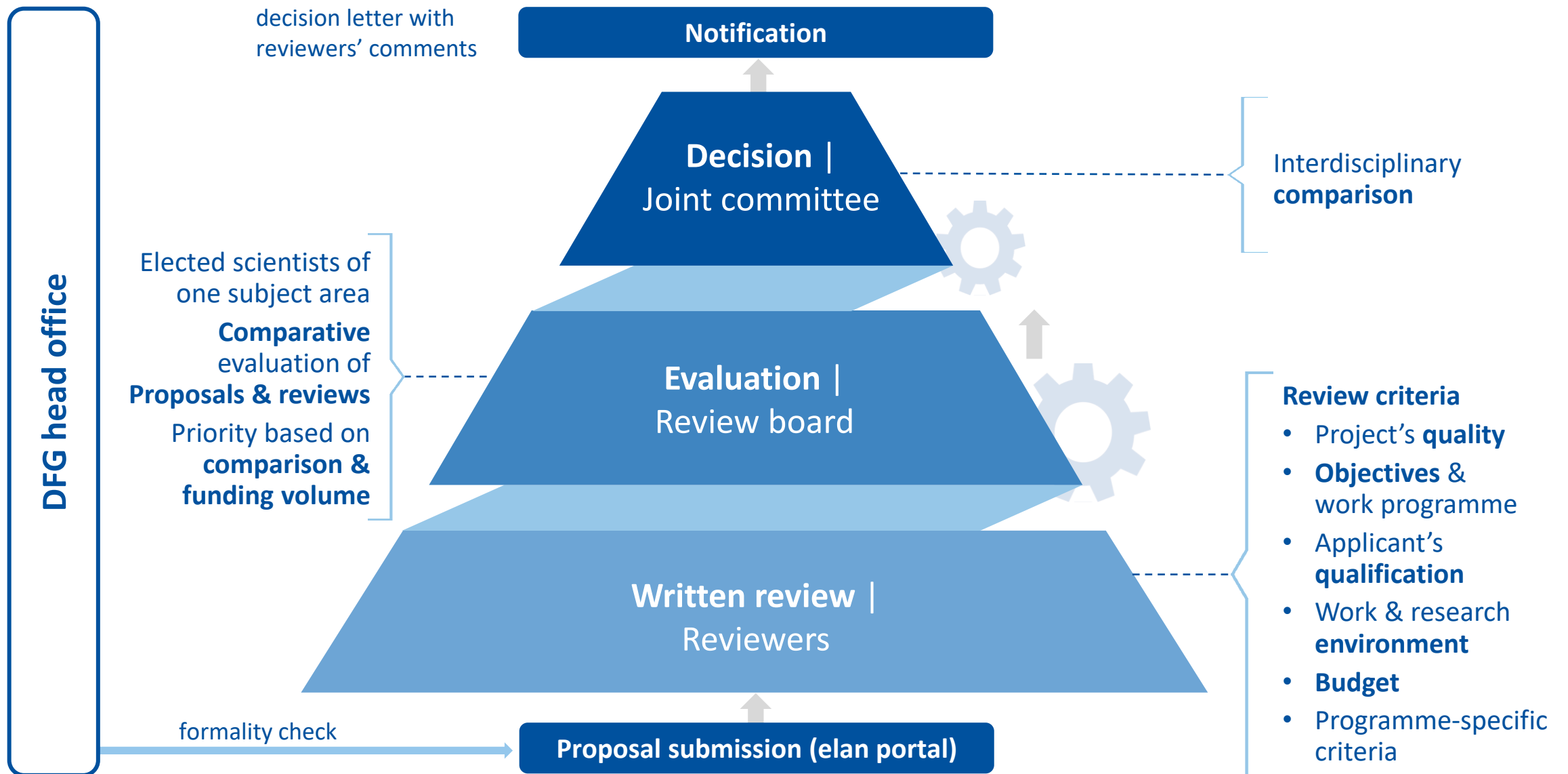
☒ Deutsch

☐ English

E-Mail Adresse speichern /
Save email address:

☐

→ Anmelden / Login



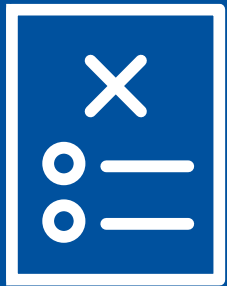


49 Review Boards

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



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



Use the feedback as a ressource

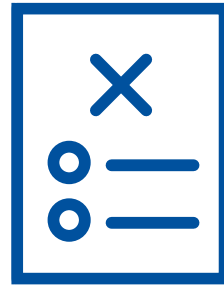
You might want to rework and resubmit your proposal



Consult the DFG Head Office

If you feel treated unfairly or would appreciate further advice

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 successful...**



Congratulations!



Get started

Start your project with the first request for funds (within 12 months after decision)



Contact us early

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



More questions?

info@researchcareers@dfg.de



Orientation for early-career researchers:

www.dfg.de/research_careers

Proposal Submission – A How-To Guide:

www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/individual_grants_programmes

GEPRIS – database with all DFG-funded projects:

gepris.dfg.de/en

Profiles of 25,000 German research institutes:

www.gerit.org

DFG Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft



www.dfg.de



Bluesky | @dfg.de



Mastodon | @dfg_public



Instagram | dfg__public



Youtube | @DFGbewegt



LinkedIn | Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
(DFG) – German Research Foundation

Please
complete the
PAW survey! 😊

<https://survey.academiccloud.de/f/571758?lang=en>

