

Open Call for “Kármán Conferences”

Background

The **Exploratory Research Space @ RWTH Aachen (ERS)** is a structure to support the generation of new and unconventional research ideas. Regularly organized meetings, workshops etc. aim at overcoming the barriers between different disciplines and fostering the interdisciplinary exchange between scientists at RWTH Aachen University.

Outstanding international meetings on novel research topics can be promoted as “Kármán Conferences”. ERS invites proposals for new conferences in vital, emerging areas with a presumably high impact on the future scientific profile of RWTH Aachen University. The subject proposed must be in fundamental research and technology and at a state of development that places it at the very frontiers of science. Preferably, these are interdisciplinary topics at the interfaces of natural, engineering or medical sciences and related technologies. Kármán Conferences are characterized by an outstanding scientific quality, internationally renowned speakers, excellence and originality of the contributions.

The organization of a Kármán Conference is supported with a subsidy of up to 25,000 €.

1. Type and Aim of Measure

Kármán Conferences shall help to evaluate new ideas and to sharpen novel research directions by ensuring active discussion and presentation of yet unpublished results. To encourage open communication, any information presented or discussed at a Kármán Conference is a private communication and not for public use. Documentations or publications arising from the conferences are not to be prepared.

The format and venue of a conference shall stimulate discussions and a sense of community. Typically, meetings take place in an appealing, private environment and are lasting four to five days. The number of attendees should be limited to 120, approximately. Kármán Conferences aim at supporting young scientists and encourage the exchange with well-established senior scientists and professors at eye level. Thus, the primary criteria for participation are scientific accomplishment and the commitment to actively and meaningfully contribute to the meetings.

The conference chair and vice-chair are responsible for the content and conduct of the meeting, the invitation of speakers as well as the selection of discussion leaders and attendees.

Kármán Conferences shall help to evaluate and sharpen a scientific topic with possible relevance to the research profile of RWTH Aachen University. Thus, they are a "working meeting" of a confined scientific community and do not aim at creating international visibility for a topic rather established, already.

2. General Conditions

Any full professor of RWTH Aachen University may apply for a subsidy to organize a Kármán Conference. The proposal has to be submitted by the conference chair together with a vice chair person from a different faculty of RWTH.

A short report is requested within two months after the meeting (scientific outcome and possible follow-up activities; number of participants, feedback of participants based on questionnaire; financial report; lessons learned for organization of further conferences).

3. Proposal Structure and Content

The proposal should contain the following information:

- Contact details of applicants, i.e., conference chair and vice-chair
- Topic of the conference and its relevance to the respective scientific community
- Expected long-term impact on research profile of RWTH Aachen University
- Preliminary meeting schedule including preliminary list of keynote speakers
- Planned meeting date and venue
- Cost frame for entire organization

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

4. Selection and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals are reviewed by the members of the ERS Steering Committee. The evaluation process may involve external experts. Selection criteria are:

- originality and interdisciplinary nature of scientific topic
- scientific excellence of invited speakers and overall programme
- contribution to research profile and international visibility of RWTH Aachen University
- possible benefit to establish a novel, promising research topic at RWTH
- scientific reputation of the applicant

5. Funding

The budget of ERS is provided by the excellence initiative of the German federal and state governments. For the organization of a Kármán Conference, an ERS subsidy of up to 25,000 € per conference may be requested. Up to two meetings per year will be supported.

Eligible costs are, e.g., rent for meeting venues, technical equipment, external moderation, travel costs for invited speakers, session chairs and selected attendees.

The overall cost schedule shall list all expected revenues (including calculation of participation fees) and expenditures and a justification of the requested subsidy. The applicants are asked to seek for additional sources of revenue (e.g., funds from corresponding projects, association supports, sponsoring, application to DFG).

6. Further Information and Application

This is an open call. Proposal may be submitted at any time via email to:

RWTH Aachen
Exploratory Research Space – ERS-Forum
Dr. Brigitte Küppers
E-Mail: kueppers@ers.rwth-aachen.de
Phone: 0241 80 96504

We strongly recommend to contact us before submitting a proposal.

The ERS Steering Committee:

Prof. Gerd Ascheid, Faculty 6 - Electrical Engineering and Information Technology
Prof. Thomas Gries, Faculty 4 - Mechanical Engineering
Prof. Walter Leitner, Faculty 1 - Mathematics, Computer Science, and Natural Sciences
Dr. Elke Müller, Head of Department 4.0, Central University Administration