

ATMO Grant Writing Bootcamp

In today's academic landscape, the ability to secure funding is key to independence and career advancement, especially for early career researchers (ECR). The ATMO Grant writing bootcamp will equip you with the time, the tools, mindset, and feedback network you need to succeed. You'll leave not just with the foundation of a refined proposal, but also with the confidence and strategic insight to navigate future calls successfully.

What to expect

- a **preparatory 3,5h online webinar** to sharpen your proposal idea and get an overview on potential funding programs
- online coaching between webinar and bootcamp if needed
 - with Stefan Götze on how to develop a research question, with Elija Bleher on potential funding programs
- a **5-day on-site bootcamp** as a retreat in a quiet, inspiring location, guided by two experienced trainers, Dr. Stefan Götze and Dr. Elija Bleher. The retreat includes:
 - short daily input sessions, e.g. on creativity, story-telling, peer review processes and reviewer's mindset, important elements of a proposal, AI as a writing tool
 - focused writing sessions
 - peer exchange
 - time for reflection and networking
 - 'on-demand' sparring partners Elija Bleher and Stefan Götze
- under consideration: "Evening Panel: Funding Stories and Lessons Learned" with established researchers
- a post-retreat coaching to refine your application and finalize submission of the proposal
- an ATMO Grant Writing Award for the most outstanding proposal

Who can apply

PhD students in their final year and postdocs

Requirements

Candidates should:

- work within the Research Field Earth & Environment and at the time of the retreat have a contract with KIT.
- be strongly committed to write a grant proposal.
- aim at a ECR funding scheme of appropriate size, e.g. AvH Feodor Lynen Fellowship, DAAD Prime Fellowship, DFG Walter Benjamin, DFG Research Grant, DFG Emmy Noether, Helmholtz YIG. Small grants (e.g. for covering travel or material) are not of the intended category.
- be able to attend the entire bootcamp as well as the preparatory webinar. During the 5-day-bootcamp, the focus must be on writing the proposal, hence, any parallel online meetings or other tasks are not possible.
- prepare their work in the bootcamp, incl. the selection of a target funding scheme, development of a first outline of the research idea, together with supervisor(s) and cooperation partners.

Candidates do not require experience in grant writing, but should state their experience (also with awards and fellowships) in the application form nevertheless.



Location

The 5-day on-site bootcamp will take place at the retreat house Kloster Kirchberg. Kloster Kirchberg is located in Sulz am Neckar, around 40km south-west of Tübingen. It is secluded and surrounded by meadows and forests, with the nearest town with a train station being Sulz am Neckar. For more information and some impressions see <https://kloster-kirchberg.de>.

Dates

- Preparatory online webinar: **27 or 29 May 2026, 9-12:30** (please indicate your preferred date in the application form)
- Bootcamp (on-site at Kloster Kirchberg): **5-10 July 2026** – arrival in the afternoon on 5 July, start with dinner; end after lunch on 10 July 2026.

Costs

The ATMO Program will cover a large part of the overall costs. There is a **fee of € 500 per participant**, that covers accommodation and meals. We expect both, participant fee and travel costs to Kloster Kirchberg, to be covered by the institutes.

Once we have selected the participants, we will send invoices for the fees. They will have to be paid in advance, i.e. before the preparatory workshop takes place end of May. If a candidate has been selected but later withdraws, this is only possible until 7 May. After that deadline, the full amount must be paid, even if the participant does not attend after all.

Application

Deadline: 29 April 2026, 12am.

Please complete the online application at <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/8ZD-V24PPdS>. In addition to the information on your background and motivation, we ask you to upload a support letter from your advisor, in which they declare their willingness to cover the bootcamp costs and acknowledge your ability to focus on developing a grant proposal during the time in the bootcamp.



Trainer

Dr. Elija Bleher is a biologist by training with a PhD from the RWTH Aachen. She has successfully acquired third-party funding, e.g. a two-year fellowship abroad and a subproject in a BMFTR joint project. As head of the IFU Graduate Program at KIT Campus Alpin she focuses on qualification, career development and coaching of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, also with regard to 3rd party funding.

Dr. Stefan Götze is a social scientist with a D.Phil from the University of Oxford and works at the Karlsruhe House of Young Scientists (KHYS), KIT's central support unit for early career researchers. There, he advises researchers on grant applications and conducts multiple training formats, focusing on scientific creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration, comprehensible communication and the use of AI as a professional tool.

**Invest a week in your future – and take a decisive step toward establishing your independent research career!
We look forward to supporting you on your path to funding success!**

If you have any question, don't hesitate to contact us via elija.bleher@kit.edu.

