The Excellence Initiative
Impact on Research Careers
„The development of the science system in Germany is not to have a flat field but a picture of mountains and valleys.“
1. The Excellence Initiative
2. Outcomes
3. Example of Institutional Strategy
4. Gender Related Measures
The German Excellence Initiative – a contest

Aim:

- Strengthen Germany’s universities
- Make them more visible and attractive internationally

Three lines of funding:

- Graduate Schools
- Clusters of Excellence
- Institutional Strategies

Input: 1.9 billion € government funding for 5 years (2007 – 2012)
Program feature: Universities can apply for funding of …

- **Graduate Schools** (39): highest-level research training; ~ 1 Mio. € p.a.
  - coordinated PhD training
  - professional management

- **Clusters of Excellence** (37): centers of excellence in research; ~ 6.5 Mio. € p.a.
  - huge centers of interdisciplinary research
  - new in terms of size and budget, flexibility of money

- **Institutional Strategies to promote top-level research** (9): excellent research, research training and institutional planning; ~ 21 Mio. € p.a.
  (including minimum of one Cluster and School)
Graduate Schools

- Structured research training in an excellent research environment
- Internationally competitive centres of top-level research by promoting young researchers
- Instrument of quality assurance in graduate education
- Professional management (~80 % of budget)
- 45-500 PhD students, postdocs, undergraduates, junior researchers, professorships
- International recruitment (25%)

Highest level research training

- 39 Graduate Schools
- approx. 1 million € p.a. each
Clusters of Excellence

- Local concentration of research competence, thematic focus
- Internationally visible and competitive, network under university leadership
- Significantly raise a university’s profile, build on already existing strengths
- 5-15 new professorships, 50–100 postdocs and graduate students, international recruitment

Centres of excellence in research

- 37 Clusters
- approx. 6,5 million € p.a. each
Institutional Strategies

- For top-level university research
- Increase international competitiveness of the whole university

- 9 universities
- 21 mio € per year each
How does the Excellence Initiative
Promote Young Researchers
in Germany?
Direct and indirect effects:

► New positions: ‘fresh’ money

► Beneficial structures

► Positioning of universities in global competition
The Excellence Initiative
Fresh money, new positions

Total number from both rounds of the Excellence Initiative:
About 4000 new positions

► EXC and GSC up to April 2009:
  ● ~ 1200 PhD positions
  ● ~ 660 positions for PostDocs
  ● ~ 70 junior professors/group leaders
  ● ~ 180 senior professorships

► Institutional Strategies
  ● ~ 850 positions for young researchers (PhD to group leader)
  ● ~ 140 senior professorships
New Beneficial Structures

- Overarching structures new in terms of size, financial budget and cooperation
- Professional administration and management structures
- Tenure track options
- Industry cooperation
- Career centres for PhD students
- Tailor made study and mentoring programs
- Open and international atmosphere
- Double career programs
- Child care services
- Welcome centres for international researchers
- High flexibility of budget
- High pressure to succeed due to evaluation
Impact on German Universities

- Creativity boost for the university system
- Competition and differentiation between universities gains momentum
- Structural changes
- Improved networking between universities and other research institutions
- Impulse towards greater internationalisation, improved gender balance, more diversity
- Increased awareness for universities and research in the media and the general public
- Alumni culture, fundraising strategies
- 4000 new research positions at all levels
Positioning of universities in global competition

University of Konstanz – Institutional Strategy

Equal opportunities

Creativity in research and teaching

Institutional creativity

Konstanz Science Forum

Cluster Cultural Foundations of Integration

Modell Konstanz towards a culture of creativity

Graduate school “Chemical biology”

Institutional strategy

Top-level research in cells of creativity

Promoting young researchers

Internationalisation

Research Centres

Freedom for creativity

Support Services

Quality management

Fundraising

Zukunftskollel
University of Konstanz: „Zukunftskolleg“
Support for young investigators

Innovative, institutionally established postdoctoral fellowship program

► Interdisciplinary and cross-generation approach
► Gives postdocs the opportunity to work with renowned senior fellows
► Distinguished researchers are invited to participate as senior fellows in cooperation projects
► Even beyond the boundaries of their own subject
► (Junior) Fellows to young scientists who have already made outstanding scientific achievements and whose projects have exceptional potential
University of Konstanz: „Zukunftskolleg“
Support for young investigators

Goal

► Independence in research, training in key qualifications, encouragement of interdisciplinary dialog with senior fellows
► Assumption of responsibility in committee work and higher education policy
► Acquisition of various soft skills, scientific contacts and experience, membership in networks
University of Konstanz: „Zukunftskolleg“
Support for young investigators

**Instruments available**

► Awards for postdoctoral researchers, junior professors, heads of junior research groups
► Co-financing of investments, and material resources
► Co-financing of personnel: for fellows, senior fellowships, doctoral fellowships, scientific retreats, mentorships
► Coaching program
► Posts of new fellows recruited through official calls for applications
The Excellence Initiative
Indirect Effects

- Universities realize non-funded initiatives on their own
- Rejected initiatives are supported by individual states (‘Länder’)
- Overhead introduced to all DFG Programmes (20%)
- DFG decided for research oriented gender standards
Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality
Self-governance to promote gender equality in German higher education

Goal

- Generally promote gender equality in the German science system
- Significantly increase the participation of women in research in Germany
- Set benchmarks in the field of gender equality in German higher education
- Putting gender equality high on the agenda in German research
Research-oriented standards on gender equality: two parts

- First part (structure):
  structural requirements to safeguard gender equality, e.g. the design of management and review processes or the editing of data on the situation of gender equality within the institution

- Second part (people):
  comprises personnel standards and the „cascade model“.
New approach to promote gender equality in German research

- Nationwide initiative while respecting the organisational freedom of the DFG’s member institutions
- Participating institution must define and implement their own measures and report them to the DFG!
- Participating institutions are free to chose the means intended to reach the goals and to chose the extent of their own commitments
- Implemented on a five-year schedule (July 2008 until July 2013)
Online-Toolbox on best-practice measures promoting gender equality (published July 2009)

- To provide helpful suggestions for the implementation of the standards
- Best-practice examples for different kinds of measures
- Quality assurance of measures prior to being included into the database
- Publicly accessible via the internet: www.dfg.de/instrumentenkasten (only in German)
Thank you for your attention!

Further Information:
- about the DFG: [www.dfg.de](http://www.dfg.de)
- about projects funded: [www.dfg.de/gepris/](http://www.dfg.de/gepris/)
- about more than 17,000 German institutions of research: [www.dfg.de/research_explorer/](http://www.dfg.de/research_explorer/)
Success parameters

- publications, projects,
- appointments/senior posts in research institutions or industrial research, prizes and awards, conference participation,
- patents, temporary professorships and "habilitations"