

# Do's and don'ts when applying for an ERC Startup Grant

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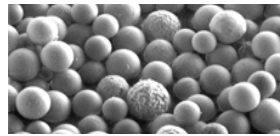
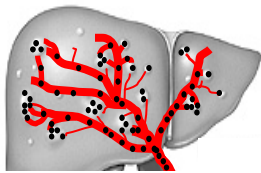
MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT

*Max-Planck Institute for Metals Research*

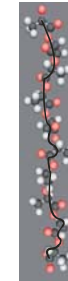
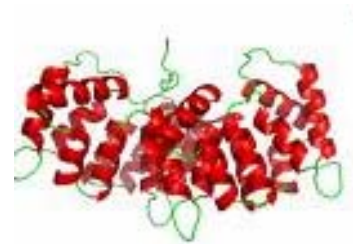
*Stuttgart, Germany*

# What we do

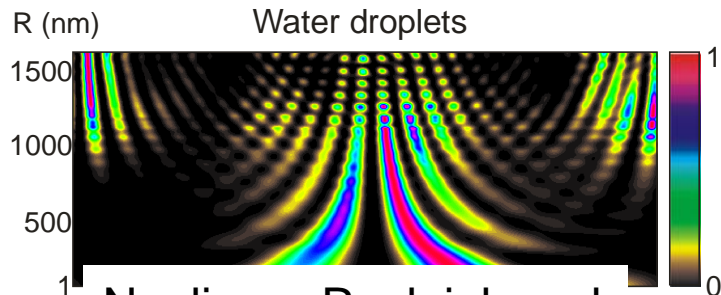
Liver Malignancy



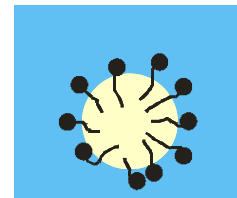
Internal microsphere structure for liver cancer treatment



Surface structure of biomedically relevant interfaces



Nonlinear Rayleigh and Mie scattering



Interface properties of droplets and vesicles in water

# Funding



ERC Starting Grant (2009)



MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT

Max-Planck Floating Research Group (2005)



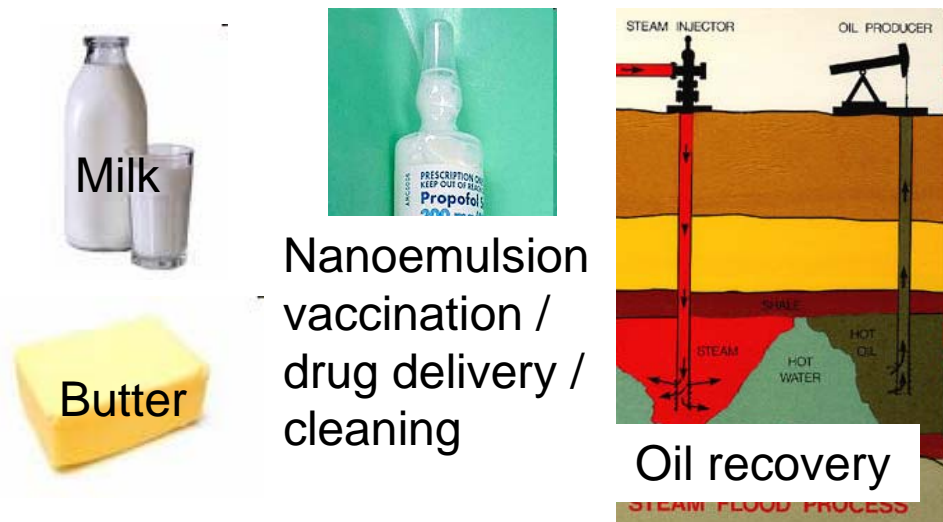
Host for Alexander von Humboldt fellows  
(2006,2008)



Normalverfahren (DFG), 2008

# ERC proposal

## Molecular Interfacial structure and dynamics of Nanoscopic droplets in Emulsions (MINE)



Panel: PE 4 Physical and analytical chemistry

PhD received: Sept. 2004 (Applied Oct. 2008)

# Applying, first evaluation, the applicant

## The proposal writing, some ideas

Start long before deadline (if you can)

Write exactly what they ask of you

Be clear, think your project through (what do I want to achieve, why, when, and how?)

Preliminary data is a pro, it shows you thought about it.

Be honest on possible challenges

Including clear pictures helps

Choose the right panel (i.e. the one that represents the community that will be most perceptive to your brilliant ideas)



# Applying, first evaluation, the applicant

## The proposal writing, some ideas

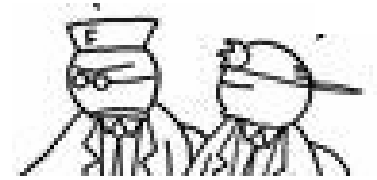
Imagine yourself as an evaluator,  
Would you like to read your own stuff?  
Ask a non-specialist to read and  
comment on what you wrote

In doubt? Contact the help desk

Especially for the ERC:  
The idea must be innovative,  
unique, can be high risk,  
but must have high impact



# Applying – the committee evaluates

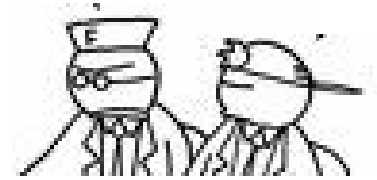


## 1 - The track record is important

- Publications (number, what journals, with different people)
- First and last author on paper
- Awards
- Books
- Further activities
- Self-evaluation need to be included

PI must have track record that proves potential

# Applying – the committee evaluates



## 2 - The proposal itself and how you present it is important

A referee needs to read a lot of proposals – you are often a number:

- the worst ones are thrown out immediately
- the best ones get selected immediately
- the middle portion (~60-80 % of all candidates) is risky



# The Interview

If you are selected there can be a presentation and interview

- Be aware of the scientific background & diversity of the committee
- Be clear, not too detailed (you are probably not the first one today)
- Be enthusiastic (if you are not, why should they be?)
- Do not under sell yourself (you have been selected show them why)
- Do not over sell yourself (28 year old world-leaders do not exist)
- Present previous and future goal
- Why you want to go where
- Be prepared to have someone else click through your slides
- **Practice, practice, practice**

# If you do not pass

## If it fails somewhere...

Try to find out why you did not get it – you can use that for later attempts

There can be a bias (e.g. physicists evaluating chemistry proposals)

Don't be upset ... its nothing personal ... try again



# Typical Committee Questions

- What makes you think this will work?
- What kind of competition do you expect from the scientific community? Are you the best to do this? Why?
- Experience with group leading?
- Why this institute?
- Can you remove part of your budget?