



ICCK Services in 2021

Preamble. The following services are based on my own experiences as a scientist as well as on training courses by German support organizations and discussions with colleagues and customers. All offers have the same base: I would have loved to get this kind of information when I was a graduating student or young scientist – but they were then not available and I had to acquire them the hard way. Consequently all my services are very much geared towards practice – I shy away from assisting research organizations in designing their ‘European Research Strategy’ or consulting larger industrial or business institutions.

I am a one-man-operation, and in no way am I a competition of the EU Offices at research institutions / universities or support organizations like the EU National Contact Points (NCP) or the German ‘Kooperationsstelle EU der Wissenschaftsorganisationen’ (KoWi). In fact, my consulting normally complements the work of the local officials (“EU Referent/in”) by bringing in the necessary expertise in the initial part of the proposal writing up to the point of submission. In many cases my contracts actually are with the local EU Office – and they are happy that their scientists have a private and confidential counterpart in another scientist who has served as evaluator for the Commission. And I am delighted that they organize everything around my seminars – a real ‘win-win’ case.

I used to be a scientific coworker of the Max Planck Society - and as a sideline advised on research funding topics. I was pretty good at this, and thus continued this line after my official retirement. Much to my surprise I discovered a niche - apparently no one else in the German consulting system offers the very wide ranging and practical palette of information and straight application assistance.

These days I lecture for all kind of organizations worldwide, and coach scientists to successfully apply for grants from German, Israeli and European funding organizations - especially the Marie Curie and ERC Actions of the Horizon 2020 (soon Horizon Europe) programs of the European Commission. Personally I have a wide range of interests – and in the past my customers came from a similar wide range of science, e.g. physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, finance, religious / history studies. Below you will find some details of the two routes my consulting has taken:

SEMINARS:

1. A day-long seminar geared towards Graduate Schools on the wide variety of funding opportunities.

This starts with a reminder of the research organizations in Germany, continues with research funding organizations (from DAAD to EU, NATO and the international institutions), and has as focus in the afternoon the essential understanding of the practical side of grant writing (including tips and pitfalls). Lecture in German or English, all sheets in English. Usually the attendants get a PDF of the slides.

2. A seminar for international young scientists on research funding opportunities in Germany.

These seminars are usually part of status meetings of German funding agencies in Asia, Africa or South America - sometimes coupled with subsequent or *in loco* individual consulting. Again this starts with a reminder of the research organizations in Germany, continues with details about research funding organization (from DAAD to EU) and has as focus in the second part the clear understanding of the practical side of grant writing (including tips and pitfalls). Lecture, slides and PDF in English.

3. A half-day / full day seminar for excellent scientists planning an ERC application.

Applying for an ERC Grant is like playing in the Champions League – and with an official success rate of around 12 % not even a minor mistake is permissible. This is, depending on the local request, either a very much hands-on seminar for excellent scientists to cover all the topics to consider when applying for a Starting (StG), Consolidator (CoG), Advanced (AdG) or Synergy Grant (SyG) of the European Research Council (ERC) – or a motivational seminar for junior / senior staff of a research institution. It can also be a discrete “Fireside Chat” for university leadership contemplating higher third-party funding. Lecture in German or English, all sheets in English.

4. A seminar (2-8 hours) preparing scientists for the interview phase of ERC StG, CoG, AdG and SyG.

Roughly 30 % of the ERC applications pass step 1 – the proposal is then given to between 4-8 experts and the applicant usually is invited for an interview of approximately 20 minutes in Brussels. This seminar (starting for AdG in the new Horizon Europe) covers all the points needed to understand the (really important!) interview



preparation – it resembles in parts the seminars offered in Germany by KoWi or the MPG Headquarters. It frequently results in subsequent individual consulting and rehearsing up to the interview date.

5. A full day seminar for doctoral students / postdocs & group leaders with focus on a MSCA application.

Applying for any of the offers in the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) requires close attention of both applicant and the host to all the points mentioned in the Guide - be it for Individual Fellowships (IF) or the Innovative Training Networks (ITN). This is a very much hands-on seminar, and frequently results in subsequent individual consulting up to the submission point.

6. A day-long seminar geared towards "Fachhochschulen" on the wide variety of funding opportunities.

In the past the German "Fachhochschulen" (sometimes declared as "University of Applied Sciences") served mainly the local area. But this is changing, many are starting European and international cooperations – and often their administration is not yet prepared for this endeavor. The seminar focuses on relevant research funding organizations, particularly beneficial foundations, and the layout of successful funding applications. The lecture is usually in German, the sheets are a mix of German and English. Usually the attendants get a PDF of the slides.

7. A half-day / full-day seminar for junior researchers planning their first "DFG Sachmittelantrag".

The lecture is usually in German, with sheets in German. Attendants get a PDF of the slides.

8. Still under development: A day seminar on the essentials of scientific writing.

I am developing this seminar on request of customers. It covers the basic rules for the PhD and Postdoc phase of a scientific career, starting with the rules for writing a lab book, and covering literature search and journal club, regular reports to the supervisor, rules for a poster resp. a personal (workshop) presentation, the writing and publishing of a scientific paper, the inner workings of a publication or funding application review, guidelines on the handling of research data, and even rudimentary points about writing a research funding application and a job (postdoc) application. First presentation this summer?

PERSONAL ASSISTANCE:

Very rarely do I meet a client in person – we communicate by Skype / Zoom or WebEx and e-mail. After an initial (cost-free) video-discussion I accompany an individual scientist as her/his personal "devil's advocate" during the process of improving an application to the ERC, the Marie Curie Program, the DFG, the German "Wissenschaftsrat", the Israel Science Foundation or the Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR). I do not write the application for them, but I do provide layouts, samples, a number of introductory files – and I will suggest changes by e-mail and skype to achieve perfection. Please note that I require use of MS Word!

The research topics of my customers cover a wide range - from the natural sciences to clinical studies and political sciences. In their interest I strive to design all our communications - be it webinars, pre-established SOPs, e-mail or skype - to assure an outstanding level of quality. It is my aim and pride to offer thoughtful solutions, thus enabling my clients to be successful. For the ERC StG, CoG and SyG customers entering stage 2 this usually includes coaching for the interview phase (interview phase for AdG applicants might start in 2021).

At a time when success requires far more than just 90 out of 100 points all of my clients appreciate the confidential and very critical personal pre-evaluation - at a very reasonable financial investment. If necessary, please contact me for testimonials.

SUCCESS:

No one can guarantee success, but I think the figures speak for themselves: in the past years 50 % of my AdG customers got the grant, 50 % of my CoG customers got to the interview phase - as well as more than 50 % of the StG customers (and 75 % of the MSCA applicants last year).

COSTS:

For individual consulting I charge a very reasonable hourly academic rate (in 15 min units) retained in time sheets. Both sides can cancel the contract on short notice. Please inquire about the fixed rates for national and international seminars.