

# YERUN Lunchtime Series

Implications of funding schemes – University of Bremen

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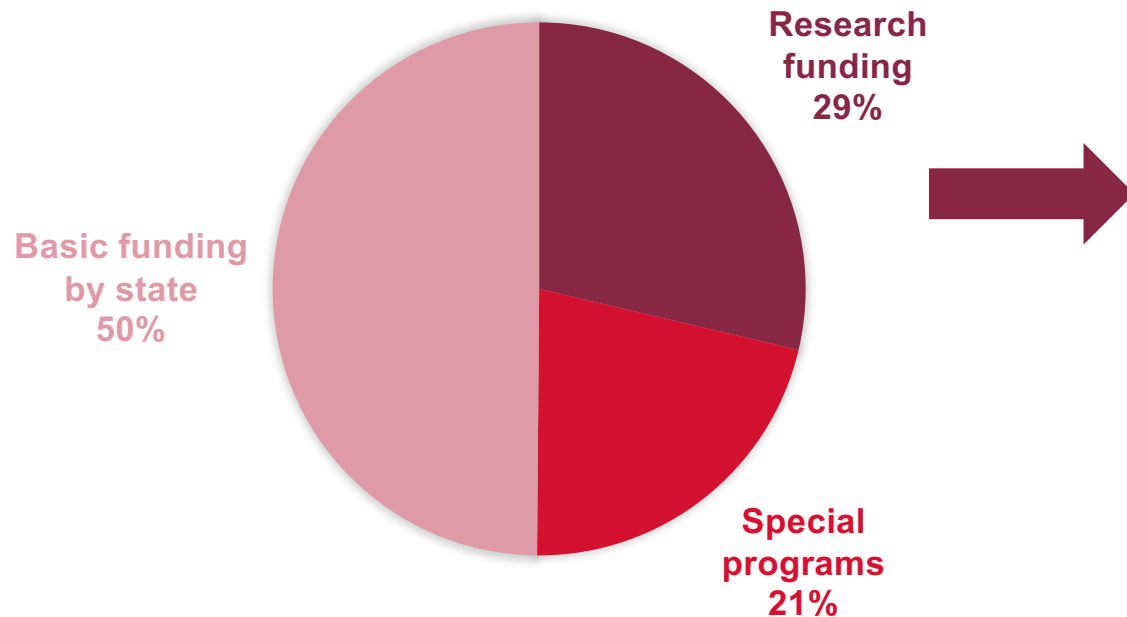
# Overview

- Relevance of research funding for universities
- National and regional legal setting
- Implications
- Some suggestions

# Relevance of research funding

- The share of research funding has increased

## UNIVERSITY BUDGET



A high number of research positions in projects:

- No teaching envisaged
- Focus on project results, not individual qualification
- Research funding is project based (short-term contract)

**Bremen:** Majority of PhD candidates (R1) and ECRs (R2) is employed in projects



# Different logics

## Project funding

- Project-based funding
  - Short-term contracts
- Majority of ECRs (R1, R2)

## Basic funding

- Research and teaching, additional goals and tasks
  - Career tracks, permanent positions available (but rather few)
- Minority of ECRs (R1, R2)

## National legal setting: Germany

- **Public service:** Termination of a permanent employment contract is hardly possible
- „**WissZeitVG**“: Temporary Contracts Act in Science  
= regulation under which a temporary contract is possible:
  - **Third party funded projects**
  - **Scientific qualification:** Limited number of years up to PhD and after PhD, special rights (parental leave)
    - If years have expired: Permanent contract, project contract or **leaving academia**



## Regional legal and political setting

### **Bremen:** BremHG, „Science Plan 2025 “:

- Basic funding comes with defined goals, tasks and targets
- Focus on research and education of students
- ECRs: Focus on academic qualification and career development

### **Additional political agreements:**

- Minimum duration of contracts (3 years PhD, 2 years postdoc), **independent from financial source**
- Political demand for a higher proportion of career paths with permanent contracts



# Implications for universities

## Benefits

- Research funding allows for innovation and research excellence
- A lot of research would not be possible on basic funding alone
- Some researchers teach on a voluntary basis – and enrich the teaching portfolio

## Challenges

- **Competition with industry.** Hard to find staff for short-term projects (e.g. computer science, engineering)
- Projects create **additional costs**: Facilities, energy, wage increases, inflation, administrative costs,...
- Due to national/local legal framework: Need to provide **longer /permanent contracts** in short-term funded projects



Impacts on basic funding, tension flexibility vs. stability

# Implications for ECRs

## Benefits

- High number of positions in projects available
- Different type of contract, less duties (no teaching, no academic self-governance etc.)

## Challenges:

- **Conflict of objectives:** Time for individual qualification for an academic career vs. focus on project results
- **Contract duration:** Contract does not always cover time needed to finish PhD (3-4 years)
- **Uncertainty:** Only limited number of subsequent contracts possible
- **Equal opportunity:** No right to make up time from parental leave



## Mismatch:

- A high number of positions in projects but few career tracks/permanent positions at universities



Career development:  
Time problem





# How to address (some) challenges for ECRs

## Duration of contracts:

- PhD contracts always have a minimum budget of 3 years and may run longer than original project to complete the qualification

## Ensure time for qualification and career development:

- Allow personal qualification time for ECRs in projects (based on competence profile)

## Re-funding of permanent staff:

- Allow for booking permanent staff into research projects (R2, R3)

## Parental leave:

- Funding agencies should provide additional contract months for researchers on parental leave during projects (this is an individual right in qualification contracts/basic funding)

