

## Newsletter December 2023

Dear reader,

In many German families, St. Nicholas Day on 6 December is celebrated by filling their children's boots with oranges, nuts and sweets – a sure sign that the last month of the year has arrived.

For our last newsletter issue of 2023, we did something special: in October, we asked you to vote for the December spotlight topic... and many of you did! Fitting in with the theme of participation, "citizen science" received the most votes. So, in this issue, we look at the ways science can encourage and profit from civic engagement and societal exchange. Whether it is young people collecting plastic in Europe's rivers or boat enthusiasts joining marine research expeditions – citizen science is on the rise in Germany and around the world. Does citizen science impact *your* research? Let us know in the "Your turn!" section.

Many thanks to everyone who voted for such an interesting topic. We hope you enjoy reading and wish you a happy holiday season!

PS The first newsletter of 2024 will be published at the beginning of February. We have included current calls with deadlines in January and early February in this issue.

### SPOTLIGHT

Wherever you see this tag, the post connects to our monthly spotlight topic.

## Current calls

**Apply by:** 31 December 2023, 1,550 €/month + allowances, 2 years  
**PhD:** research in history and culture of Germans in Eastern Europe

### Immanuel-Kant-Stipendium (Grants)

[Go to the Federal Institute for Culture and History of the Germans in Eastern Europe \(BKGE\)](#)

**Apply by:** 15 January 2024, min. 4,180 €/month + allowances, 3 years  
**PhD:** computer science, mathematics, engineering, natural sciences or other data science/machine learning/AI related disciplines

### reIAI PhD program

[Go to Konrad Zuse School of Excellence in Reliable AI \(reIAI\)](#) (partially in German)

**Apply by:** 15 January 2024, 1,350 €/month + allowances, 2 years  
**PhD:** all disciplines

### Scholarships for PhDs and research fellowships

[Go to Hanns Seidel Foundation](#) (partially in German)

**Apply by:** various deadlines at the different Helmholtz Centers, many at the beginning of February, min. 300,000 €/year, 5 years  
**Postdoc & Advanced research:** disciplines related to energy, earth and environment, health, information, matter, and aeronautics, space and transport

### Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups

[Go to Helmholtz Association](#)

**Apply by:** 9 February 2024, support for travel, accommodation and boarding  
**Students & PhD & Postdoc:** mathematics and computer science

### Heidelberg Laureate Forum

[Go to Heidelberg Laureate Forum](#)

**Apply by:** 28 February 2024, 1,450–1,550 €/month + allowances, 6–24 months  
**PhD:** economics, social sciences and humanities

### Dieter Schumacher International PhD Scholarship & Ute and György Széll International PhD Scholarship

[Go to Hans Böckler Foundation](#)

**Apply by:** any time, 934–1,400 €/month + allowances, no set duration  
**Students & PhD:** all disciplines

### Scholarship Programme of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

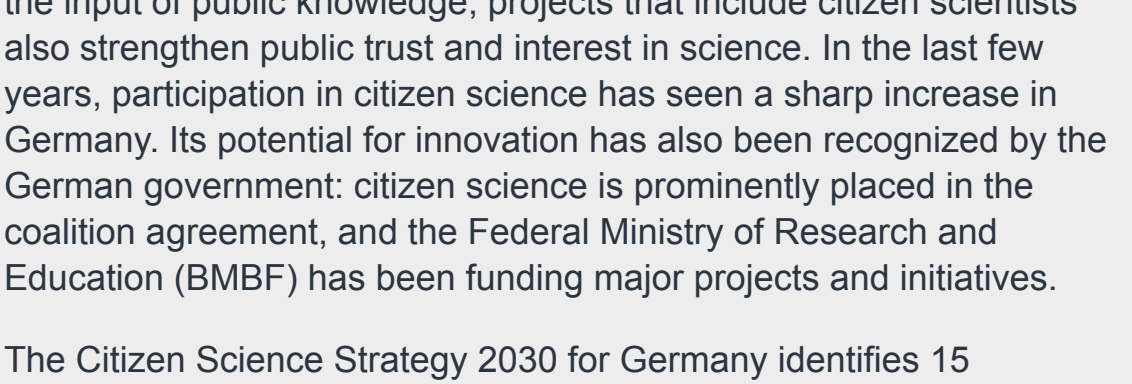
[Go to Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung](#) (partially in German)

**Apply by:** any time, varying amount, up to 2 years  
**Postdoc:** all disciplines

### Walter Benjamin Programme

[Go to Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft \(DFG\)](#)

## A spotlight on: citizen science



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SPOTLIGHT WHITE PAPER

### Centering participation and innovation: the Citizen Science Strategy 2030 for Germany

Citizen science offers benefits to both science and society. While researchers can directly profit from the collection of huge data sets or the input of public knowledge, projects that include citizen scientists also strengthen public trust and interest in science. In the last few years, participation in citizen science has seen a sharp increase in Germany. Its potential for innovation has also been recognized by the German government: citizen science is prominently placed in the coalition agreement, and the Federal Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF) has been funding major projects and initiatives.

The Citizen Science Strategy 2030 for Germany identifies 15 groundbreaking action areas – from funding instruments to data management – and provides an overview of the citizen science landscape in Germany. Written with the help of 219 persons from 136 organisations, the strategy has one aim: "to strengthen Citizen Science by 2030 in order to unleash its innovative potential for science, society and politics." If you want to know what is happening in citizen science in Germany, this paper is the place to start!

## A closer look: work in Germany



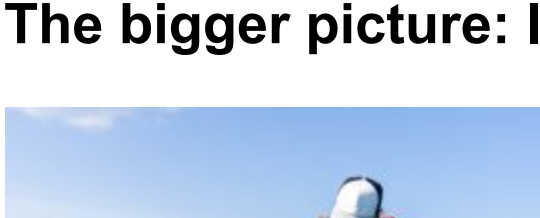
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SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE

### Plastic Pirates tackle water pollution

Plastic Pirates, a youth-driven initiative which started in Germany and has expanded into 12 other countries due to its success, is pioneering the documentation of plastic waste in Europe's water bodies. With over 15,000 participants in Germany alone, this project serves as a vital research asset: its findings uncover the diverse sources of water pollution, from macroplastics like fishing nets to microplastics originating from larger items' breakdown. By empowering young minds and emphasizing community action, the initiative raises awareness but also contributes essential data – aligning with the EU's mission to restore our oceans and waters by 2030.

## The bigger picture: life in Germany

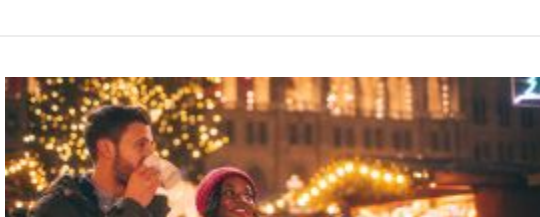


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SPOTLIGHT WEBSITE

### Citizen Science Cruises: setting sail for a more sustainable future

The German non-profit organisation DocShip offers cruises aboard research vessels where passengers aren't just travellers – they're citizen scientists! Participants actively assist experienced scientists on board. Citizen Science Cruises' aim is to generate valuable insights into environmental preservation, biodiversity and the global implications of climate change. Everyone is invited to become part of this research community – whether you join as a professional, a ship owner, lecturer or guide, or work temporarily with the crew. Want to go on a voyage? Learn more on the project website!



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WEBSITE

### The magic of the Nuremberg Christkindlesmarkt

Handcrafted ornaments, spiced gingerbread and mulled wine, twinkling lights and a historic ambiance – these are the things that make a traditional German Christmas market special. Christmas markets have a long tradition in Europe and in Germany in particular. One of the oldest and most famous in the world is the Nuremberg Christkindlesmarkt. It dates back to the early 17th century and has kept its medieval charm right in the heart of Nuremberg's historic old town. Plan a visit and take a stroll through this magical place for some unforgettable memories!

## In case you missed it

### Germany hosts record number of international exchange students

Germany has achieved third place globally for hosting 370,000 international exchange students in the 2022/23 winter semester. Federal Minister of Research and Education Bettina Stark-Watzinger praises support programmes like My GUIDE and HAW. International and highlights programmes' appeal based on strong career prospects and the lack of tuition fees. Germany is also successful in retaining graduates and attracting international researchers: 70,000 academics from around the world attest to its status as a key academic hub.

### Excellence Strategy boosts German university research globally

The Excellence Strategy (ExStra), funded by German federal and state governments, enhances the global competitiveness of German universities and further elevates their research. With an increase of its budget to 687 million euros for 2026 and 2027, the strategy is amplifying its efforts to support its Clusters and Universities of Excellence. While Clusters of Excellence promote project-specific collaboration among top scientists in internationally competitive research areas, funding for Universities of Excellence strengthens institutions as a whole. So far, the strategy has supported 57 Clusters of Excellence and 10 Universities of Excellence as well as one University Consortium of Excellence. Learn more about them and find a detailed overview on ExStra's brand new website!

### SPOTLIGHT

### German citizen science research prize celebrates collaborative excellence

A new "Knowledge of the Many" research prize for citizen science in Germany invites nominations recognizing outstanding scientific work in this field. The prize, with awards of 20,000, 10,000 and 5,000 euros for the top three winners, aims to support projects that advance citizen science. The prize money enables the award winners to further expand their activities. This year's winners cover our planet's surface, oceans and stratosphere: from light pollution and agroforestry systems to beach debris – citizen science was essential to their research success.

(In German)

## Upcoming events



**12.12.**  
 DEC 2023 · SHIBUYA / JAPAN & ONLINE

[TechBIZKON VII – Digitalizing the World](#)



**12.12.**  
 DEC 2023 · ONLINE

[Info talk: DFG Funding Offers for Scientific Careers](#)

(in German)



**13.12.**  
 DEC 2023 · ONLINE

[Web tutorial "Working and Living in Germany 4.0"](#)



**10.01.**  
 JAN 2024 · ONLINE

[Info talk: DFG Funding Opportunities for Postdocs](#)



SPOTLIGHT

**03. – 06.04.**  
 APR 2024 · VIENNA / AUSTRIA & ONLINE

[ECSA 2024 conference: Change](#)

## Your turn!

Does (or could) citizen science benefit you and your research?

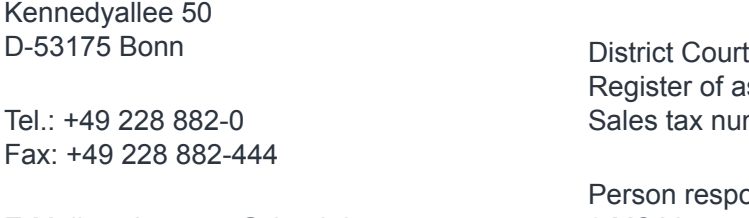
Not at all

A little

Substantially

## Let's stay in touch

Get updates about research career options and funding opportunities in Germany, the latest research news, interesting research projects and upcoming events.



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