

## **Call for Applications 15 February 2010**

# **20 Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups**

**Sponsored by the President's Initiative and Networking Fund**

### **A. Goal of the Funding**

In its mission statement, the Helmholtz Association defines promoting talented young scientists individually as one of its key objectives. With the establishment of Investigators Groups, the Association aims to provide the best foreign and German junior researchers with excellent working conditions in a research-oriented environment. Researchers are granted independence early on, with secure career prospects ('tenure track') based on proven scientific achievements. Investigators Group leaders are expected to work closely with university partners. In this way, they can experience the advantage of cooperating with important strategic partners in an environment where the optimal division of tasks leads to a common goal. At the same time, they are given the opportunity to gain teaching experience and acquire the necessary qualifications for a higher academic career. The President of the Helmholtz Association supports every endeavour to establish junior professorships for successful candidates jointly with the partner university.

### **B. Object of the funding**

Funding will be granted to up to 20 independent Young Investigators Groups working in the fields of *Energy, Earth and Environment, Health, Key Technologies, Structure of Matter, and Aeronautics, Space and Transport*. The funding of a Young Investigators Group amounts to a minimum of 250,000 euros a year. This includes:

- position of group leader, as a rule according to E 14/15 TVöD / BAT Ib/Ia,
- scientific or technical staff (three on average),
- expenses of materials and supplies and investments

Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups are set up jointly by the Helmholtz Centres and universities to work on overlapping areas of research and expertise of interest to both parties. The group's themes must have relevance to a Helmholtz programme and the university or faculty's primary focus. The group leader is expected to build up and to run close contacts to a partner university in his/her field of research and teaching during the period of funding. Where possible, the leaders of the Helmholtz-University Young Investigators Groups should also be given joint positions as junior professors.

Even in cases where there is no possibility of a junior professorship, leaders of the Young Investigators Groups should be jointly appointed by the Helmholtz Centre and the university and should have the same rights and obligations as junior professors (personnel and budget responsibilities, assisting PhD students in the completion of their doctoral studies, taking on

teaching assignments of  $\leq 4$  weekly seminars, access to all necessary resources/infrastructure), in accordance with the individual state laws on higher education.

The groups can be based at the university or at a Helmholtz Centre or at both institutions. However, they must perform specific scientific work for both partner institutions, as defined in the planned work programme.

In exceptional cases, the Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups may also be based at foreign institutes.

### **C. Target group**

This call is directed at top post-doctorates from domestic institutions - with proven research experience abroad - or international institutions. The most important selection criterion is the outstanding quality of the applicants.

### **D. Duration of funding**

The term of the research groups is 5 years with an evaluation after 3-4 years, in the case of joint appointments as junior professor 6 years. Following an unqualified positive evaluation, the candidate will then be given a permanent employment contract by a Helmholtz Centre without having to submit a new application. The decision to grant a permanent position of employment will be made on the basis of a quality assessment based on international standards of the candidate's scientific achievements, as well as an evaluation of the project's relevance to the corresponding Helmholtz programme. The examination procedure will be carried out by the host Centre with the substantial participation of external reviewers.

### **E. Application**

The call for applications will be issued internationally.

The procedure involves three stages

1. **Applicant** should approach the Helmholtz Centre directly by 31 March 2010 (see Information for Applicants), preferably via the contact person named.
2. The **Centres** decide on their nominees in agreement with the university partner and following a pre-selection process and ask the nominees to submit the complete application documents. These applications are then submitted to the Helmholtz Head Office via the boards of the centres by 28 May 2010. Applications sent directly to the Head Office will not be accepted.
3. Candidates are then selected from amongst the nominees on the basis of written recommendations given by international **Experts** and then the final choice made following a personal presentation by these candidates to the Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups **Review Panel**.