

Call for Proposals, 26th February 2010

6 Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Groups

Jointly supported with funding from

The Initiative and Networking Fund of the Helmholtz Association

and

The Russian Foundation for Basic Research

For many years the Russian-German cooperation has proven to be extremely successful through merging scientific competencies and the joint use of research infrastructures for the benefit of both countries. The Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR) are currently supporting 14 bilateral research groups through their joint programme “Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Groups (HRJRG)” out of two joint calls (first call in 2007, second call in 2008). On December 17, 2009, the president of the Helmholtz Association, Jürgen Mlynek, and the chairman of the council of the RFBR, Vladislav Panchenko, decided to launch a third call.

The aim of the joint funding programme is to identify mutual scientific interests in the field of fundamental sciences between researchers of the Helmholtz Research Centres and Russian Universities and/or Russian Non-University Research Institutions. The focus of this programme lies in the support and encouragement of early stage researchers in both countries to pursue a career in science and establish new international links and exchange of knowledge on the basis of excellent research projects.

The Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the Helmholtz Association announce the opening of the third call for applications lasting from 26th February until 31st May 2010. After a review period of 4 months up to 6 Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Groups will be selected for funding.

Aim of the funding measure

The Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Groups (HRJRG) are designed to intensify scientific cooperation between the Helmholtz Research Centres and Russian scientific institutions and universities in order to set new impulses in existing and upcoming research programmes of the Helmholtz Association. A special focus of the HRJRGs lies in the promotion of excellent young Russian scientists, post-docs and PhD students, and in their involvement into the multi-national research projects and infrastructures steered by the research centres of the

Helmholtz Association. Within the framework of the HRJRG funding scheme, excellent young Russian scientists should be given new career perspectives inside Russia while at the same time being closely tied to the international scientific community. A HRJRG may set the kernel for a future, larger scale bilateral or EU-Russia or otherwise funded project. German university partners are very welcome to participate in the application and formation of a HRJRG together with a team from one of the Helmholtz Research Centres.

Subject of funding

- HRJRGs shall bring together research capacities from one or more Russian Research Centres and/or Universities and one or more Helmholtz Research Centres and German Universities, thus creating a **centre of excellence** with international standing and attractiveness to researchers in a key area of research. In general, researchers of both countries should contribute equally to the competence of the Helmholtz-Russian Partnership. In the Partnership researchers of the participating partner institutions work on a defined research project which is divided into **coordinated work packages** designed to reach a common research goal.
- HRJRGs provide **sufficient level of skill, equipment and manpower capabilities** necessary to work on the defined research project, fill relevant research gaps and develop a special concept for cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional support of young scientists.
- HRJRGs shall represent research groups of **high national and international visibility** which are promising to attract additional funding from third parties throughout their funding period.
- HRJRGs shall be **managed jointly** by a German and a Russian Principal Investigator (PI), responsible for the harmonisation and coordination of work packages within the HRJRG. One of the PIs shall be announced as the spokesperson responsible for the joint external representation of the project.
- The fruition of the research shall be shared by the participating German and Russian researchers. It is recommended that all Helmholtz and Russian institutions involved in the HRJRG may conclude a separate agreement on issues such as **intellectual property rights**, liability and confidentiality.

Scope of funding

- Helmholtz Association is prepared to provide each selected HRJRG with up to **130,000 euros** per year from its Initiative and Networking Fund, for a total of 3 years. The part of the budget provided by Helmholtz can only be used for one or more of the following cost categories:
 - to cover the travel and accommodation costs for HRJRG researchers;
 - to cover personnel costs for the HRJRG;
 - to purchase consumables necessary for the performance of the HRJRG;
 - to cover the costs for joint field work or expeditions within the framework of the HRJRG.
 - From funds provided by the Helmholtz Association to the HRJRG a sum of up to **30,000 euro** per year can be assigned to the Russian partner institution/s according to the cost categories outlined above. These shares of the funds, however, may preferably be spent in Germany.

- RFBR is prepared to provide each selected HRJRG with up to **1,000,000 roubles** per year for a total of 3 years. The part of the budget provided by RFBR should primarily be used for research activities as an RFBR research grant, including the following cost categories:
 - to cover Russian personnel costs of the project;
 - to cover travel and accommodation costs of Russian researchers going to Germany;
 - to purchase equipment and consumables necessary for the performance of the project in Russia;
 - up to 15% of the RFBR part of the budget can be used to cover overhead costs of the Russian institution.

Conditions for funding

- For each HRJRG a **joint proposal** in **English language** has to be **submitted through the Board of the coordinating Helmholtz Research Centre** (see also below, “Submission of applications”).
- The proposals must indicate **German and Russian PIs** of the project. German and Russian PIs must be scientists of **outstanding reputation**.
- The **Russian PIs** must be **early stage researchers** who received a **PhD or equivalent title (“Kandidat Nauk”)** not longer than **10-12 years** before the deadline of the joint call.
- Participating groups that are not affiliated with the same institutions as the Russian PI and Helmholtz PI should have a **Group Leader**. Constraints for selection of a Group Leader are equal to constraints of the Russian PI (as stated above).
- Maximum 2 **Key Researchers** per side (Helmholtz, Russia) should be added to the project. Key Researchers are not eligible for monthly stipends.
- The joint proposal should contain a clear concept for the implementation of **PhD students** into the research activities on both sides.
- The proposals must meet the following conditions:
 - **strategically relevant** research topic
 - **significance** for the advancement of **basic research**
 - **programme-oriented** activities with coordinated, complementary work packages, concrete goals and sufficiently detailed milestones
 - **external evidence** of the expertise of the research groups, e.g. from collaborative research centres, Helmholtz evaluations, prizes, leadership or participation in outstanding EU or third party-funded projects, calls to high-ranking expert committees, high quality publications
 - **concrete quality gain** for partner institutions, possibly also in comparison to an existing cooperation
 - **sufficient level of skill, equipment and manpower capabilities** to conduct the research timely and with excellence
 - **joint management** and leadership structure, including a spokesperson responsible for external relations
 - abundant opportunities for the **exchange of young scientists** to/from Russia/Germany must be outlined
 - **financial master plan** regarding the utilisation of funds requested from Helmholtz and RFBR (**3-year financial plan** giving **annual specifications** of the categories of costs for each of the participating partner institutions respectively: personnel, consumables and equipment).

Submission of applications

- Applications with **seven** copies of all application material plus a CD-ROM with a *.pdf or *.doc file of the material must reach the Head Office of the Helmholtz Association (Ahrstrasse 45, 53175 Bonn, Germany) **by 31st May 2010 at the latest** (preclusion period).
- Applications must be **submitted via the executive board of the coordinating Helmholtz Centre**.
- Applications **should be related to the Research Fields, Programmes and Programme Topics** of the Helmholtz Association (See list of Helmholtz Research Fields-Programmes-Topics)
- Applications must be submitted using the “**Joint Research Proposal**”-Form designed for the application process for Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Groups (disqualifying criterion).
- Applications must be written in **English**.
- Five independent reviewers for the proposal shall be suggested including full addresses and e-mail. It must be declared that there are no conflicts of interest.
- Applications must **fulfil all the formal conditions** for funding in order to be admitted to the evaluation procedure (amendments are not possible).