

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

as of January 13, 2020

for up to 15 Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups

funded by the Initiative and Networking Fund of the  
President of the Helmholtz Association

17<sup>th</sup> Call for Applications



**The Helmholtz Association wishes to offer excellent international researchers the opportunity to establish their own adequately equipped Young Investigator Group at a Helmholtz Center in order to successfully and permanently establish themselves in the scientific community. Outstanding women scientists meeting the eligibility criteria are especially encouraged to apply.**

## A. Goal of the funding

A key objective of the Helmholtz Association's mission is the individual promotion of talented junior researchers. Through its Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups, the Association enables the best international and German junior scientists to set up and lead their own research group. Young Investigator Group leaders are given early scientific independence and have attractive career prospects. This includes the option of permanent employment, support, and flexibility during the family phase, and further qualifications at the Helmholtz Leadership Academy. Young Investigator Group leaders are expected to collaborate closely with a university partner, gathering teaching and Ph.D. supervision experience. The President of the Helmholtz Association supports every endeavor to establish professorships for successful candidates jointly with a partner university.

## B. Purpose of the funding

Funding will be granted for up to 15 Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups working in the research fields of Energy, Earth and Environment, Health, Key Technologies / Information, Matter, and Aeronautics, Space, and Transport. The funding provided by the Initiative and Networking Fund of the President of the Helmholtz Association will amount to up to 150,000 Euros a year and will serve as co-financing. The Helmholtz Center and cooperating university are expected to provide funding to at least an equivalent amount. Young Investigator Groups thus generally receive a minimum of 300,000 Euros a year for five years. This funding covers costs for:

- the group leader position, normally at E 14/15 TVöD (collective agreement 14/15 for civil service employees),
- scientific or technical staff (normally three or four),
- expenses for materials, travel, and investments.

Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups are jointly set up by Helmholtz Centers and universities in areas of joint interest: Specifically, the Group's focus must be of relevance to a Helmholtz Program-oriented Funding stream and should promote cooperation with a university or department. Where possible, leaders of Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups should be given joint professorships.

The Helmholtz Young Investigator Group can be based at a Helmholtz Center or jointly at a Helmholtz Center and a cooperating university. The group leaders are expected to perform specific scientific work for both partner institutions, and this work must be defined in the planned work program. Cooperation with international partners is welcomed. Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups cannot be established at institutions abroad. However, commercial businesses are highly appreciated as associated partners but cannot receive funding from the Initiative and Networking Fund.

In the interest of providing the best possible support for junior scientists setting up their own groups and preparing them for their leadership responsibilities, group leaders are required to attend the "Leading Your Group" course at the Helmholtz Leadership Academy in the first or second year of funding. This course is specifically designed for new Young Investigator Group leaders.

In addition, the Helmholtz Centers and partner organizations also provide qualification and advisory services. The planned qualification measures have to be described in the format of a career development concept in the application (see Annex 1).

The Helmholtz Association aims to make sure that all group leaders have the opportunity to successfully combine family planning and a scientific career. Therefore, during the family phase, group leaders who go on parental leave or work part-time can apply for additional funding for a temporary deputy to cover their leadership responsibilities (where possible), allowing a seamless continuation of the research project.

## C. Target group

This call is directed towards excellent researchers who have two to six years post-doctoral experience and documented international research experience (see Annex 2).

The most important selection criterion is the outstanding scientific achievements and research capabilities of the candidates (CV, publications, citation index, awards, etc.) as well as the quality of the planned research project (innovation capacity, relevance, structure, coherence, feasibility). Further criteria include the strategic importance for the nominating institution (the host Helmholtz Center) and clearly discernible synergy effects resulting from the cooperation between the Helmholtz Center and the partner university.

The Helmholtz Young Investigator Group program is primarily a recruiting instrument. Candidates already employed by a Helmholtz Center are eligible but have to demonstrate international experience, competitiveness, and mobility to a certain degree.

The Helmholtz Association especially wishes to attract promising women scientists to continue their careers in science. At least 40% of Helmholtz Young Investigator Group leader positions in this call should, therefore, be awarded to women.

## D. Duration of funding

The funding term of each Helmholtz Young Investigator Group is limited to five years, with an evaluation after three years. If a recipient takes a parental leave of absence during this time, the funding period can be extended and the evaluation postponed in coordination with the Helmholtz Head Office.

Following an unreservedly positive evaluation, the candidate will be offered a permanent employment contract by a Helmholtz Center – if possible, with staff responsibility – without having to submit a new application. The decision to grant a permanent position will be made on the basis of a quality assessment of the candidate's scientific achievements according to international standards. The examination procedure will be carried out by the host Helmholtz Center with substantial participation by external reviewers.

The evaluation report alongside a corresponding statement from the Helmholtz Center regarding the future career development has to be submitted to the head office of the Helmholtz Association.

The planned evaluation process for the Helmholtz Young Investigator Group must be described in the career development concept and made available to the candidate. The position that will be offered to the candidate in case of an unreservedly positive evaluation must be specified in this plan.

## E. Application

The call for applications will be issued internationally.

The application procedure involves several stages (see Annex 4):

1. **Candidates** should approach the Helmholtz Centers **directly** with a draft of their application and contact the point of contact indicated (see Annex 3) before applying.
2. Following an internal **candidate** pre-selection process, the **Helmholtz Centers** decide on their nominees and request that they submit the complete application documents. Please contact the Helmholtz Center to obtain the deadline for the internal selection process.
3. The maximum number of candidates that each Helmholtz Center can nominate is as follows:

### no more than four applications:

- Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt (German Aerospace Centre) DLR,
- Forschungszentrum Jülich FZJ,
- Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology) KIT.

### no more than three applications:

- Alfred-Wegener-Institut Helmholtz-Zentrum für Polar- und Meeresforschung (Alfred-Wegener-Institute Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research) AWI,
- Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron DESY,

- Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (German Cancer Research Centre) DKFZ,
- Helmholtz-Zentrum München – Forschungszentrum für Gesundheit und Umwelt (Helmholtz Zentrum München – German Research Centre for Environmental Health) HMGU,
- Helmholtz-Zentrum Berlin für Materialien und Energie HZB,
- Helmholtz-Zentrum Dresden-Rossendorf HZDR,
- Max-Planck-Institut für Plasmaphysik (Max Planck Institute for Plasma Physics) IPP.

**no more than two applications:**

- Deutsches Zentrum für Neurodegenerative Erkrankungen (German Centre for Neurodegenerative Diseases) DZNE,
  - GEOMAR Helmholtz-Zentrum für Ozeanforschung Kiel (GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel),
  - Helmholtz-Zentrum Potsdam – Deutsches Geoforschungsinstitut (Helmholtz Centre Potsdam - GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences) GFZ,
  - GSI Helmholtz-Zentrum für Schwerionenforschung (GSI Helmholtz Centre for Heavy Ion Research)<sup>1</sup>,
  - Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht – Zentrum für Material- und Küstenforschung (Centre for Materials and Coastal Research) HZG,
  - Helmholtz-Zentrum für Infektionsforschung (Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research) HZI,
  - Helmholtz-Zentrum für Informationssicherheit (Helmholtz Center for Information Security), CISPA
  - Max-Delbrück-Centrum für Molekulare Medizin in der Helmholtz Gemeinschaft (Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association) MDC,
  - Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung (Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research) UFZ.
4. These applications are then submitted to the Helmholtz Head Office in Bonn via the heads of the Helmholtz Centers. Applications sent directly to the Helmholtz Head Office by candidates will not be accepted.
  5. The invitation of candidates to give a presentation in person in front of an interdisciplinary panel of experts in Berlin is based on written assessments. Candidates who are invited to present their proposal will receive their invitations about four weeks in advance.
  6. Successful candidates have to start their Helmholtz Young Investigator Group **within 12 months of receiving funding approval**, otherwise, the funding will expire.

## F. Dates and deadlines

**Please contact the center to obtain the deadline of the internal selection process at the Helmholtz Center**

**May 4, 2020:** Deadline for online submission of complete applications by the Helmholtz Centers to the Helmholtz Head Office in Bonn (cut-off date; key date for determining 2-6 years after doctorate) via EABS: <https://helmholtznet.de/antraege/default.aspx>

**August 31, 2020:** Deadline for submission of the statement by the university to the Helmholtz Head Office in Bonn

**October 13-14, 2020:** Final selection meeting in Berlin

**No more than 12 months after receiving funding approval:** start of the Helmholtz Young Investigator Group

---

<sup>1</sup> The GSI is eligible to apply only via Helmholtz Institute Jena and Mainz.

## G. Documents to be submitted (see Annex 1)

### **Center cover letter (English, one PDF)<sup>2</sup>**

1. Written confirmation by the board
2. The concept for career development measures, including the description of the planned evaluation process and position of the Young Investigator Group leader in case of positive evaluation (see Annex 1)
3. Information about the Helmholtz Center's internal pre-selection process (see Annex 10)

### **Declaration of the candidate (English)**

1. Statement regarding current employment status and any comparable application submissions to other organizations
2. Statement about the handling of personal data

### **Assessable application (in English, one PDF, no more than 3 MB)**

1. Application overview (see Annex 6)
2. The scientific part of the application
3. The strategic significance of the Young Investigator Group for the Helmholtz Center and the relevant partners
4. Candidate CV
5. List of publications and citation index
6. Supporting letter from the prospective direct superior

### **List of six independent reviewers (in English as Excel sheet, see Annex 9 and 11)**

### **Financial plan (in English as Excel sheet, see Annex 7)**

### **University statement (in English, as PDF) (see Annex 8)**

---

<sup>2</sup> If there are multiple confirmations for several applications, please enclose a copy of each.