

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

of January 17, 2018

for 15 Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups

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

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



**The Helmholtz Association wishes to offer excellent international researchers with their own adequately equipped Young Investigators Group at a Helmholtz Center the opportunity to successfully and permanently establish themselves in the scientific community. Outstanding young female 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 young researchers. Through its Young Investigators Groups, the Association provides the best young international and German scientists with the excellent scientific working conditions they need to achieve this objective by allowing them to set up and lead their own working groups. Young Investigators Group leaders are given early independence and have attractive career prospects, including the option of permanent employment, support and flexibility during the family phase, mentoring, and further qualifications at the Helmholtz Management Academy. Young Investigators Group leaders are also expected to work closely with university partners, gathering experience as teachers. The President of the Helmholtz Association supports every endeavor to establish professorships for successful candidates jointly with the partner university.

## B. Purpose of the funding

Funding will be granted to up to 15 Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups working in the research fields of Energy; Earth and Environment; Health; Key Technologies; 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 Euro 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 Investigators Groups thus generally receive a minimum of €300,000 a year for six years. This covers costs for:

- the group leader position, (normally at E 14/15 TVöD [collective agreement 13/14 for civil service employees]),
- scientific or technical staff (normally three or four),
- expenses for materials, travel, and investment.

Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups are jointly set up by Helmholtz Centers and universities in areas of research or expertise that are of interest to both parties: Specifically, the Group's focus must be of relevance to a Helmholtz program and should promote cooperation with the university or department. Where possible, the leaders of Helmholtz Young Investigators Groups should be given joint professorships.

The Young Investigators Group can be based at a Helmholtz Center or jointly at a Helmholtz Center and a cooperating university. They 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 Investigators Groups cannot be established at institutions abroad, however. Commercial businesses are highly appreciated as associated partners. However, they cannot receive funding from the Initiative and Networking Fund.

In the interest of providing the best possible support for young 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 Management Academy in the first or second year of funding. This course is designed especially for new Young Investigators Group leaders.

In addition, the Helmholtz Centers and partner organizations also provide qualification and advisory services which are to be recorded as part of a personnel development concept in the application.

The Helmholtz Association wants to make sure that both women and men 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 his/her leadership responsibilities (where possible), allowing seamless continuation of the research project.

## C. Target group

This call is directed towards excellent researchers with between two and six years' post-doctoral experience with documented research experience abroad (see Annex 2).

The most important selection criterion is the outstanding quality of the candidates (CV, publications, citation index, awards, etc.) and 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 Center and the partner university.

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

## D. Duration of funding

The term of each Young Investigators Group is six years, with an evaluation after three to four years. If a recipient takes parental leave during this time, the funding period can be extended and the evaluation postponed in coordination with the 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 and an evaluation of the project's relevance to the corresponding Helmholtz program. The examination procedure will be carried out by the host Center with substantial participation by external reviewers.

The Initiative and Networking Fund cannot release the funds for the fifth and sixth years until the evaluation report has been submitted with a corresponding statement from the Helmholtz Center. The planned evaluation process for the Young Investigators Group leader's further career development should also be described in the concept.

## E. Application

The call for applications will be issued internationally.

The application procedure involves several stages (see [Appendix 4](#)):

1. **Candidates** should approach the Helmholtz Centers **directly** with a draft of their application and contact the point of contact indicated (see [Appendix 3](#)) before applying.
2. Following an internal **candidate** pre-selection process, the **Centers** decide on their nominees and request that they submit the complete application documents.
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,
  - 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 before an interdisciplinary panel of experts in Berlin is based on written assessments. Candidates who are invited to give a presentation will receive their invitations about four weeks in advance.
  6. Successful candidates have to start their Young Investigators Group **within 12 months of receiving funding approval**. Otherwise, the funding will expire.

## F. Dates and Deadlines

**March 1, 2018:** Deadline for candidates to submit application documents (draft applications) to the Helmholtz Centers

**May 4, 2018:** Deadline for 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)

**October 5, 2018:** Deadline for submission of the statement by the university to the Helmholtz Head Office in Bonn

**October 18-19, 2018:** Final selection conference in Berlin

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

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

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

1. Written confirmation by the board
2. Concept for personnel development measures and description of the planned evaluation process for possible continuation
3. Information about the Helmholtz Center's internal pre-selection process (see Annex 10)

### Candidate cover letter (German or English)

1. Statement regarding current employment status and any comparable application submissions to other organizations

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

1. Application overview (see Annex 6)
2. Scientific portion of the application

<sup>1</sup> Eligible to apply only via Helmholtz Institute Jena and Mainz

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

3. Strategic significance of the Young Investigators Group for the Helmholtz Center and the relevant partners
4. Candidate CV
5. List of publications and citation index
6. Financial plan (see Annex 7)
7. Supporting letter from the prospective direct superior

**List of six independent reviewers (see Annex 9)**

**University statement (as PDF) (see Annex 8)**