

Call for Proposals, 15th December 2016

6 Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups

Jointly supported with funding from

The Initiative and Networking Fund of the Helmholtz Association

and

The Russian Science Foundation

In order to increase the scientific cooperation between Helmholtz Research Centres and Russian Research Institutions, the **Helmholtz Association** and the **Russian Science Foundation** announce the opening of a first call for applications for Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups. At the Russian Science Foundation the proposals will be part of an open public competition for the activity “**Basic Scientific Research and Exploratory Scientific Research, Conducted by International Research Teams**”.

The aim of this joint funding programme is to identify mutual scientific interests between researchers of the Helmholtz Research Centres and Russian Research Institution / Universities. A 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 first call for Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups is open for applications in the two research areas “**Biomedicine**” and “**Information and Data science**” lasting from 15 December 2016 until 31st March 2017. After a review period of five months up to six Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups will be selected for funding.

Aim of the funding measure

The Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups are designed to intensify the 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, and in the research areas “Biomedicine” and “Information and Data science” with respect to the first call. A special focus of the Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups lies in the promotion of excellent young Russian and German/ Helmholtz scientists, especially PhD-students, and in their involvement into the multi-national research projects and infrastructures steered by the research centres of the Helmholtz Association. A Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Group 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 Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Group together with a team from one of the Helmholtz Research Centres.

Subject of funding

- Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups shall bring together research capacities from one or more Russian Research Institution / 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 (research in Biomedicine & Information and Data science). In general, researchers of both countries should contribute equally to the competence of the 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.
- Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups 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.
- Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups shall represent research groups of **high national and international visibility** which are promising to attract additional funding from third parties throughout their funding period.
- Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups shall be **managed jointly** by a German and a Russian Principal Investigator (PIs), responsible for the harmonisation and coordination of work packages within the group. 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

- The Helmholtz Association is prepared to provide each selected Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Group with up to **130,000 euros** per year from its Initiative and Networking Fund, for a total of three 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 involved researchers;
 - to cover personnel costs for the Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups;
 - to purchase equipment and consumables necessary for the performance of the Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Groups;
 - to cover the costs for joint field work or expeditions within the framework of the Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups.

These shares of the funds, however, would be generally required to be spent in Germany.

- The RSF is prepared to provide the Russian participants of the Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups with **4 to 6 million Russian rubles** per year and per Group for a total of 3 years. The RSF funding follows the regulations for the programmes for „Basic Scientific Research and Exploratory Scientific Research, Conducted by International Research Teams”.

Conditions for funding

- At the RSF the proposals will be part of an open public competition for the activity “Basic Scientific Research and Exploratory Scientific Research, Conducted by International Research Teams”.
- For each Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Group 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**.
- Participating groups that are not affiliated with the same institutions as the Russian PI and the 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).
- The joint proposal should contain a clear concept for the implementation of **PhD students** into the research activities on both sides.

- Projects supported by the grants provided by the Parties shall not seek funding for the topics dealt with from other sources for the entire period of implementation in order to exclude double funding.

- The annual amount of funding for each project may be altered in accordance with the results of the review of the submitted reports concerning the implementation of the projects and proper use of grants by their recipients, or in accordance with the changes in the budget of either Party.

- 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 with joint external representation and spokesperson
 - special concept for the implementation of **PhD students** into the research activities on both sides.
 - 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 RSF (**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

- Complete applications must be submitted as PDF document **by 31st March 2017 at the latest** (preclusion period) to aleksei.shipilov@helmholtz.de and devin.ulavachathil@helmholtz.de. In addition one hardcopy must arrive at the Head Office of the Helmholtz Association (Ahrstrasse 45, 53175 Bonn, Germany) by 31th March 2017 at the latest.
- Applications must be **submitted via the executive board of the coordinating Helmholtz Centre**.
- Applications should be related to the research topics **“Biomedicine” and “Information and Data science”**.
- Applications must be submitted using the **“Joint Project Description Template”-Form** designed for the application process for Helmholtz-RSF Joint Research Groups (disqualifying criterion).
- Applications must be written in **English**.
- Up to six 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. Reviewers located at a Helmholtz Centre must not be named. At least two female reviewers have to be named among the six names.
- Applications must **fulfil all the formal conditions** for funding in order to be admitted to the evaluation procedure (amendments are not possible).