

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

of January 17, 2019

for 15 Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups

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

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



**The Helmholtz Association wishes to offer excellent international researchers with their own adequately equipped Young Investigator 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 Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups, the Association allows the best young international and German 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, mentoring, and further qualifications at the Helmholtz Leadership Academy. Young Investigator Group leaders are also expected to collaborate closely with a university partner, gathering teaching 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 to 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 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 Investigator 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 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 and should promote cooperation with a university or department. Where possible, leaders of Helmholtz Young Investigator Groups should be given joint professorships.

The Young Investigator 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 Investigator 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 Leadership Academy in the first or second year of funding. This course is designed especially 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.

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 who have between two and six years' post-doctoral experience and 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 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 special degree.

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

## D. Duration of funding

The term of each Young Investigator Group is six years, with an evaluation after 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. 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 sixth year until the evaluation report has been submitted with a corresponding statement from the Helmholtz Center.

The planned evaluation process for the Young Investigator Group must be described in the career development concept. 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 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 **Helmholtz 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,
  - The 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 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 Investigator Group **within 12 months of receiving funding approval**. Otherwise, the funding will expire.

## F. Dates and Deadlines

**February 24, 2019:** Deadline for candidates to submit application documents (draft applications) to the Helmholtz Centers

**May 3, 2019:** 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)

**September 30, 2019:** Deadline for submission of the statement by the university to the Helmholtz Head Office in Bonn

**October 17-18, 2019:** Final selection conference in Berlin

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

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<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 (German or English, one PDF)<sup>2</sup>**

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

### **Declaration of the Candidate (German or 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. Scientific portion of the application
3. 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. 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)**

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