

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

of March 1, 2018

for funding of first-time appointments of excellent
women scientists (W2/W3)

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

Within the framework of the Pact for Research and Innovation, the Helmholtz Association is intensifying its efforts to attract and fund excellent women scientists. The current concept of the Initiative and Networking Fund (2017–2020) aims to support these efforts through the W2/W3 program for women scientists with outstanding qualifications.

A. Goal of the funding

The funding instrument supports the first-time permanent appointment of excellent women scientists to W2- or W3-level professorship positions (university). This funding makes it easier for the candidates to take the decisive career step towards becoming established professors. Strategic cooperation with universities is also to be enhanced.

Additional resources create opportunities for financing and equipping this first W2 or W3 position and, for example, for early appointments. Women scientists who are already employed at Helmholtz Centers can be funded provided the appointment involves a clear career step for junior professors, Young Investigators Group leaders, or other scientists holding post-doctoral positions.

B. Purpose and duration of the funding

Funding for both W2 and W3 professorships is generally up to € 1 million over a period of five years (€200,000 p.a.). The funding can be used to finance the position and its equipment.

Funding can be granted for activities at the applying Helmholtz Center and at the appointing partner university. An absolute prerequisite for funding is a concept for the use of the funds that details their deployment and additional services provided by the Helmholtz Center and the partner university. A statement must also be made about the planning for the time after the Initiative and Networking Fund support expires.

If funding is granted, appointment (presentation of the certificate of appointment) is a prerequisite for the provision of funds. For the selected group of candidates, the Helmholtz head office is planning to offer coaching in addition to the funding.

C. Target group and funding criteria

The funding program is aimed at outstanding women scientists for whom the decisive step towards becoming established professors is linked to the funding. Such candidates include:

- Internal and external candidates who will be appointed for the first time to the W2 or W3 level from a junior professorship, Young Investigators Group leadership position, or another post-doctoral position, as long as the desired professorship is permanent.

- External candidates who are currently in a fixed-term professorship and are to be recruited to a permanent position at Helmholtz, such as from a fixed-term W2 position at another institution to a W3 position at Helmholtz. Candidates who are already in permanent professorships or are to be appointed from a fixed-term W2 position at Helmholtz to a permanent W3 position are not eligible for funding.
- Women researchers who currently hold professorial positions at foreign institutions and are to be recruited to a Helmholtz Center, with a focus on women scientists in the early phases of their careers (in contrast to the call for applications for “Funding to recruit top-level international women scientists”).

The most important selection criterion is the outstanding scientific performance of the applicants (CV, publications, citation index, awards, etc.). For German candidates, documentation of relevant research experience at foreign institutions is another key criterion. Other criteria are:

- Originality of the planned research work
- How well the candidate’s research profile fits the applying Helmholtz Center and the research program
- The joint commitment of the Helmholtz Center and the partner university to support the successful establishment of the candidate as a professor. It is imperative that questions of equipment, but also structural concerns (such as support for integration into university departments) and supporting personnel development measures and if applicable dual career measures will be addressed. The current status and further plans for the appointment procedure must be presented by the partner university.

D. Application procedure

The call for research-topic-independent applications will be issued internationally.

The application procedure involves several steps:

1. Applicants should contact the Helmholtz Centers directly and get in touch with the relevant board of directors. Conversely, the Helmholtz Centers are called upon to actively recruit suitable candidates.
2. As necessary, the Helmholtz Centers will make a pre-selection and enter into negotiations with their partner universities.
3. The applications for funding from the Initiative and Networking Fund are then submitted to the Helmholtz head office in Bonn via the Helmholtz Centers’ boards of directors. Applications sent by candidates directly to the Helmholtz head office will not be accepted.
4. Written peer reviews will be obtained for each application.

5. In the event that the program is greatly oversubscribed, the President reserves the right to make a pre-selection on the basis of the review. Not later than six weeks before the meeting of the selection panel, applying Helmholtz Centers and candidates will be informed of whether their applications will be considered in the procedure's next step.
6. The final selection decision is made by the President based on the recommendation of an interdisciplinary panel of experts. Candidates will receive invitations to make a presentation to the panel not later than six weeks before the meeting.
7. Selected candidates must be appointed not more than 18 months after funding has been approved. Otherwise, the funding lapses. The prerequisite for funding is a copy of the submission of the certificate of appointment.

E. Dates and Deadlines

July 13, 2018: Deadline for submission of complete applications by the Helmholtz Centers to the Helmholtz head office in Bonn

November 12, 2018: Deadline for submission of the letter of intent by the university to the Helmholtz head office in Bonn

December 5 and 6, 2018: Final review panel session in Berlin

Not more than 18 months after funding approval: Deadline for submitting a copy of the certificate of appointment and start of funding

F. Documents to be submitted

1. Letter from the Helmholtz Center board of directors (German or English, PDF)

- Strategic importance of the appointment for the Helmholtz Center, suitability for the Helmholtz program, and relevance to the research field
- Resources commitment with reference to the financial plan, if applicable planned dual career measures
- Information on the status of the negotiations with the candidate and the partner university and specification of the type of professorship the appointment is to involve (W2/W3)

2. Documents about the candidate (English; one PDF; no larger than 3 MB)

- Applicant CV
- Publication list with citation index with the five most important publications highlighted

- Letter of motivation and planned research activities for the funding period
- Financial plan: direct project-related costs for the funding period with annual data on personnel costs, material costs (including travel costs), and investments. No funding will be granted for overheads.
- Proposal of three independent, scientifically relevant reviewers (see Annex)

3. Partner university statement (German or English, PDF)

- Intended appointment (W2/W3; denomination, integration into the university department and any other relevant structures)
- Resources promised, if applicable planned dual career measures
- Appointment process outlook

4. Recommendation letter from the Scientific Advisory Board of the Helmholtz Center submitting the application

Single original copies of applications will be submitted by the board of directors of the Helmholtz Center to the President of the Helmholtz Association at the Helmholtz head office in Bonn, Ahrstraße 45, 53175 Bonn, Germany and transferred by e-mail to Daniel Riesenber (daniel.riesenberg@helmholtz.de; technical contact) and Dr. Rainer Nicolay (rainer.nicolay@helmholtz.de; financial and contractual questions). The Helmholtz Association websites offer answers to frequently asked questions about the funding program at

https://www.helmholtz.de/karriere_talente/foerderprogramme/

Annex – Selection of unbiased reviewers

Impartiality issues and conflicts of interest may exist in relation to the research project, the candidate, or the current and future research institutes the candidate is associated with. Impartiality issues/conflicts of interest may for example arise if the reviewer:

- is employed by or plays an active role at a Helmholtz Center
- has a family relationship or close personal ties or contacts with a researcher involved in the application.
- is in close current or planned scientific cooperation with a researcher involved in the application.
- has been in a dependent employment or supervisory relationship (such as a teacher-student relationship at any level up to and including the postdoc phase) with a researcher involved in the application within the last six years.
- is preparing a proposal or carrying out a project closely related to the candidate's research topic (direct scientific competition).
- has had a joint publication or been actively engaged in cooperative research efforts with a researcher involved in the application within the last five years.
- has engaged in intensive use of the research center's facilities within the last five years.
- is currently or has been in an employment relationship within the last five years with the respective Helmholtz Center or the current employer.
- is or has been involved in an ongoing or failed appointment procedure with any of the university partners involved.
- has personal commercial interests of relevance to the application.

Please name three potential reviewers and make sure that at least one of them is a female scientist.

Please refrain from nominating only the most prominent scientists in your field of research, as it may be difficult to get an assessment.

Please attach the proposals to the application on a separate sheet with complete contact and address data (including e-mail addresses).

Please disclose possible points of contact with the reviewers and sign to confirm that no potential bias is known.

If the bias criteria are not observed, we reserve the right to reject applications before any review has taken place.