

## **Second Call for Proposals, 9 January 2019**

### **Helmholtz International Labs**

#### **Supported by the Initiative and Networking Fund of the President**

One of the central objectives of the Helmholtz Internationalization Strategy 2017–2022 Association is to enhance strategic international cooperation with excellent research institutions from all over the world. To reach this goal, the funding program '**Helmholtz International Labs**' was launched within the Initiative and Networking Fund.

#### **Aim of the funding measure**

With an International Lab, an existing – or highly promising new – international partnership is expanded and taken to the next level. Helmholtz Centers join forces with a renowned complementary international partner institution (a university, research institute, scientific organization or similar), focusing on an **innovative, forward-looking research topic** that is of **high strategic relevance** for the Helmholtz Association as a whole. **Research infrastructures** – such as measuring stations, research vessels, laboratories, research platforms, satellites, supercomputers, accelerators or other experimental equipment - play a pivotal role in a Helmholtz International Lab.

A 'Helmholtz International Lab' is intended to create a **visible research activity** of the Helmholtz Association in a location abroad. This 'outpost' is positioned and branded accordingly and thus also contributes to the international visibility of the Association. The aim is to create a lasting **strategic institutional partnership**. The International Lab should be planned on a long-term basis, be sustainable and supplemented by further joint collaboration projects. Participation of several Helmholtz Centers and/or of the entire Helmholtz Research Field is possible.

An International Lab is also characterized by the 'right minds'; renowned researchers that come together to collaborate complementarily and ideally already have a long-term successful collaboration.

Furthermore, an International Lab should offer an attractive environment for **early-career researchers** and therefore develop and offer suitable instruments such as: joint young investigators groups, joint PhD supervision, and exchange and mobility programs for early-career researchers.

#### **Subject and duration of funding**

Helmholtz International Labs are designed as joint facilities of a Helmholtz Center and an international partner institution. A total of **three International Labs** can be funded within the scope of this second call for proposals. **Three calls** will take place in total as part of the current framework of the Initiative and Networking Fund 2017-2020.

The maximum amount of funding that can be requested from the Initiative and Networking Fund is **300.000 € per year**. It is required that the Helmholtz Center(s) and the international partner provide co-financing. The total project volume should amount to max. 1.200.000 € per year, funded by the Initiative and Networking Fund, the Helmholtz Center(s) and the international partner in the ratio of **1:1:2**. Hence, the share between the two countries is **50:50**.

The initial project duration is **five years**. Following a successful evaluation, an additional period of **three years** may be funded.

Eligible for funding are:

- Personnel costs for the coordination and management of the Helmholtz International Lab
- Joint research projects
- All measures that contribute to the further development of the partnership (e.g. joint workshops, strategy meetings, conferences)
- Activities in the area of talent development and the promotion of young researchers, e.g. joint young investigators groups
- Exchange and mobility programs for e.g. post-docs, visiting researchers or administrators
- Travel costs and material expenses for public relations, publications etc.

Only the project share residing in Germany will receive funding from the Initiative and Networking Fund. The funding of international cooperation is based on reciprocity. It is thus expected that costs arising outside of Germany will be covered by the international partner institution.

A Helmholtz International Lab does not have its own legal capacity. In case the proposal is successful and receives funding, a 'Research Consortium Agreement' (or similar) should be drawn up and signed by the partners, addressing all matters related to the joint research projects (incl. the available financial resources, human resources and infrastructural resources).

## Target groups

This call for proposals addresses **researchers at Helmholtz Centers** who, together with a counterpart at a renowned international partner institution, wish to expand international cooperation in a research field that is seminal and strategically highly relevant for the Helmholtz Association, with a special emphasis on the use of research infrastructure.

## Criteria for the assessment of proposals

The proposal must convincingly address and include the following points:

- The use of existing and/or the joint development of **research infrastructure(s)** play a pivotal role in this call. Infrastructures that already exist at a Helmholtz Center may be used, but the prerequisite is that a 'Helmholtz International Lab' (as in: a visible scientific outpost) will be established at the partner institution abroad in any case.
- The proposed project is characterized by **scientific excellence** on an international level.
- The Principal Investigators (PIs) complement each other and are an **excellent scientific match**. Ideally, a long and successful cooperation between them already exists, which is evidenced by e.g. joint publications.
- The joint research topic is **strategically highly relevant** and future-oriented. It also fits the thematic focus of the Helmholtz Association i.e. the respective Helmholtz Research Field. The partner institutions complement each other to create **synergy effects** that increase research performance and lay the foundation for joint leadership in particularly innovative fields of research.
- The support of the respective **Helmholtz Research Field** as a whole is a plus. The active participation of several Helmholtz Centers in the project is possible.
- The promotion of **early-career researchers** is of high importance for the Helmholtz Association and is therefore a key component in the proposed undertaking. The

project contains suitable measures for this target group, e.g. joint young investigator groups, joint PhD supervision and support, and mobility and exchange programs for young researchers.

- The proposal contains a **timeline and a work program**, consisting of concrete work packages including joint milestones (e.g. development of joint infrastructures, joint research initiatives, joint publications, joint events, joint acquisition of additional third-party funding).
- A **budget** (*included in the application template*) for the initial funding period of five years must be drawn up, detailing: Costs and expenses that are directly project-related, including annual indications for the three categories personnel costs, material costs and travel expenses (Helmholtz Center(s)) i.e. personnel costs, material costs and travel expenses (partner institution). Overhead costs are not eligible for funding.
- The International Lab has a **joint management and leadership** structure in which researchers of all involved partner institutions are represented. They are jointly responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the work programs and represent the International Lab to external stakeholders. Furthermore, the establishment of a Joint Steering Committee and/or a Scientific Advisory Board is recommended.
- The **sustainability** and the **long-term potential** of the project are important selection criteria. The aim is to create a lasting strategic partnership on institutional level, which goes beyond the proposed project and from which, ideally, other Helmholtz Centers and/or the entire Research Field can benefit in the long term. The proposal must state clearly how the partners intend to continue their collaboration and how they plan to use the joint infrastructure(s) once the funding period of the Initiative and Networking Fund expires. The partners should demonstrate a clear intention and ability to invest their own funding in the future in order to continue their cooperation. The initiative should also be integrated into the Helmholtz research program structure.

### Application and selection procedure

Each Helmholtz Center may only submit **one application** within this second call. The proposal must be submitted via the **Executive Board** of the Helmholtz Center to the President of the Helmholtz Association. Proposals must be submitted in English using the **official template** (with a maximum of 20 pages). Up to **six independent reviewers** for the proposal should be suggested in a separate document, including full contact details. There may be **no conflicts of interest**. Reviewers located at a Helmholtz Center may not be named.

For every proposal at least two peer reviews will be obtained. On the basis of these reviews, an **internal selection** will take place. All applicants who successfully passed the first selection round will be invited for a **presentation session**, taking place in **Berlin on 01 October 2019**. The review committee, which is chaired by the President, will then decide which proposals will receive funding from the Initiative and Networking Fund. It is required that at least one **representative of the international partner institution** participates in the presentation session in Berlin.

Proposals must be submitted electronically by **22 March 2019** at the latest to Ms Alexandra Rosenbach, [alexandra.rosenbach@helmholtz.de](mailto:alexandra.rosenbach@helmholtz.de). In addition one signed hardcopy must arrive at the Head Office of the Helmholtz Association in Bonn (Ahrstrasse 45, 53175 Bonn, Germany, attn. Dr. Rainer Nicolay). For further questions, please contact Alexandra Rosenbach, International Affairs Department at the Head Office in Berlin, Tel: +49 30 206329-135, E-mail: [alexandra.rosenbach@helmholtz.de](mailto:alexandra.rosenbach@helmholtz.de).