

Call for HCJRG Proposals, 15 January 2014

5 Helmholtz-CAS Joint Research Groups
Jointly supported with funding from
The Initiative and Networking Fund of the Helmholtz Association
and
The International Cooperation Fund of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

Deadline: 15 April 2014

In 2012 China and Germany celebrated 40 years of diplomatic relations. Between the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and many Helmholtz Research Centres there has been very successful scientific cooperation since the end of 1970s. Both Helmholtz and CAS see each other as strategic partners sharing many joint research interests.

In 2011 the president of the Helmholtz Association Professor Jürgen Mlynek, and the CAS president Professor BAI Chunli signed an agreement to establish Helmholtz-CAS Joint-Research Groups (HCJRG). The first five Groups were selected in September 2012, a further five Groups were selected in September 2013. Due to these very successful calls both parties decided to launch a third call.

The aim for this HCJRG programme is to support the jointly identified cooperation projects with mutual interests and scientific excellence. It is hoped that this instrument would reinforce the connections between Helmholtz and CAS and improve the visibility of the successful collaboration between the two parties.

Aim of the funding measure

The Helmholtz-CAS Joint Research Groups are designed to intensify scientific cooperation between the Helmholtz Research Centres and the CAS institutes in order to set new impulses in existing and upcoming research programmes of the Helmholtz Association. The special focus of the HCJRGs lies in the long-lasting strategic partnership, expected scientific achievements, know-how transfer, as well as in the promotion of excellent young scientists, post-docs and PhD students. The participation of women scientists is particularly welcome. It is expected that the HCJRG programme will attract more external funding and bring further bilateral or multilateral cooperation at various levels.

Subject of funding

- HCJRGs shall bring together research capacities from one or more CAS research groups 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. In general, researchers of both countries should contribute equally to the competence of the partnership. In the partnership researchers of the participating institutions work on a defined research project which is divided into coordinated work packages designed to reach a common research goal.
- HCJRGs 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.
- HCJRGs shall represent research groups of high national and international visibility which are promising to attract additional funding from third parties throughout their funding period.
- HCJRGs shall be managed jointly by a Helmholtz and a CAS Principal Investigator (PI), within the HCJRG. These two leading scientists shall be announced as the spokespersons responsible for the joint external representation of the project.
- The fruition of the research shall be shared by the participating Helmholtz and CAS researchers. It is recommended that all Helmholtz and CAS institutions involved in the HCJRG 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 HCJRG with 80,000 to 120,000 euros per year from its Initiative and Networking Fund for a total of 3 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 HCJRG researchers;
 - ◆ to cover personnel costs for the HCJRG;
 - ◆ to purchase consumables necessary for the performance of the HCJRG;

- ◆ to cover the costs for joint field work or expeditions within the framework of the HCJRG.

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

- CAS is prepared to provide each selected HCJRG with up to 300,000 RMB (equivalent to around 35,000 euros) per year for a total of 3 years. This part of the budget is seen as a dedicated CAS grant supporting key international cooperation projects and therefore, it does not include any personnel costs, but the relevant international cooperation costs:
 - ◆ to cover travel cost for CAS researchers going to Germany and the accommodation cost of HCJRG researchers;
 - ◆ to purchase equipment and consumables necessary for the performance of the project in China and Germany;
 - ◆ to cover the other spending in accordance with the CAS regulations.

Conditions for funding

- For each HCJRG a joint proposal in English language has to be submitted through the Board of the coordinating Helmholtz Research Centre, while the CAS groups should also prepare and submit in parallel an additional CAS application form in Chinese to the CAS headquarter (see also below, "Submission of applications").
- The proposals must indicate Helmholtz and CAS PIs of the project. Helmholtz and CAS PIs must be scientists of outstanding reputation.
- In case there are German groups outside of Helmholtz involved, they should appoint an additional Group Leader.
- At most two PIs per side (Helmholtz, CAS) should be added to the project. These PIs are not eligible for monthly stipends.
- The joint proposal should contain a clear concept for the implementation of PhD students into the research activities on both sides.
- 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, including a spokesperson responsible for external relations
- ◆ abundant opportunities for the exchange of young scientists to/from China/Germany must be outlined
- ◆ financial master plan regarding the utilisation of funds requested from Helmholtz and CAS (3-year financial plan giving annual specifications of the categories of costs for each of the participating partner institutions respectively: personnel, consumables including travel/accommodation, and equipment).
- Where a renewed application is concerned, a **separate** report of one page is necessary that describes developments since the last application.

Please note: With the acceptance of funding from the Initiative and Networking Fund of the Helmholtz Association, scientists agree to make scholarly publications originating entirely or in parts from results of the funded project available to everyone in a freely accessible archive (repository), no later than six months after the original publication. If there are good reasons, the open access publication may be waived. These reasons have to be put forward to the Helmholtz Association immediately after they have come to notice.

Submission of applications

- Applications must be submitted electronically via the Helmholtz Electronic Proposal Processing System for Applicants and Reviewers (<https://helmholtznet.de/antraege/default.aspx>) by **15th April 2014** at the latest (preclusion period). In addition one hardcopy must reach the Head Office of the Helmholtz Association (Ahrstrasse 45, 53175 Bonn, Germany) by 15th April 2014 at the latest.
- Applications must be submitted via the executive board of the coordinating Helmholtz Centre.

- Applications should be related to the Research Fields, Programmes and Programme Topics of the Helmholtz Association (See list of Helmholtz Research Fields-Programmes-Topics)
- Applications must be submitted using the “Joint Research Proposal”-Form designed for the application process for Helmholtz-CAS Joint Research Groups (disqualifying criterion).
- Applications must be written in English.
- Five independent reviewers for the proposal shall be suggested including full addresses and e-mail in a **separate** file. It must be declared that there are no conflicts of interest. Helmholtz employees cannot be accepted as reviewers.
- Applications must fulfil all the formal conditions for funding in order to be admitted to the evaluation procedure (amendments are not possible).

The final decision of the selected 5 Helmholtz-CAS Joint Research Groups will be announced not later than mid-September 2014.