

### **3. Call for Applications of 10 January 2019**

## **Helmholtz - OCPC - Programme 2017-2021 for the Involvement of Postdocs in Bilateral Collaboration Pro- jects with China**

**Jointly Funded Together with the  
Office of the China Postdoctoral Council (OCPC)  
of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security  
(MoHRSS)**

#### **A. Background to the Project**

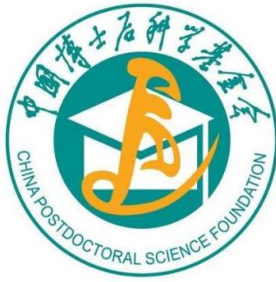
China is continuously promoting its research potential, in particular by considerably increasing its R&D expenditure and, in parallel, by training R&D staff. In many fields, Chinese scientists and research institutions have caught up with the level of western industrialized countries or will do so in the near future.

It is therefore of fundamental importance that the Helmholtz Association and its centres should expand or establish sustainable collaborations, in particular with China. Our aim is to accompany China as an important cooperation partner in the scientific sector along the road described above towards a knowledge-based and innovation-driven society so that we can jointly work on the grand challenges facing society and create a win-win situation for both parties.

The Helmholtz programme with the Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security serves to consolidate projects between Helmholtz centres and Chinese cooperation partners from universities and research institutes. It is jointly administered with the OCPC, a governmental agency under the responsibility of the MoHRSS. As a pilot project, it is initially scheduled for five years (2017-2021).

#### **B. Funding Model**

The programme enables the Helmholtz centres to integrate up to 50 postdocs in projects that they are implementing or intend to establish with partner institutions in China. The young scientists will receive a funding and will be able to undertake research work at a Helmholtz centre for up to two years in order to promote sustainable collaboration with the Chinese partners. After their research stay in Karlsruhe, it is envisaged that the scientists will return to their home institutes and will continue to contribute their research competence to cooperation with their former hosts.



The funding is composed as follows:

- The successful postdoctoral fellow shall be awarded with a research grant at RMB 300,000 for two years, equivalent to approx. € 1500 per month<sup>1</sup> to be used for subsistence allowance, for health insurance and for travel expenses during the stay at KIT. In most cases, the income tax would be drawn from this Chinese part.
- A KIT fellowship of € 1500 per month from decentralised budgets of KIT (e.g. an institute's budget). Funding must be secure. The fellowships include insurance contributions and travel expenses while staying at KIT.

During their stay at KIT, the fellowship holders remain affiliated to their postdoc station in China with respect to employment law. The postdoc station also administers the fellowship funded by the OCPC budget and pays it to the participants. Apart from safety instructions, KIT shall not have the authority to issue directives. This mixed funding provides the Chinese researchers with excellent financing, equivalent to the research fellowships for postdocs from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. As is customary in the case of scholarships, the work results developed by the scholarship holder shall belong to this scholarship holder.

### **C. Target Group**

The opportunity to become involved in a KIT collaboration project primarily targets on talented Chinese candidates, by a postdoc research station registered with OCPC<sup>2</sup>. Young scientists under the age of 35 with Chinese passport, having taken their degree or to take their PhD degree before the final decision in September in China or abroad or even abroad at the time of application, are also eligible to apply as long as they could find a postdoc research station to accept their application and to make further recommendation to OCPC.

### **D. Funding Period**

The agreed OCPC-KIT funding period is normally two years. After completing their research stay in Karlsruhe, the candidates shall return to China to close their OCPC programme and then shall be free to go anywhere. Ideally, they will continue to be involved in the long-term collaboration project between their home organisation and KIT<sup>3</sup>.

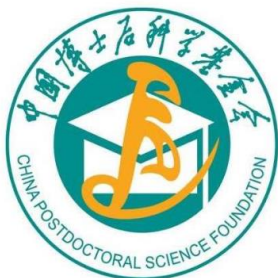
KIT institutes are entitled to withdraw their offer of a stay in Karlsruhe to a visiting scientist within six months after he or she has taken up their project work if it should subsequently become apparent that the candidate is not qualified for the project. KIT could also extend the stay of the desired fellow for one more year but with another fellowship or employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Exchange rate as of 21 December 2018

<sup>2</sup> There are about 450 postdoc research stations in China, which means that all excellent Chinese universities and academic institutes fulfil this most important selection criterion.

<sup>3</sup> At the end of the scholarship period, it is possible to agree with the postdoc station on an extension of the stay in a Helmholtz centre for 1 year. Chinese funding is excluded during an extension.



## E. Application Procedure

The procedure comprises three steps:

1. **KIT institutes** that are interested should contact **KIT - International Affairs** by 10 February 2019 with a project proposal (contact person: Oliver Kaas, phone: 45323, email: [oliver.kaas@kit.edu](mailto:oliver.kaas@kit.edu)). **KIT - International Affairs** checks whether the formal application requirements have been fulfilled and passes the formally correct project proposals for OCPC by 15 February 2019 through Helmholtz Beijing Office.
2. The **HGF Office in Beijing** will compile all files from all participating Helmholtz centres and communicate with OCPC to make sure that OCPC will announce the public call on its website officially before 28 February 2019 with a defined deadline for the application by 25 April<sup>4</sup> 2019. Interested candidates will inform the Chinese **post-doc research station** about their interest and submit their necessary documents to the OCPC by the published deadline. **Candidates who submit their applications directly to the OCPC and not through a postdoc station will not be considered by OCPC.**
3. Each postdoc station is on its own responsibility to evaluate the candidates based on its own formal evaluation criteria, as they would have the subsequent responsibilities. OCPC would only cross-check the application and recommendation materials to make sure there are not frauds. Theoretically, all the materials received would be forwarded to the HGF Beijing Office not later than on 20 May 2019 and would then be transferred immediately to the relevant KIT institute<sup>5</sup>.
4. The proposed candidates are then finally reviewed by **KIT institutes**. Suitable instruments for this purpose are video conferences or a personal interview with the candidate. The KIT institutes will receive the decision and communicate the results to **KIT – International Affairs**, who in turn forward the institutes' decisions to the HGF Beijing Office not later than on 20 June 2019.
5. OCPC will double-check again all Helmholtz decisions and present the whole list of the chosen candidates to a Minister and will very likely announce the final decision on its website by 10 July 2019 including also a certification letter to Helmholtz in English about the result and its commitment for offering a grant to these selected fellows within July 2019.

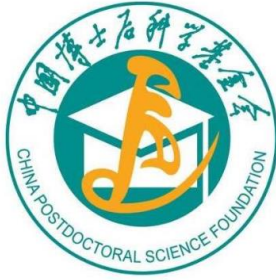
It is expected that successful candidates will start work on their project at KIT within six months of receiving confirmation of their fellowship from the OCPC.

## F. Project Proposal

The project proposal from the KIT institute to find a young scientist from China must be written in English and should be structured according to the attached form.

<sup>4</sup> Call in China expected for 1 **March 2019**; deadline in China expected for 25 **April 2019**

<sup>5</sup> Expected for beginning of June 2019



**Part A** of the form is to be completed by the KIT institute with its own details and information on the planned project and the required qualifications of the post-doc. Foreign trade regulations shall be considered.

- Title of the project
- Name of the KIT sub-institute
- Name and contact details of the KIT project leader / supervisor
- Internet address of the institute and, if applicable, of the working group
- Description of the scientific topic (max. 1 page)
- Description of the existing or planned collaboration with a Chinese institution (max. half a page)
- Qualifications required by the applicant

**Part B** of the form is to contain the documents to be submitted by the post-doc to the OCPC and can be supplemented and modified by the project leader depending on the project proposal.

- Reason for the candidate's personal interest in a research visit to KIT
- CV and copies of certificates
- List of publications
- Two letters of recommendation
- Evidence of competence in English

**Part C** of the form describes the conditions of the programme which must be observed by the postdoc.

- Completion of PhD within the past five years
- Not older than 35 years of age at the time of application