

7.2.2.1 Module 1: Junior Research Groups

The BMBF intends to issue an international call together with the ZIKs in order to invite suitable junior researchers to apply as group leaders and to select the proposals in a two-step procedure. The selected junior research group leaders will then submit applications for funding of their junior research group projects together with the hosting institutions.

I.) Application procedure for junior research group leaders

Applications written in German or English and including a project outline (see below) must be submitted by post or e-mail to the project management organization and the respective ZIK simultaneously by a date yet to be announced (in the above-mentioned call). Deadlines for submission are not cut-off deadlines. However, it may not be possible to consider applications received after this date. No legal claim can be derived from the submission of an application.

Applications may be submitted by German and foreign researchers holding a doctoral degree who are no older than **35 years of age** when submitting their application; applications may also be filed by researchers older than 35 in duly substantiated exceptional cases (e.g. child-rearing periods, university qualifications obtained as a mature student, completion of several degrees). Applicants for the first basic research-oriented group at a ZIK who spent most of the preceding two years in Germany must furnish evidence of at least two years of **research abroad**. The leader of a second junior research group to be additionally established at the ZIK with a focus on technology and process innovations should have an application background and be able to furnish proof of at least two years' **work abroad**.

The letter of application must include the following information (exclusion criteria):

a) Personal data (not more than 5 pages, 12 point font):

- Name, date of birth and nationality of the applicant
- Academic career (since leaving school) including information about previous work
- Current employment
- Presentation of the applicant's motivation
- List of major publications and patents filed
- References

b) Project outline eligible for evaluation (not more than 10 pages, 12 point font):

- Name of the ZIK and the junior research group for which the application is filed
- Topic and scientific objective of the planned research project which must correspond to the ZIK's main field of work
- Research methods to be applied and scientific relevance of the planned research project
- Description of the innovative approaches and the work schedule
- Presentation of resources planning (for example: how the junior research group will be composed, whether junior researchers will be brought along from another institution)
- Time schedule and milestones
- Prospects of success
- Opportunities for commercialization in the long term

II.) Decision-making procedure for junior research group leaders

The ZIKs, the project management organization and the BMBF will evaluate the applications received in a pre-selection process (which may involve external expert opinions). The BMBF will then invite the best applicants to present their projects in English or German to a panel which may include international experts.

In addition to fulfilment of the prerequisites for funding, the following evaluation criteria in particular will be applied:

- Scientific originality and feasibility of the project
- Qualifications and expertise of the applicant
- Compatibility of the project with the ZIK's profile
- Innovation potential of the project deliverables.

The votes of the respective ZIKs are taken into account in the selection of the junior research group leaders; the final decision is taken by the BMBF. The applicants are informed about the result of the decision-making procedure.