

Last deadline for applications:
September 15, 2006

Funding Initiative

Information for Applicants 66

Interplay between Molecular Conformations and Biological Function

I. Funding objectives

The conformation and conformational dynamics of biologically relevant molecules is the key to understanding their functions. The funding initiative therefore aims at analyzing, modulating and controlling multiple conformational states in biological systems. In particular, innovative approaches shall be pursued to investigate and influence biological function. The Foundation regards interdisciplinary cooperation as indispensable for adequately addressing the respective topic.

Accordingly, the funding initiative intends to foster interdisciplinary research at the interface between chemistry and biosciences (including biophysics and modelling). Beside scientific meetings, joint projects will be funded only if they include research groups from both areas which differ in their thematic or methodological orientation. The involvement of junior scientists in cooperative projects is particularly encouraged.

It is mandatory that syntheses of molecular systems specifically designed to be oriented towards, or influencing a biological function, constitute a component of any joint project. High priority will be given to a combination of synthetic chemistry, structural analyses and functional studies. Aspects of particular interest are: (i) theoretical treatments of active conformation, (ii) dynamic conformational analyses aimed at establishing the differences between active and ground-state conformation

in the systems observed, (iii) methodological developments intended to determine the active conformation and to analyse molecular ensembles, as well as (iv) new methods of chemical synthesis.

Projects dealing exclusively with structure/function studies and not involving synthetic chemistry can not be funded.

II. Funding possibilities

Funding will be made available for interdisciplinary joint projects, and will cover costs for personnel and non-personnel resources, including travel expenses. The Foundation can fund the same project for a maximum of five years. In general, grants are awarded for a period of up to three years. A renewal of the grant is possible after submission of a new proposal and subsequent evaluation taking account of the existing results.

With respect to cooperation with scientists from other fields, researchers participating in funded projects may receive financial support to spend a limited period of time (up to maximum of one year) in other funded laboratories, either in Germany or abroad.

To intensify the interdisciplinary exchange of experiences and results – in particular among the research teams funded – symposia dealing with the funding initiative's topic are planned at regular intervals. Furthermore, scientific meet-

ings, e.g. imparting special methods applied in the funded projects, can be supported according to the provisions listed for the funding initiative "Symposia and Summer Schools" (see Information for Applicants No. 1).

III. Applications

Applicants are free to submit full proposals or preproposals, as pre-stage for an application; there are no application forms. In both cases a comparative evaluation by an interdisciplinary and international review panel will occur. However, an invitation to submit a full proposal does not imply that the project will be funded. The Foundation fixes annually changing deadlines (once or twice a year) which can be inquired by phone or looked up on the homepage of the VolkswagenStiftung. A list of the projects funded so far is available there as well.

In principle, applications from abroad receive equal consideration. However, the Foundation does expect a specific cooperation with scientists at German institutions; its necessity should be substantiated in the light of the particular nature of the project. For projects with international participation, the Foundation recommends that the scientist in charge is based in Germany.

The Foundation can provide funds only to academic institutions. Applicants who are not members of universities and other recognized research institutions should therefore supply details on the legal status, statutes, trustees and boards, charitable status, budgeting and auditing of their respective institution. Non-institutionalized project groups will be asked for detailed information of their legal and organizational status. If available, applicants are required to supply an annual report or a general description of their institutions.

Please submit your application electronically (e-mail, disk or cd-rom; preferably application

and each appendix as separate pdf-files) and also in hard copy. Applications and preproposals should be prepared according to the attached checklist.

IV. Contact

Further information can be obtained from the office of the VolkswagenStiftung in Hannover, Germany.

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How to apply: Checklist

Applications and preproposals have to be written **in English** and should be submitted in two copies. Sending the same documents by e-mail or fax in parallel is not necessary.

In preproposals (not exceeding five pages/2500 words) the following points should be addressed:

- Topic and objectives of the joint project
- Significance for the objectives of the funding initiative and the related field
- Brief description of the current state of research, the preliminary work, the working program and the methods to be applied
- Distribution of tasks among the groups involved and explanation of the interdisciplinary cooperation
- Name of the scientist in charge, coordination of the joint project
- Cost estimate, including statement of the project duration, separately for each participating group
- Curriculum vitae and list of publications of the last five years for all applicants (as appendix)

Applications should not exceed 15 pages/7500 words (without appendices) and be broken down as follows:

- Brief informative title of the project
- Summary, not longer than half a page in German and English, which will inform about the project on the Foundation's website in case of funding
- Description of the project (justification including significance for the funding initiative, objectives and rationale, current international state of the art in the field as well as own previous work including literature citations, methods, working program and time schedule, distribution of tasks and coordination of the joint project).
- Budget, to be drafted separately for each participating group and itemized as follows:
 - Personnel expenses
 - Scientific personnel
 - Other personnel (e.g. technicians)
 - Recurring non-personnel expenses
 - Travel expenses

Other recurrent non-personnel expenses (e.g. consumables)

- Non-recurring non-personnel expenses

Equipment

Other non-recurrent purchases (e.g. literature).

The cost schedule has to contain detailed substantiation of each item, also in relation to existing resources and available equipment. For personnel, not only the classification of the individual position has to be specified, but also the actual amount required (including additional expenses) on the basis of current collective agreements. For equipment a valid quotation has to be presented for each item with a purchase price exceeding 10.000 €. For German institutions specific conditions for the purchase of large equipment (exceeding 125.000 €) exist which are detailed in the German Information for Applicants.

- Complete funding received from other funding agencies has to be indicated including title, term, scope of the grant and the granting institution. In the case of projects on related subjects, a substantive delimitation has to be made between these and the project applied for. Likewise, information is required indicating whether the same or a topically related application has been submitted or is to be submitted to other funding institutions.
- Name and address of scientific institution(s) to act as recipient(s) of the grant. With institutions other than universities and recognized non-university research institutes, further details on their legal status, statutes, trustees and boards, charitable/non-profit status, budgeting and auditing are required.
- Signature of all applicants

Appendices:

- Curriculum vitae and a list of publications of the last five years for all applicants (including reprints of up to five of the most important papers). This information is also needed in case the application covers full-time positions for postdocs provided the candidate is already known.
- Quotations for equipment exceeding 10.000 €
- If the applicant lacks a position at the institution during the anticipated duration of the project an additional statement of the head of the institute is required regarding the feasibility of the project and the administration of the allocated funds.

Further information about this funding initiative may be obtained from the office of the Volkswagen-Stiftung in Hanover:

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