

Overview

In the process of actively shaping the chances offered by the digital transformation, the Bavarian government has developed the strategy BAYERN DIGITAL. The Centre Digitisation.Bavaria (German: Zentrum Digitalisierung.Bayern, short: ZD.B) provides the core element of that strategy. The ZD.B has established a platform for research, collaboration, innovation, and entrepreneurship in order to strengthen digital competences in Bavaria and foster collaborations between industry and research on key topics in this area.

One central initiative is the establishment of the ZD.B junior research groups (short: research groups) on topics of digitisation at Bavarian state universities and state universities of applied sciences (in the following both referred to as universities). The goal of the funding programme for establishing the research groups is to support young postdoctoral scholars working on topics that are relevant for digitisation in technical, industrial, or societal areas.

Funding Programme

The funding programme of the Bavarian State Ministry for Education, Science and the Arts will support up to 10 junior research group leaders ---with an excellent PhD degree--- to establish an independent research group working on innovative projects with high practical impact. The programme will provide excellent young scholars with the possibility to begin a long-term academic career. The grant features for each research group include the following:

- A volume of up to 250.000,- € per year¹
- A duration of up to 5 years (provided a positive intermediate evaluation after approximately 2 years)
- The possibility to supervise PhD students
- The possibility to represent their research topics / discipline in teaching

The funded research groups are formally assigned to a Bavarian state university and will have their work focus there. To foster an intensive collaboration between the research groups, presences and work phases at the ZD.B offices in Garching (Munich) are planned.

¹ The budget can be used for personnel costs and any other consumables as, e.g., travel costs. The personnel costs cover the funding of the position of the group leader as well. The exact wage classification will be set in accordance with the regulations of the university to which the group leader is assigned.

All research groups are independent in their research and in the organisation of their research project, as well as in additional fund-raising. The research group leaders supervise scientific theses such as Bachelor, Master, Diploma, and PhD theses. They publish independently as responsible authors and have project budget to hire additional personnel. All publications need to indicate that the research results have been produced in the context of the Centre Digitisation.Bavaria and that it has been funded by the Bavarian State Ministry for Education, Science and the Arts.

Prerequisites and Selection Criteria

Postdoctoral researchers from Germany and from abroad are entitled to apply for the grant as long as they fulfil the following prerequisites:

1. Completion of an excellent PhD
2. Excellent achievements in research and teaching, based on an outstanding publication record (quality and originality), awards and honours, third party funding, collaborations, etc.

The application must include the following (according to a given template):

1. An academic curriculum vitae including qualifications, list of references, experiences in teaching, and an overview of third party funding obtained and / or research projects in which the applicant participated
2. Three references not including the PhD advisor(s)
3. A proposal for a research project with a high practical impact, high originality and especially high relevance for the digitisation. Research projects in the context of universities of applied sciences as well as research projects to be conducted in collaboration with industry are also welcome. The description (5 pages max.) must include:
 - Motivation and goals as well as a summary of the state of the art (including own previous work)
 - Scientific and practical impact of the research project
 - A brief working program including the planned research methodology
 - Planned national and international collaborations with other researchers and / or practitioners from academia and / or industry as well as the desired synergies with other current activities in the context of ZD.B (e.g. resulting from the thematic platforms)
4. Letter of intent from the university to which the applicant will be formally assigned. In that letter, the university needs to assure the following in case of acceptance of the application:
 - The responsibilities of the applicant are limited to those activities directly related to the planned research project.
 - The applicant will be granted the possibility to include his/her topic in the teaching curriculum of the university.

- The applicant will be granted the possibility to supervise PhD students during the duration of the grant².
- The applicant will be granted access to all necessary infrastructure and provided with the necessary facilities (office, labs).
- The applicant will be assigned a professor of the university as a contact person.
- The university assures to investigate, in context of the intermediate evaluation, the possibility of converting the position to a regular professorship.

The letter of intent is a mandatory part of the application. The letter needs to be signed by a faculty dean of the corresponding university, as well as by an additional professor of that university who will serve as the contact person.

Evaluation of Applications

A committee consisting of internationally distinguished experts, established by the Bavarian State Ministry for Education, Science and the Arts, will evaluate all applications and provide the Ministry with recommendations for awarding the grants.

The committee will also advise on the continuation of the projects based on the results of an intermediate evaluation of the funded research groups after approximately two years. The Bavarian State Ministry for Education, Science and the Arts will decide upon granting the funds based on the recommendations by the committee.

Network Structure

The funded research groups are to form an active research network. A core element of the network is the scientific exchange between the research groups and their members. Seminars and symposiums on the current state of the research projects is a basis for the collaboration.

The ZD.B will further foster the interaction and collaboration with the scientific community as well as with the Bavarian industry to actively support knowledge and technology transfer. The groups will also be supported and encouraged to contribute to other programmes of the ZD.B, e.g. by representing their topics and results in courses for PhD students.

² In case of an assignment to a university of applied science, the necessary conditions to allow for a formal supervision of PhD students need to be clarified in advance, e.g. via an agreement for a “cooperative PhD”.

Application

The application must be submitted in English in electronic form as well as via a printed and signed document. All necessary material is available for download under <http://zentrum-digitalisierung.bayern/nachwuchsforschungsgruppen/call-for-proposals>. Only applications that meet the formal requirements will be evaluated. The application must be self-contained without additional, complementary material or publications. It is expected that the application contains a complete and comprehensible concept for additional third-party funding, where reasonable and necessary. The letter of intent, to be signed in advance by the chosen university, must be part of the application.

The deadline for the application to the offices of the Centre Digitisation.Bavaria (address below) and in electronic form, to be sent to ResearchGroups@zd-b.de, is October 1st 2016.

Questions on the application procedure can be directed to:

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