



## Programme Information

### Sofja Kovalevskaja Award

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's **Sofja Kovalevskaja Award**, which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, is granted to young exceptionally promising researchers from abroad in recognition of outstanding academic achievements and enables them to establish their own junior research groups at research institutions in Germany.

Scientists and scholars from abroad, whose research records to date have already qualified them to be recognised as top-level junior researchers and who are expected to continue producing outstanding results as recipients of the Sofja Kovalevskaja Award, are eligible to submit applications.

The programme is open to scientists and scholars from all countries and disciplines who **completed their doctorates with distinction less than six years ago**. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation particularly welcomes applications from qualified, **female** junior researchers.

Virtually unaffected by administrative constraints, the award winners will be able to concentrate on high-level, innovative research work of their own choice in Germany and thus strengthen the internationalisation of research in Germany. The award amount will allow the winners to finance their own junior research group at the university or non-university research institution of their choosing in Germany and also cover their living expenses.

Candidates will be selected solely on the basis of their academic qualifications. There are no quotas for individual disciplines or countries. The most important assessment criteria are:

- academic publications in internationally reviewed journals and for publishing houses
- statements on the candidate's academic profile and potential in the form of expert reviews, requested by the candidate, from different institutions and, where possible, from different countries
- the academic quality and feasibility of the research project proposed by the candidate

Applications are assessed by independent peer reviewers appointed by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. An independent Alexander von Humboldt Foundation selection committee selects up to eight award winners and determines the award amount. The award is conferred by the President of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation under the patronage of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

#### **Value and purpose of award and use of funds**

Winners of the Sofja Kovalevskaja Award will be granted funding totalling up to 1.65 million EUR to conduct the approved research project over a period of five years commencing immediately after receiving the award (this sum includes a 15% administrative flat-rate, cf. below). The award amount will be paid in instalments. The first instalment may be drawn as soon as the award winner has accepted the award and submitted the complete acceptance documents.

The award is intended to sponsor the project headed by the winner at a host institution in Germany (including the necessary equipment and material, personnel, travel expenses etc.). It may be utilised for all expenditure serving this purpose and should be used economically and prudently. Scientific equipment financed by the award will become the property of the host institu-

tion immediately upon purchase. Part of the award may be used to cover the award winner's living expenses<sup>1</sup>.

The host institution in Germany will receive a flat-rate totalling 15% of the award amount (administrative flat-rate). This sum may be used to finance a "welcome package", for example, including measures to help integrate the award winner in his or her new personal and professional environment. It may also be used to support the professional integration of a partner (dual career couples) and to compensate for the potential loss of retirement savings that were accrued abroad. We should particularly like to draw attention to the possibility of utilising the administrative flat-rate to initiate the financing of a tenure-track option.

Furthermore, the flat-rate may also be used to help cover costs resulting from the programme-related use of existing and/or specifically acquired material and specially-created personnel infrastructure (e.g. general institute facilities, laboratories or workrooms, operating and maintenance costs, finance and personnel management and auditing).

The host institution is permitted to pass any left-over funding from the administrative flat-rate to the award winner for the furtherance of his or her research work.

Detailed information on the award winners' accounting obligations (proof of use of funds, etc.) can be found in the [Regulations on the use of funds](#) for the Sofja Kovalevskaja Award.

### Application requirements

1. **Doctorate** or comparable academic degree (Ph.D., C.Sc. or equivalent), completed with distinction less than six years prior to the date of application.
2. **Cutting-edge academic achievements** documented by a comprehensive list of **academic publications** for internationally-reviewed journals and publishing houses.
3. **Detailed expert's report** by an academic host at a research institution in Germany as well as the **host's agreement** and the **confirmation from the administration** at the host institution.
4. **Expert references** by important collaborative partners and academics at the applicant's own institute and other institutes, if possible not all located in his/her country of origin.
5. **Language skills:** scholars in the humanities or social sciences and physicians must have a good knowledge of German if it is necessary to carry out the project successfully; otherwise a good knowledge of English; scientists and engineers must have a good knowledge of German or English.
6. **Origin:** Foreign academics staying in Germany are eligible to apply if they have been in Germany for less than 24 months at the time of application. German academics are eligible to apply if they have been working in an academic capacity abroad for at least five consecutive years at the time of application. If in doubt, check with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation ([info@avh.de](mailto:info@avh.de)) before submitting an application, as formal grounds might militate against the application.
7. **No previous Sofja Kovalevskaja Award:** This award can only be granted once to any individual researcher.

### Application procedure

Applications must reach the

**Alexander von Humboldt Foundation  
Selection Department  
Jean-Paul-Str. 12, 53173 Bonn, Germany**

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<sup>1</sup> Gross salary not affected by collective agreements amounting to up to 5,935 EUR per month (annual gross labour cost approx. 89,000 EUR) (as of March 2011). Regarding taxes please refer to our regulations on use of funds.

by **September 1, 2011 at the latest**. This submission date is not an absolute deadline; however, in the event of a late or incomplete submission it may not be possible to process and assess the application in the time available.

Only the valid application documents should be used. They can be downloaded from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's [website](#) or obtained from the Foundation directly. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the applications they submit are complete. Substantially incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant unprocessed.

Visit the [FAQs](#) on the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's website for more information on the selection procedure.

### **General regulations and obligations**

The award recognises the outstanding academic record to date as well as the personality of leading junior academics. It is thus taken for granted that, both in their previous academic work and during the research stay in Germany, award winners have abided by and will continue to abide by the Rules of Good Scientific Practice and the corresponding laws obtaining at the respective research location. Should an award be granted, further details can be found in the Regulations on the Use of Funds.

When accepting the award, award winners undertake especially:

- to concentrate their entire working activity on the research project and to be present at the host institution in Germany regularly and continually; secondary employment is only permissible in exceptional cases, provided that it does not interfere with the sponsorship objectives, and requires written agreement from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation;
- not to utilise any other fellowships or funds from other German institutions designated for living expenses when using part of the award money to cover their living expenses;
- not to make use of any congruent sponsorship from funding deriving from German academic sponsorship; part funding from German or foreign sources must be reported to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation immediately.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation strongly recommends that host institutions should grant award winners the right to supervise doctoral students through to submission, if necessary in cooperation with a university. This should be negotiated with the host institution and, if necessary, in cooperation with a university on an individual contract basis. Any such contract should be submitted to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation after the award has been accepted.

as of: March 2011