

The Humboldt Foundation

The Principles

- **sponsors research at the highest level:** The most important selection criterion is evidence of individual excellence. The Foundation sponsors the best scientists and scholars as well as prospective leaders irrespective of regional origin or disciplinary focus.
- **sponsors people:** Even today, advances in science are dependent on the excellence and, above all, the pioneering spirit of individual personalities. Thus the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation sponsors people, not projects. It does, however, help them to form teams and research alliances if these are important for achieving their aims.
- **promotes creativity through independence and freedom of scope:** Those sponsored by the Humboldt Foundation are free to choose their own research topics, their academic hosts and the scientific methods they wish to use.
- **sponsors researchers for an entire (academic) lifetime:** The Foundation's diverse portfolio of funding tools enables Humboldtians to foster contact with Germany and collaborate with their specialist colleagues even after they have returned to their own countries.
- **is independent:** Selection is based on the principle of academic self-governance: committees composed of scientists and scholars of all academic disciplines decide who will be sponsored, independently and solely according to standards of academic excellence.
- **is neutral:** Sponsorship recipients are chosen without regard to religion, ethnic and social origin, nationality or gender. The Foundation is not governed by ideologically or commercially defined guidelines.
- **is flexible and personal:** The Foundation responds flexibly to individual requirements. Personal contact with its foreign guests and their families is a constitutive aspect of the Foundation's work.
- **is innovative:** In its ongoing dialogue with partners at home and abroad the Foundation identifies new challenges facing cooperation in science and cultural policy, developing potential solutions which it implements with the support of various different funders.
- **is professional:** The trust placed in the Foundation by public funders and private donors is a consequence of professional management. Headquarters abide by the requirement to use the funding economically, efficiently, lawfully and effectively without dispensing with the degree of flexibility appropriate to science.

The Impact

Alexander von Humboldt Foundation sponsorship not only benefits individual Humboldtians but also academia and society in Germany and across the world:

- **Internationalisation strengthens Germany as a location for research**

Due to its reputation and its funding tools, which are tailored to a specific segment of excellence, the Foundation makes Germany an attractive destination for the best researchers from abroad - whether for fixed-term stays or permanent relocation. In either case, both the competitiveness of German research and its international visibility are enhanced. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's network connects German research institutes with centres of scientific excellence abroad.

- **Lifelong relations connect Germany with the globalised world**

Sponsorship recipients nearly always leave the country with a positive image of Germany that radiates well beyond academia: from economic cooperation through to dialogue on the rule of law. Humboldtians who stay in Germany permanently bring their own international network to their collaborations.

- **Understanding between cultures and countries grows**

The Foundation's work is not just about academia. The learning community of German and foreign knowledge elites continues to have an impact, not least because Humboldtians often hold key positions in areas of society other than academia.

- **Sustainable development in economically weaker states promotes a more peaceful world**

By gaining research experience linked to development Humboldtians from developing and transition countries return home with important new ideas. Through their teaching they then pass on these ideas, which can help to generate a competitive economy, eco-friendly policies and a liberal society.

The Major Challenges

- To sustain the appeal of fellowships and award programmes.
- To continue the systematic development of the Humboldt Network and exploit its potential to greater effect.
- To use visibility and a culture of welcome to strengthen the position of Germany and Europe in the contest for research markets.

The equitable inclusion of women academics in the programmes and initiatives is an integral part of all objectives.