Call for Proposals - Junior Research Groups

1. Preface

Digital change is a change of structure, which has a great influence on all areas of life and economics. It manifests itself in new economic branches and business models as well as in the way how people communicate, learn and work.

The government of NRW supports among other things the digitalization in economy, goes along with the digital change of work and promotes research in digitalization. With the program "Digitaler.Fortschritt.NRW" the Ministry for Innovation, Science and Research of the State of North Rhine Westphalia (MIWF) addresses chosen key topics. The funding of research in the field of IT security, digitalization in medicine and digitalization in society shall contribute to the finding of solutions for such rapid rebuilding processes. The goal is to shape the change in such manner that most people benefit in an economic and social way.

2. Aim of the Funding "Digital Security"

In cooperation with the MIWF researchers as well as representatives of companies and syndicates have written an expert paper that yields a holistic view over necessary developments around digital security concerning all sections of business, work and life. Thereupon, these experts have derived the research agenda "Human Centered Systems Security" in 2016, which has become a basis of the program "Digitaler.Fortschritt.NRW".

With respect to the increasing need in qualified professionals in the IT security sector on the one hand and the necessity for making progress in research and education on the other side the MIWF intends to make advances in the training of human resources.

3. Subject of Funding

Within the framework of the Digital Agenda of the North Rhine Westphalian Government, experienced young postdoctoral scientists will receive support to set up their first own junior research group. The newly established junior research groups are supposed to fit into, enrich and strengthen the established scientific foci of digital security.

Key research topics represented in the Digital Security – according to the NRW Forschungsagenda "Human Centered Systems Security" include

- Modern IT Security Architectures
- Security and Privacy Engineering
- Usable Security and Privacy
- Multilevel Effects of Human Interactions

The applications should outline the possible contribution the envisaged work can make towards solving global challenges.

4. Duration

A total of four researchers (professorships) will receive support for a period of up to five years.

If the institution wants to fill the research group leader position with a W1-professorship position, the expenses in the sixth year have to be fully defrayed by the institution's own resources. A guarantee for financing has to be declared in the application.

A total of four researchers will receive support for a period of up to five years. Research budgets amount to a maximum of 118.000 Euro per annum and researcher, pending a positive evaluation in the third year. The rest has to be covered by the applying research institution. Granted support may be used to cover the salaries of the researcher and staff as well as expenses for durables, consumables and travel.

5. Recipient

All universities in North Rhine Westphalia may apply for these junior research awards. The recipient of the funding will be the research institution. The maximum number of applications per university is two. At the date of application the candidate must not occupy a W1-professorship.

6. Application Documents

Application is due on February 15th 2017. Aspired date of funding is July 1st 2017 until June 30th 2022 pending a positive evaluation in the third year.

Applications (please follow the detailed application guidelines attached to this message):

- a five-year research-program (incl. state of the art of the proposed research topic, previous work of the applicant, scientific goals and methods (six year period for a junior professorship)),
- a work plan for the five -year period (six year period for a junior professorship),
- a financial plan (annual and total),
- a statement of the university ensuring availability of sufficient lab-space, necessary infrastructure and a description of the institution's contribution (Tenure Track, further staff and consumption requirements),
- in case of a junior professorship: a statement of the university ensuring the financing of the sixth year
- CV and bibliography of the selected head of the group, certificate of the PhD /MD degree,
- Two letters of reference (due to February 28th 2017)

Applications (3 copies) have to be submitted by February 15th 2017.

To facilitate the review process, all applications should also be submitted as PDF file to the attention of Dr. Sascha Knops at s.knops@fz-juelich.de

7. Review Process

The selection process is two-stage. Following a preselection process, applicants for the positions will be invited to present their project to an international jury, to be held in March 2017.

Selection criteria are innovation and excellence of the research proposal as well as the implementation of the digital agenda and the profiling of the applying university. The option Tenure Track is a bonus.

In the case of equal academic excellence, preference will be given to applications from female researchers.

8. Begin of Funding

Funding of the awarded projects is supposed to start in July 2017. There is no legal entitlement to a grant award. The grant awarding body shall make decisions at its own discretion. The grant will be awarded subject to the availability of the proposed funding.

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