

## **Extensive Funding for Heidelberg's Collaborative Research Center of Molecular Catalysis**

**Research on catalysis at the University of Heidelberg evaluated excellent by the German Research Foundation (DFG) – Funding for the Collaborative Research Center until 2009 exceeds 6.7 Million €, with 5 Million € third-party funds from the DFG.**

On basis of an excellent intermediate evaluation after its first three years of operation by a panel of expert reviewers the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG)) has granted substantial funding for another 4-year period for chemistry's Collaborative Research Center "Molecular Catalysts: Structure and Functional Design" (SFB 623) at the University of Heidelberg (Department of Chemistry and Earth Sciences).

19 research groups with a total of around 70 scientist and their technical staff from the Institutes of Chemistry, the Institute of Pharmacy and Molecular Biotechnology (IPMB), the Max Planck Institute for Medical Research and the Interdisciplinary Center for Scientific Computing (IWR) are cooperating within this research network.

The common goals of the Collaborative Research Center are defined as broad and interdisciplinary basic chemical research in the field of molecular catalysis. They comprise the whole spectrum of this key technology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: from biocatalysis in the living cell to the synthesis of drugs, fine chemicals and large scale commodity products on an industrial scale. Basic research on catalysis is not only important for the progress of chemistry itself, but is also essential for chemistry as a cross-section science and as a motor of invention and innovation for the technical progress in developed countries. The intention of the Collaborative Research Center is to find ways towards a rational design and experimental realisation of new catalysts, which save energy and conserve resources, by understanding mechanistic details and structure-functionality relationships on the molecular level. Technical applications of catalysts are considered in an adequate way, but without giving priority to technical process development over basic research.

"The positive funding decision of the DFG not only testifies to the recognition of our past and current achievements in the field of molecular catalysis research, which is also a main focus of research and teaching of our faculty, but it also confirms our position among the German leading research universities in chemistry, as publicized in the latest research ranking by the "Die Zeit" magazine", explains the speaker of the Collaborative Research Center, Organic Chemistry professor Peter Hofmann.

"The extensive DFG grant for the next 4 years will enable us to follow our research targets in a very broad context and in depth. The availability of excellent equipment and of well-educated human resources will allow us to remain competitive on an international scale, so that chemistry in Heidelberg will continue to attract highly qualified scientist and the best young professionals from allover the world" Hofmann says.

Until 2009, the funding by the DFG for the University of Heidelberg includes salaries for 30 positions for researchers (PhD students, postdocs) as well as monetary

support for administrative personnel, scientific equipment and consumables, for travel expenses, visiting scientists, scientific symposia and meetings. The chemistry students, both undergraduates and graduates, will also benefit from these third-party funds, as they will lead to improved teaching facilities in the faculty. The funding is further complemented from sources of the university and of the federal and state Ministries for Science in order to allow for necessary technical personnel, for supply of literature, for lab equipment and to acquire state-of-the-art high-performance mass spectrometer instrumentation, an analytical device that is indispensable for the research within the SFB.

Funding until 2009 in total will amount to 6.72 Million €, of which 5 Million € are funds from the DFG. In addition, the Collaborative Research Center gratefully acknowledges sponsoring by BASF AG, which generously finances the biennial international symposium "Heidelberg Forum of Molecular Catalysis", that will be held again on 8<sup>th</sup> July of this year, in 2007 and in 2009.

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