

# Press Release

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## “Best Research Environment 2024”: Winning teams announced

*Die Junge Akademie* and the Volkswagen Foundation honour ten outstanding teams with the inaugural “Best Research Environment” award

Ten teams from various scientific and academic disciplines have been selected to receive the “Best Research Environment 2024” award. This year, *Die Junge Akademie* and the Volkswagen Foundation are awarding the prize for the first time. It honours the importance of a good research environment in academic and scientific performance, and the effort required to actively shape inspiring, supportive, and fair working conditions. The contribution made by each and every researcher counts when it comes to scientific and academic progress.

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Ten teams received the ‘Best Research Environment 2024’ award on 7 June 2025. Far left in the picture: Dr Henrike Hartmann (Volkswagen Foundation). Far right in the picture: Dr Gisela Kopp (Die Junge Akademie).

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In March, the jury selected 24 teams from almost 300 applicants for the shortlist. On 7 June 2025, ten of these were selected by random draw to receive the award, each accompanied by a prize of 10,000 euros. This process emphasises that it is not a question of ranking. All the shortlisted teams are equally worthy winners.

“The shortlisted teams impressively show the many different ways in which research environments can be positively shaped. Such environments offer orientation, support, inspiration,

and development opportunities,” says Dr Gisela Kopp, Alumna of *Die Junge Akademie* and initiator of the award.

“A good research environment is the invisible foundation for scientific success. It not only offers space for creativity and cooperation, but also the necessary support and recognition that researchers need to develop their full potential,” emphasises Dr Antje Tepperwien, Head of the “Understanding Research” profile area in the Volkswagen Foundation's funding department.

**The following ten teams have been honoured as “Best Research Environment 2024”:**

- Financial Markets Department (IWH) at the Halle Institute for Economic Research (IWH) - Member of the Leibniz Association
- Lise Meitner Research Group “China in the Global System of Science” at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
- One Health Surveillance Group at the Helmholtz Center for Infection Research / Helmholtz Institute for One Health (HIOH)
- Professorship of Social Psychology at the Chemnitz University of Technology
- Research Group “humanet3” at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, the Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition, and the Center for Humans and Machines (CHM) at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin
- Research Group “Industrial/Organizational and Social Psychology (AOS)” at the Technische Universität Braunschweig
- Research Group “LAMA Lab: Laboratory for AI in Materials Science” at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena
- Single Cell Focus Area (SCFA) at the Max Delbrück Center (MDC), the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH), the Berlin Institute of Medical Systems Biology (BIMSB), and the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin
- Working Group “Experimental Interaction Ecology” at the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv) Halle-Jena-Leipzig
- Work Unit of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy for Children and Adolescents at the University of Münster

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The full shortlist with all 24 nominated teams can be found here:

<https://www.diejungeakademie.de/en/projekte/best-research-environment-award/shortlist-2024>

The selection committee responsible for drawing up the shortlist considered factors such as a clear identity, transparent responsibilities and communication paths, a culture of tolerance towards mistakes, and supportive structures.

**Background information**

*Die Junge Akademie* is the world's first academy for scientists and researchers in the early and middle stages of their careers and has become an important voice in Germany's science system over the course of its almost 25-year history. The Volkswagen Foundation provided financial support to *Die Junge Akademie* until 2005, thus helping to establish the organisation. With its profile area “Understanding Research”, the Volkswagen Foundation opens up spaces for reflection and supports structural changes in the science system. One thematic focus is on the diversity of scientific culture(s).

Full information on the award, the selection criteria, and application conditions are available here:

<https://www.diejungeakademie.de/en/projekte/best-research-environment-award>

*Die Junge Akademie*  
at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities  
and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina

*Die Junge Akademie* was founded in 2000 as the world's first academy for outstanding young academics. Its members – who come from all academic disciplines as well as creative fields – explore the potential and limits of interdisciplinary work in new projects, aim to encourage dialogue between academia and society, and provide new impetus in discussions about scientific policy. *Die Junge Akademie* is supported by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. Its office is located in Berlin.