

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

FOR JOINT SUPPORT OF

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH TRAINING GROUPS (IRTGs)

BY

THE DEUTSCHE FORSCHUNGSGEMEINSCHAFT e.V. (DFG);
GERMANY

AND

THE INSTITUTE OF ATOMIC PHYSICS (IFA),
ROMANIA

1. Background

In line with the DFG and IFA (hereafter referred to as the “Parties”) Memorandum of Understanding signed on 10th August 2022, the two Parties hereby agree to cooperate by supporting German-Romanian **International Research Training Groups (IRTGs)** as described in the relevant DFG guidelines as well as this document. IRTGs allow for coordinated research and training of postgraduate (i.e. doctoral) students in both countries.

2. Description of IRTGs

IRTGs are structured research and training programmes that strive to strengthen bilateral partnerships through joint research, a joint qualification programme, cross-border supervision of doctoral students from partnering countries, and long-term coordinated and reciprocal exchange visits by doctoral students at respective partnering institutions. Their emphasis is to provide early career researchers with an opportunity to obtain doctoral degrees within the framework of a focused research programme and a structured training programme. IRTGs can only be established by academic or research institutions with the legal right to award doctoral degrees (hereafter referred to as “host institutions”).

3. Structure of the German-Romanian IRTGs

The German-Romanian IRTGs under this IFA-DFG agreement will be jointly supported as follows:

- 3.1. Applications are possible in all subject areas covered by IFA and DFG, particularly in physics and related research areas. Interdisciplinarity in joint projects is encouraged.
- 3.2. An IRTG is run by two small teams of professors, one in Germany and one in Romania. Each team has about 5 to 10 members with proven expertise both in the IRTG’s main research topic and in providing outstanding supervision to doctoral students. The participating researchers’ expertise at the two locations should be complementary and provide added value to the IRTG.
- 3.3. Each team of professors in an IRTG should be based at a single institution in Germany and Romania respectively. In convincingly justified cases, an IRTG may be proposed by more than two institutions.

- 3.4. The German and Romanian teams in an IRTG jointly formulate a high quality and coherent research and training programme to be implemented on both sides. The teams should have common research interests and objectives and these must be reflected in a common framework and joint projects.
- 3.5. IRTG Proposals may only be submitted to the Parties by the respective host institutions in Germany and Romania. For every IRTG, one member of the team on each side serves as spokesperson/Principal Investigator, being responsible for the proposal and the scientific coordination of the IRTG. This includes also responsibility for reporting to DFG and IFA, respectively.
- 3.6. The programme should provide for regular exchanges of academic staff and doctoral students for the purposes of joint research and training.
- 3.7. Doctoral students should spend a period of at least 6 months (and up to 1 year) in total during their PhD project at the respective partner institution for research and training, and each doctoral student should have a bilateral supervisory team.
- 3.8. Both DFG and IFA agree to fund, in parallel, about 10 to 15 doctoral researchers of the Research Training Group for the duration of the IRTG.

4. Support and Funding Model for German/Romanian IRTGs

- 4.1. Both DFG and IFA will provide funding for IRTG project-specific costs incurred by their respective host institution(s). DFG and IFA will advise applicants to ensure that appropriate financial arrangements for travel and hospitality are made and that the respective laws and regulations are followed (for costs incurred in Germany and borne by German institution(s): the respective state (Bundesland) travel expenses law, for costs incurred in Romania and borne by Romanian institution(s): the respective Romanian travel expenses law). In accordance with respective internal policies of DFG and IFA, funds are provided for the following activities:

- Funding for doctoral positions/fellowships,
- Project-specific funding for dissertation research projects (e.g. consumables),
- one or more longer-term, coordinated and reciprocal research visits to the respective partner institution for each doctoral student, with an overall duration of 6-12 months - both travel and subsistence costs are covered by DFG for the German cohort of doctoral researchers and by IFA for the Romanian cohort,

- Joint workshops, conferences and seminars - travel cost to the partner institution, accommodation and daily allowance will be covered by the sending Party, while local workshop expenses (e.g. conference room costs) will be covered by the hosting Party,
- Short-term visits, lectures and workshops by the research professors (i.e. supervisors) at the partner institution - both travel and subsistence costs are covered by DFG for the German partners and by IFA for the Romanian partners,
- Further types of funds according to the respective programme guidelines.

4.2. The host institutions are expected to supply the necessary core support, especially fully equipped work stations for doctoral students (office, laboratory space, etc.) and operating costs. The host institutions may provide the IRTG with in-kind support and/or additional funds from other sources.

5. Duration of Funding

German/Romanian IRTGs will be supported for a potential maximum of 9 years, divided into two funding periods, the first one being 5 years for DFG / 3+1+1 years for IFA, the second one being 4 years for DFG / 3+1 years for IFA. Continuation of funding after the first funding phase may only be granted on the basis of a successful renewal proposal.

6. Applications, Review and Decision Process

Both Parties will accept only joint proposals by German/Romanian institutions. All joint applications are to be prepared according to the guidelines for International Research Training Groups and will contain separate budget requests for the German and the Romanian host institution.

6.1. Establishment Proposals for German-Romanian IRTGs

German-Romanian host institutions will first submit a joint IRTG pre-proposal to DFG. Pre-proposals can be submitted any time.

If a pre-proposal is evaluated positively, the host institutions will be invited to submit a joint full proposal.

Invited full proposals shall be submitted in parallel, by the German host university to DFG, and by the Romanian coordinator/university to IFA. Submission must be in accordance with the guidelines and through the established submission systems of the respective funding organisation.

6.2. Renewal Proposals for German-Romanian IRTGs

Renewal proposals for a second funding period shall also be submitted in parallel, by the German host university to DFG and by the Romanian institution to IFA, according to the dates set and through the mechanisms defined by the Parties.

6.3. Review and decision process

DFG will evaluate the pre-proposal according to the established procedures. At least two written reviews will be requested for a pre-proposal. DFG will inform IFA on the outcome.

Full proposals and renewal proposals will also be evaluated separately by the Parties according to their own established procedures. The Parties will inform each other on the outcome.

It is agreed that both Parties will apply review criteria for IRTG proposals as specified in the respective DFG forms and guidelines. Additional criteria for the evaluation may be applied with prior consent from the respective other Party.

6.4. Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest

The Parties agree that all information on the review process will be kept confidential. The conflict of interest rules of both Parties will be applied. Should the rules of both Parties differ, the more restrictive requirements apply.

7. Reporting and Renewal

Funded programmes will provide annual financial reports on the usage of the funds to the Parties, according to the respective Party's rules and regulations. Renewal proposals shall be submitted according to the dates set by the Parties.

8. Intellectual Property Rights

The Parties have no claims on the intellectual property rights arising from the selected projects of the IRTGs. Rules and regulations regarding the results of work generated within the scope of the IRTG's (including inventions) shall be agreed upon between the scientific partners from the German and the Romanian sides prior to the funding of the specific IRTG.

9. Promotion of the Collaboration

Both Parties will actively promote the collaboration to eligible institutions and will deploy all appropriate measures for the information of hosts and the announcement of results.

10. Key Personnel

Each Party shall appoint a designated professional who shall be authorised to act as a primary contact person in respect of each Party's obligations in terms of this framework of cooperation, and who will be responsible for coordinating the partnership and for issuing all approvals and make all requests on behalf of each Party.

11. Disputes

The Parties shall settle all questions and disputes arising under these guidelines amicably by consultation and agreement.

12. Term, Termination

The implementation of these guidelines shall come into force upon signature thereof and will remain in force for a period of 10 years. It may be amended or renewed upon the mutual consent of the Parties. Amendments and renewals shall be made in writing only.

Either Party may terminate these guidelines any time prior to the lapse of the 10-year period by providing the other Party with a 6-months' written notice.

The amendment or termination of these guidelines will not affect activities already agreed upon and in progress at the time of the amendment or termination of these guidelines.

Head of Department, Coordinated
Programmes and Infrastructure

On behalf of Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V. (DFG),
Germany

Date: 18. August 2022

Head of Department, International
Cooperation

On behalf of the Institute of Atomic Physics
(IFA),
Romania

Date: 22.09.2022

Head of Division, Research Careers

On behalf of Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V. (DFG),
Germany

Date: 18. August 2022