

**Focus Area DynAge**  
Disease in Human Aging:  
Dynamics at the Level of Molecules,  
Individuals, and Society

**Information  
and  
Third Call for Applications 2014 (Internal Call)**

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## **Focus Area DynAge Third Call for Applications (Internal Call): More Seed Money for Interdisciplinary Consortia on Disease in Human Aging**

DynAge is now well underway in its mission to foster interdisciplinary research on disease in human aging that aims at high-level and prestigious external funding. To date, 17 interdisciplinary projects have received seed money during the first (12 projects) and second (2 continued funding, 5 new projects) rounds. In this third, internal call, DynAge asks for applications by larger-scale consortia composed of existing DynAge groups and their regional, national, and/or international collaboration partners.

The central aim of this call is to identify high-potential DynAge groups and encourage existing DynAge groups to merge into larger consortia. Successful consortia will be awarded with additional seed money (35.000 EUR each). Duration of funding will be from 01/2015 to 12/2015.

### **Core Criteria for Funding by DynAge**

***Successful applications for this 3<sup>rd</sup> round of DynAge funding will meet the following criteria:***

- (1) High quality and rigor of research.
- (2) Successful consortia integrate previously funded interdisciplinary DynAge groups (see below, *Scope of Consortia*) and should identify a broad and unifying research endeavor that builds on, extends, or integrates previous work funded by DynAge.
- (3) Investigation of aging-related dynamics of diseases and their consequences (see below, *Research Aims: Comparative Approach*).
- (4) Interdisciplinary approach and integration of at least two horizontal levels of analysis within the Focus Area's matrix of cooperation (see *Structures of Cooperation*; Figure 1)
- (5) Fit with at least one of the four central disease groups (see *Structures of Cooperation*; Figure 1)
- (6) Evidence of high potential to successfully attract third-party funding for a larger-scale research consortium (group members' publication, citation, and third-party funding record) and match with envisioned third-party funding program.
- (7) Applications of consortia promoting young or early career researchers (e.g. postdocs, junior professors) are explicitly invited.

***Research Aims: Comparative Approach.*** In contrast to other research networks that focus on disease and health in *old age*, DynAge promotes a *comparative approach*

*that contrasts different phases of the life span, to explore disease progression and treatment, individual management of illness, or associated societal, ethical, or public health issues. All parts of the human life span can be considered.*

**Scope of Consortia.** Consortia may consist of: (1) Merged DynAge project groups from the first and/or second rounds of funding. (2) High-potential large-scale DynAge groups from the first and/or second rounds of funding. Consortia should be headed by one FU- and one Charité-based principle investigator (PI) each. *All applying consortia are strongly encouraged to extend collaboration to other regional, national, and/or international colleagues.*

**Structures of Cooperation.** Cooperation within DynAge-funded interdisciplinary consortia should be organized along a network matrix with intersecting vertical and horizontal elements (see Figure 1). Vertical elements represent four groups of age-related diseases: **tumors, cardio-vascular disease, musculoskeletal diseases, and cognitive disorders/depression.** They are among the most relevant health challenges faced by aging societies and represent diseases for which expertise is available at CUB and FUB. The horizontal organization of this Focus Area entails three levels of analyses:

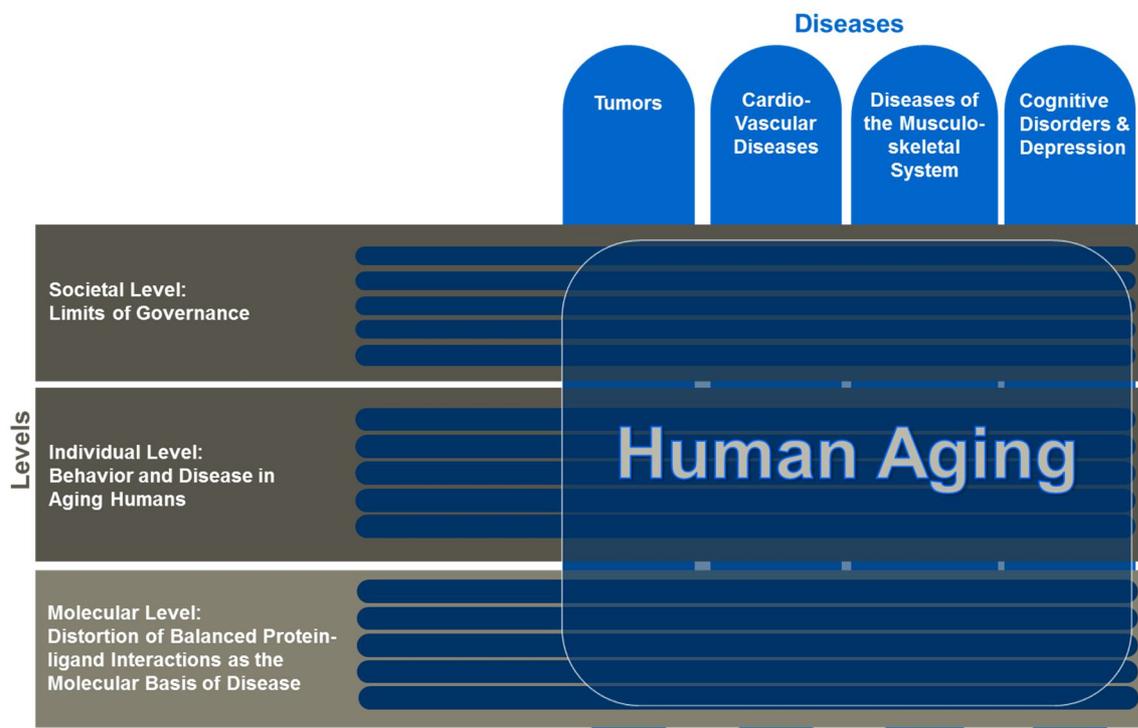
**(1) Molecular level.** Core disciplines include (but are not restricted to) biochemistry, molecular biology, chemistry, pharmaceutical sciences, or biocomputing. Major research themes comprise (among others): molecular profiling and characterization of distinct protein-ligand interactions involved in disease development and treatment; identification of common themes in molecular interaction dynamics; understanding of the molecular foundation of selected diseases and treatments; manipulation of protein interactions in the laboratory (e.g. by drugs or genetic mutants).

**(2) Individual level.** Core disciplines are concerned with the explanation and prediction of human behavior, cognition, and emotion as they relate to disease processes over the life span. They include (but are not restricted to) psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, philosophy, neuroscience, and clinical medicine. Major research themes to be addressed comprise (among others): Disease mechanisms, including behavioral, cognitive, and emotional mechanisms; individual disease management; co-regulation of disease-relevant behavior, cognition, and emotion by close social network members; interventions to change disease-related behavior, cognition, and emotion.

**(3) Societal level.** Core disciplines come from the social sciences and include (but are not restricted to) business and economics, public health, sociology, culture studies, ethnology, law, political sciences. Major research themes comprise (among others): Challenges of demographic change for societies in Germany and abroad; adjustments and new measures in health policy, social market economy, the organization of social security systems; impact of demographic shifts on the governance of societal health and well-being; coordination of reacting stakeholders; efficiency of "centralized governance approaches"; "Microfoundations of Change" i.e. upper- to lower-level path-dependencies determining the behavior of actors and contributing to the limits of governance; integrity, including aspects on lobbying and conflicts of interest.

One central criterion for successful application for DynAge funding is a clearly laid out structure of interdisciplinary cooperation entailing integration of at least two of three horizontal levels within the Focus Area’s matrix (Figure 1) and teaming up experts from the listed core disciplines with biomedical experts representing the four central disease groups: tumors (e.g., oncology), cardio-vascular disease (e.g., cardiology, nephrology), diseases of the musculoskeletal system (e.g., orthopedics, radiology, rheumatology, inflammation), and cognitive disorders & depression (e.g., psychiatry, neurology, pain management). For further characterization of the core-disciplines and research areas within the Focus Area’s matrix of cooperation, please visit [www.fu-berlin.de/dynage](http://www.fu-berlin.de/dynage).

**Figure 1. DynAge: Structure of Cooperation**



## Application and Funding

**Who can submit an application?** Consortia of previously and/or currently funded interdisciplinary DynAge project groups. Enlisting of regional, national, and/or international collaborators is strongly encouraged.

**What will the application look like?** Please, submit proposals in English, **use the provided form** and follow the outlined instructions.

Application forms are divided into 4 sections:

- (A) Consortium overview and information on applicants
- (B) Requested funding
- (C) General References
- (D) CVs of all applicants

**When is the application due?** Submit your proposal electronically by **31 October 2014**.

**Where should the application be sent?** Please, send your application electronically (as a pdf-document) to the Focus Area Project Coordinator (→ [dynage@fu-berlin.de](mailto:dynage@fu-berlin.de)).

**What will the review process look like?** Selection of successful applications will be guided by a peer-review process organized by the Focus Area's coordination group. (1) Members of the coordination group as well as external colleagues will be invited to rate the submitted proposals along the above outlined criteria for funding, using a scoring system. Special care will be taken to avoid conflicts of interest, e.g. by excluding co-authors of current proposals from funding decisions. (2) Depending on the number of submissions, applicants of projects that received high ratings may additionally be invited to present their proposals to members of the DynAge's selection committee (i.e., coordination group and invited external colleagues) at a meeting that is to take place within the first two weeks of November 2014. The exact date, time, and place of the meeting will be communicated in due time. Funding decisions will be based on outcomes of this meeting.

**When will funding decisions be announced?** Applying interdisciplinary research consortia will be informed of the outcome by 14 November 2014.

**What is the range of funding? What can funds be used for?** Following the selection process, successful applications will be awarded 35.000 EUR per consortium for one year. This seed money should facilitate the preparation of applications for further third-party funding and can be used for pilot work, reviews, proposal preparation, and others.

Staff and/or consumables can be funded for a maximum of one year (01/2015-12/2015). As funds will be awarded to interdisciplinary research consortia that are composed of members of both DynAge host institutions, FUB and CUB, groups are encouraged to *name two principal investigators, (i.e., one member of the FUB and one of the CUB)*. Within the third round of funding, however, only FU PIs can be responsible for the administration of funds on behalf of the group.

**Funding period.** The funding period will start 01 January 2015 and end 31 December 2015.

**Reporting.** DynAge-funded interdisciplinary consortia will be required to report on the current state of their research project during the 2015 Focus Area Workshop (date, times, and place are to be announced). Full project reports will be required at the end of the funding period (31 December 2015).

## Further Information

For further information on the Focus Area DynAge, please, visit our website at [www.fu-berlin.de/dynage](http://www.fu-berlin.de/dynage) or contact:

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