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Research Planning and Institutional Logics – The Helmholtz Perspective

The Helmholtz Association represents the largest non-university research institution in Germany financed by the Federal Government and the Federal States (90%/10%). Overall, 18 Helmholtz centers are collaborating in six research areas, i.e. Earth and Environment, Structure of Matter, Energy, Aeronautics, Air and Space, Key Technologies and Health. Scientific work is focusing on major scientific challenges by applying long-term oriented research as well as operation and development of complex infrastructure and large-scale facilities.

Major strategic processes at Helmholtz include (i) those in the context of program-oriented funding; (ii) the Helmholtz portfolio process; and (iii) the roadmap process of research infrastructures and large research facilities. Based on the results of these strategies, which are continuously discussed between the Helmholtz Association, external specialists and the corresponding federal ministries, new research programs are established every five years. These programs undergo a strong and competitive international peer review focusing not only on various parameters of scientific quality but, additionally, on strategic relevance. The research strategy over the five year period is not rigid but can be adapted according to scientific developments. Flexibility is also gained by the Impuls- and Networking Fund of the President of the Helmholtz Association, allowing the initiation of strategically important projects, which might be considered for institutional funding at a later stage. This funding tool is frequently used to support cooperations with external partners, in particular universities, and to promote education or the recruitment of young researchers from particular disciplines.

The balance of strategic autonomy and influence of ministries in the context of Helmholtz research planning as well as *pros and cons* of the strategic processes described will be discussed in more detail during the workshop.