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Research Strategies and Networking: The German Government's Excellence Initiative

Dr. Beate Sandler
Heidelberg University
Central University Administration
Project Office Excellence Initiative



In 2005 the German federal and state governments agreed on an initiative to promote top-level research in Germany:

The Excellence Initiative

Objectives:

- International Visibility
- improving international Competitiveness
- Identifying strengths (Excellence)
- strengthening science in the long run
- raising the profile of German universities
- Networking



The German Excellence Initiative First (2006 – 2012) & Second Programme Phase (2012 – 2017):

Excellence Initiative I

funding period: 6 years

Starting: 2006 / 2007 – 2012

total budget: 1.9 billion €

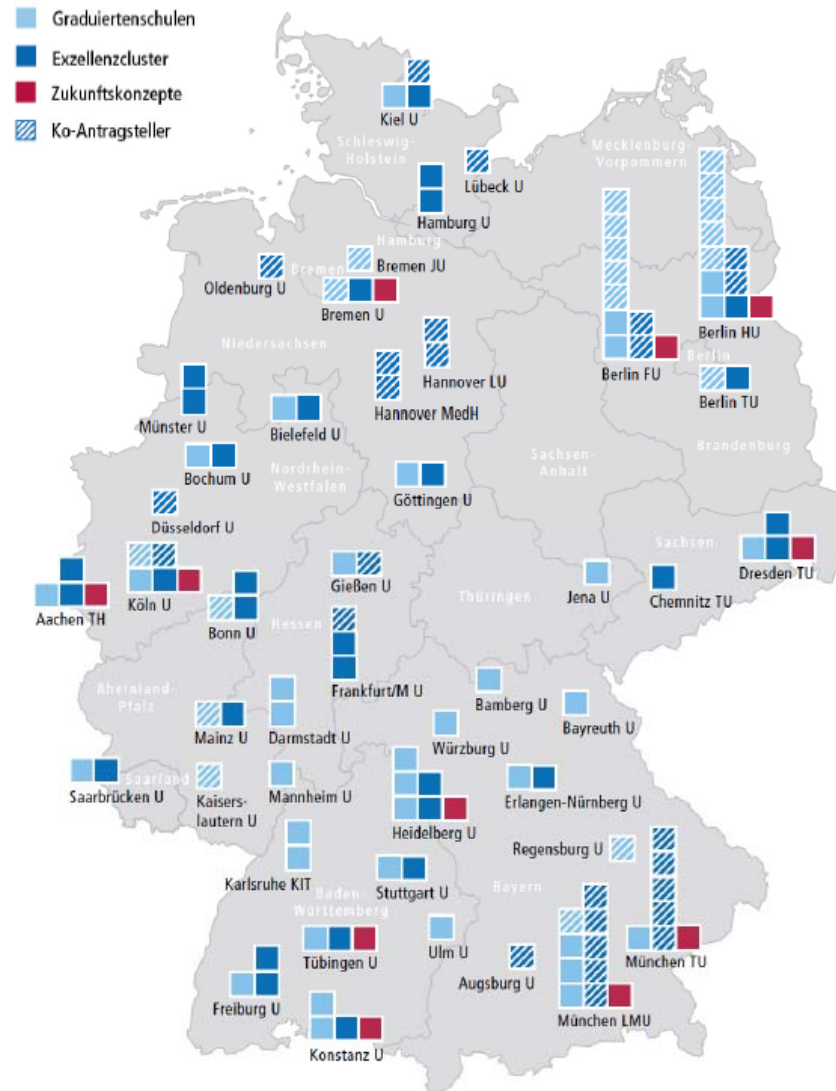
Excellence Initiative II

5 years

2012 - 2017

2.7 billion €

Entscheidungen in der Exzellenzinitiative (15. Juni 2012)





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The Excellence Initiative at Heidelberg University

Successful Projects in both Programme Phases:

Institutional Strategy “Realising the Potential of a Comprehensive University”

Clusters of Excellence:

- Cellular Networks
- Asia and Europe in a Global Context

Graduate Schools:

- Heidelberg Graduate School of Fundamental Physics (HGSFP)
 - Hartmut Hoffmann-Berling International Graduate School of Molecular and Cellular Biology (HBIGS)
 - Heidelberg Graduate School of Mathematical and Computational Methods for the Sciences (HGS MathComp)
- ➔ in total approx. 320 million € additional money for research (2006 – 2017)



First funding phase: **EFFECTS**

- **intense communication and cooperation** in the whole university → new movement and spirit
- many **new jobs** for academics and non-academics
- **new investments** as laboratories, core facilities, buildings etc.
- rising **national / international visibility** (co-operations in research and with enterprises)
- **improvements of cooperation** with other research institutions
- dynamic of **internal & external reforms**
- **profits for teaching**





First funding phase: **EFFECTS** *New Structures*

Examples:

- new interdisciplinary centres in the natural sciences and humanities (e.g. HCE / COS / CTS)
- continued decentralisation of budgetary units
- network for research-oriented teaching – 43 structured doctoral programmes
- 81 joint appointments with non-university research partners





First funding phase: **EFFECTS** *Successful Recruitment*

Examples:

- 163 professors newly appointed
- 24 top-academics retained
- 24 ERC Grants
- 10 ERC grant holders are retained or recruited colleagues (since 2007)





First funding phase: **EFFECTS**

4 Interdisciplinary “Fields of Focus”:

FoF 1: Molecular and cellular basis of life

FoF 2: Structure and pattern formation in the material world

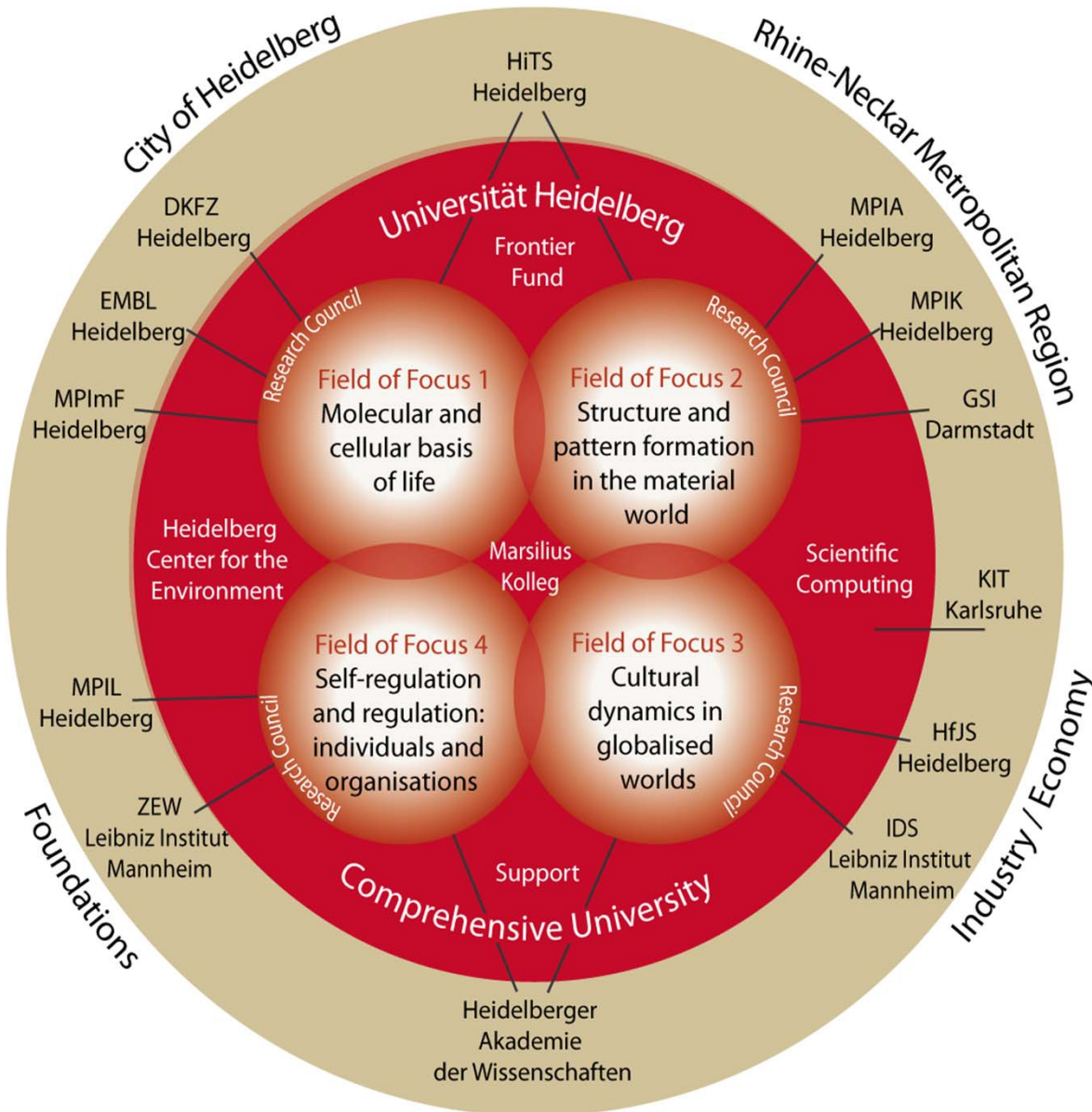
FoF 3: Cultural dynamics in globalised worlds

FoF 4: Self-regulation and regulation: individuals and organisations

- FoFs are flexible, research-driven structures supporting the joint pursuit of fundamental research questions
- They build upon strong individual disciplines. Their disciplines have theoretical and methodological commonalities and pursue joint scientific objectives
- Their disciplines communicate and cooperate with each other and with non-university partners

➔ The 4 FoFs build the centre of the Institutional Strategy in the 2nd phase

Synopsis of the University's Institutional Strategy





Institutional Strategy – Main Objectives

1. Strengthening disciplines
2. Creating new structures that allow a sustained interdisciplinary discourse within the University
3. Networking with external partners
4. Promoting young researchers (early responsibility in research and teaching, improved career models)
5. Internationalization



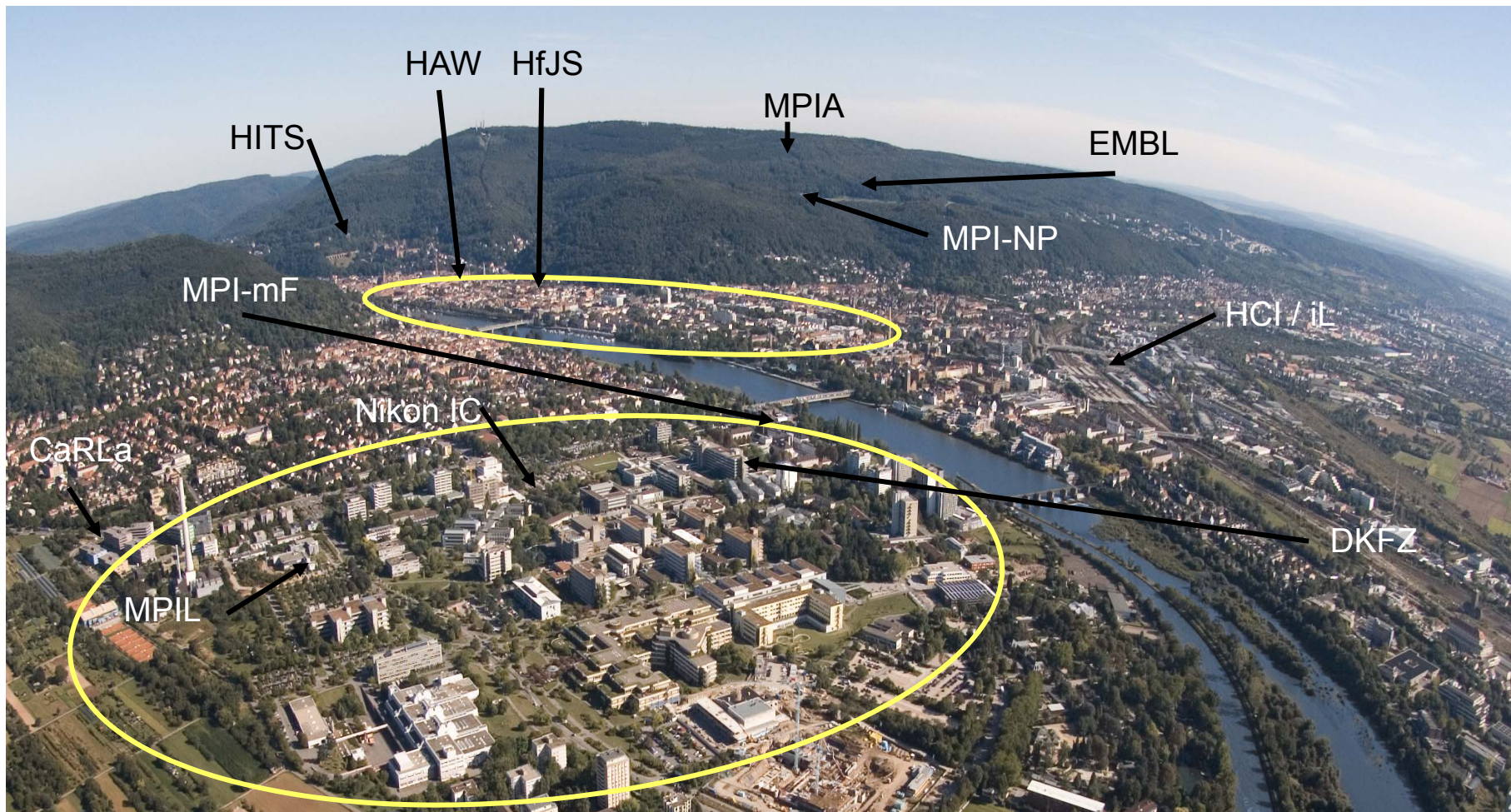
Institutional Strategy – Main Measures

- 1.- 4. Fields of Focus (FoF):** Networking on special (wide) research themes
- 5. Collaboration and integration of effort between FoFs**
- 6. Networking with external partners**
- 7. Strengthening international exchange**
- 8. Optimising the general conditions**

Heidelberg University Centre of an outstanding Research Area



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Cooperation with Industry - Some Examples



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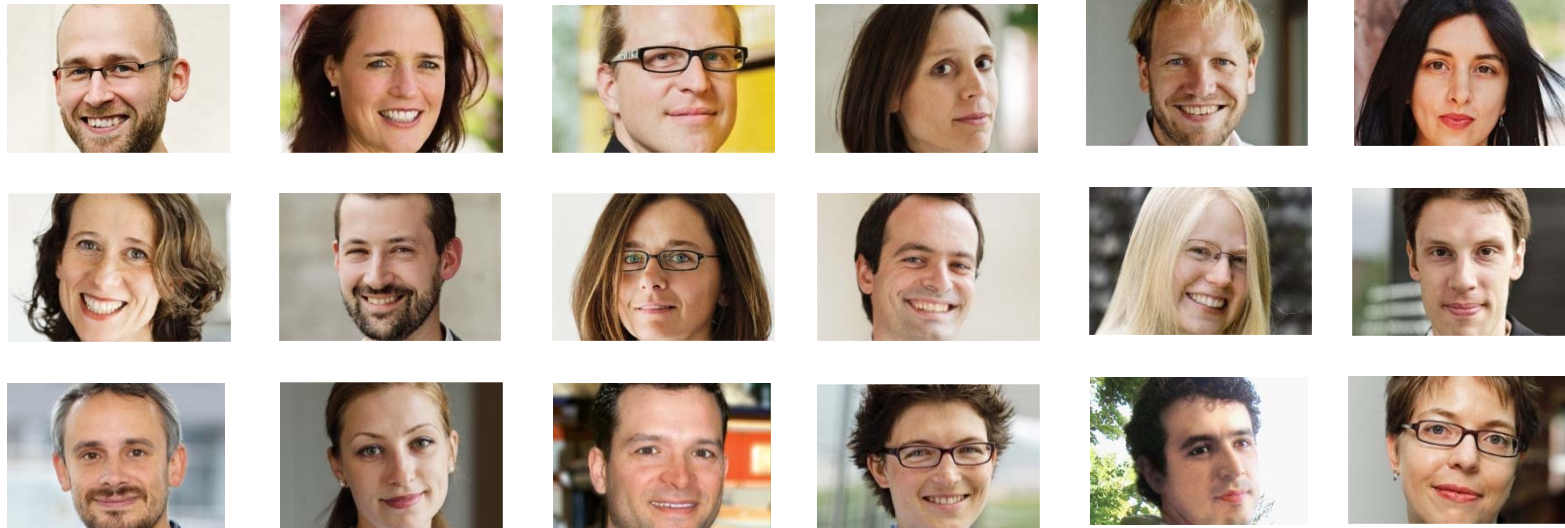


- **Catalysis Research Laboratory (CaRLa)**
“IoC” cooperation with BASF (since 2006)
- **Heidelberg Collaboratory for Image Processing (HCI)** – “IoC” project
established in the context of the ExIni together with several companies, e.g. Bosch, Sony
- **InnovationLab GmbH (iL)**
cooperation of the Uni HD & MA with BASF, Merck, Freudenberg & Co., Heidelberg Printing Machines, Roche Diagnostics, and SAP
- **Nikon Imaging Center (NIC)**
a light microscopy facility in cooperation with Nikon GmbH
- **BMBF-Leading Edge Cluster "BioRN – Cell-based & Molecular Medicine in the Rhine-Neckar Region**



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...and many excellent young researchers!



THANK YOU!