Website address:
https://www.gesundheitsindustrie-bw.de/en/article/press-release/dieter-schwarz-foundation-provides-long-term-funding-application-oriented-basic-research-and-innovative-talent-pool

Dieter Schwarz Foundation provides long-term funding for application-oriented basic research and innovative talent pool

Together with the Max Planck Society, the foundation promotes pioneering research and talent in Heilbronn.

The Max Planck Society and the Dieter Schwarz Foundation (DSS) have embarked on a groundbreaking initiative. On March 13, 2025, they signed an agreement through which the foundation will support an innovative approach by the Max Planck Institute for Medical Research in Heidelberg to translate basic research findings into practical applications. As part of this endeavour, two new departments of the institute will be established in Heilbronn. Additionally, the Dieter Schwarz Foundation's funding will facilitate the long-term development of the Max Planck Schools, a joint programme involving German universities and non-university research institutions. The pilot phase will end in September 2025 and has so far been supported by the federal government as part of a project funding programme.

Both projects will sustainably strengthen cutting-edge research and international graduate support. In addition, the Dieter Schwarz Foundation in Heilbronn will finance construction undertakings for the institute's expansion, the Max Planck Schools, and a new meeting centre. Max Planck President Patrick Cramer: "The support from the Dieter Schwarz Foundation marks a significant milestone for the Max Planck Society. We have never before received such substantial funding from a foundation. This support opens up excellent development opportunities for both the MPI for Medical Research and the Max Planck Schools. As with all our projects—whether publicly or privately funded—it is crucial to us that the Max Planck Society maintains full autonomy over all scientific and strategic decisions."

Reinhold Geilsdörfer, CEO of the Dieter Schwarz Foundation, observes: "The competition for top talent is becoming increasingly intense. Given the shortage of qualified professionals and the challenges of the future, Germany needs highly skilled experts in the medium and long term. For Heilbronn and the surrounding region, this new initiative with Max Planck is a valuable addition to the existing ecosystem of science, education, and entrepreneurship."

Expansion of the MPI for Medical Research in Heilbronn

Scientists at the Max Planck Institute for Medical Research aim to study and synthetically replicate biological systems—such as proteins, cells, organoids, and skin models—with unprecedented precision across disciplines. Their goal is to uncover fundamental insights that could lead to new applications, particularly in immunology and personalised therapies.

With support from the Dieter Schwarz Foundation, the institute, headquartered in Heidelberg, is expanding to Heilbronn, adding two new research departments—one relocating and the other newly established. The Bildungscampus in Heilbronn is already home to the Technical University of Munich and ETH Zurich, and an innovation park for AI is currently in development.

"Education, research, and entrepreneurship are fundamental, interconnected pillars of modern society. In Heilbronn, the Max Planck Society has found a uniquely dynamic ecosystem that perfectly supports the Max Planck Schools, the Max Planck Institute for Medical Research, and our FIRST in TRANSLATION initiative, which prepares fundamental research discoveries for entrepreneurial application," explains Joachim Spatz, Managing Director at the MPI for Medical Research, who is relocating to Heilbronn with his department.

"The Heilbronn Bildungscampus, for example, provides an excellent environment for applied AI, allowing us to significantly advance our pioneering work in biomedical research. Our goal is to analyse complex biological systems at multiple levels, simulate them computationally, synthetically recreate them, and explore potential applications that are as yet unknown to our society. By seamlessly integrating basic research with real-world applications, we aim to accelerate the transfer of scientific discoveries into practice."

Further development of the Max Planck Schools

The funding provided by the Dieter Schwarz Foundation also enables the expansion of the Max Planck Schools, a joint

graduate programme currently involving 26 German universities and 35 non-university research institutions, into a comprehensive career development initiative. At the three existing schools—Cognition, Matter to Life, and Photonics—ambitious doctoral students from around the world are mentored by leading scientists in these fields.

Thanks to the foundation's commitment, additional opportunities, such as international partnerships, can now be developed. "The support of the Dieter Schwarz Foundation provides the Max Planck Schools with long-term stability," says Walter Rosenthal, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). "It allows participating institutions—both universities and non-university research centres—to continue exploring innovative ways to support exceptionally talented graduates. The Max Planck Schools uniquely integrate research excellence across institutions and locations, forming a highly attractive international network. This makes a vital contribution to ensuring Germany's future as a global leader in science and research."

About the Dieter Schwarz Foundation

The aim of the Max Planck Schools – A Joint Graduate Programme of German Universities and Research Organizations is to attract promising PhD students from around the world and to train them in such a way that they will make a long-term contribution to a future worth living. This is to be achieved through cross-locational and cross-organisational collaboration between leading scientists in Germany. The programme draws on the diversity of the German research system, the resources of its strong partners and distributed excellence in the pursuit of academic excellence and personal development for both learners and teachers.

The key partners of the pilot phase, which has been running since 2018, are the Max Planck Society, the German Rectors' Conference, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the DWI Aachen, the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, the Georg August University of Göttingen, the Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf, the Humboldt University of Berlin, the KIT, the TU Munich, the University of Heidelberg and the University of Leipzig.

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Further information

Dr. Christina Beck
Press officer
Phone: +49 (0) 89 2108 1275
E-mail: christina.beck(at)gv.mpg.de
Administrative Headquarters of the Max Planck Society

- Max Planck Institute for Medical Research