

Translation of the German-language press release issued on 2 May 2018 by the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation, the State of Rhineland-Palatinate, and the University of Mainz, Germany

106 million euros toward research excellence: Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate jointly fund Institute of Molecular Biology in Mainz

Mainz, 2 May 2018: The non-profit Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate will fund the Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB) at the University of Mainz with a further 106 million euros from 2020 to 2027. The Foundation will contribute about 54 million euros and the state 52 million euros. This was announced in Mainz today by Malu Dreyer, minister-president of Rhineland-Palatinate, and Christoph Boehringer, chairman of the executive board of the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation.

“Thanks to the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation’s first donation of 100 million euros nine years ago, the Institute of Molecular Biology was able to begin its scientific success story. Today, the Institute is well on its way to the top of international life science research and to becoming a scientific showpiece of Rhineland-Palatinate. The State government already supported the institute’s establishment by financing the construction of its new building with about 45 million euros. I am convinced that this outstanding initiative will enable the Institute to continue to achieve impressive research results. It will thus help researchers to delve deeper into the processes within cells and understand their implications for our health,” said Minister-President Malu Dreyer.

“We are committed to excellence in scientific research in Mainz and in Germany and understand our involvement as a service to society. The continued aim of our initiative with the IMB and the University of Mainz is to support excellent life science research and to attract internationally outstanding scientists to Mainz. We can only succeed in this by offering them academic freedom and the best possible conditions for their research. This is why, with the addition of this new initiative, we are providing the University of Mainz with more than 200 million euros in funding until 2027. We are delighted with how quickly the IMB has turned itself into an internationally recognized centre for excellent basic research in the life sciences since its opening in 2011. And we want to continue this success story together with the State government,” declares Christoph Boehringer, chairman of the executive board of the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation.

In light of this pending joint support by the Foundation and the State, a contractual agreement was drawn up between the State, the University of Mainz, the IMB, and the Foundation, which is now published online. The new agreement’s regulations concerning academic freedom are more explicitly formulated than in the prior agreement. It also focuses on ensuring that the IMB continues to offer the best research conditions possible, in order for it to attract further excellent scientists. The joint appointment of IMB scientific directors is regulated in a separate agreement, signed solely by the University of Mainz and the IMB. This agreement follows the recommendations of the joint science conference of the federal and state governments of Germany (Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz – GWK). A

third agreement, also to be signed solely by the University and the IMB, will formalize, for example, the joint use of capital scientific equipment.

“With the IMB, Mainz possesses a successful and non-profit research centre in the life sciences. The large amount of third-party funding that the Institute has obtained underscores its excellence. The new agreements will also comply with stringent academic freedom requirements. The IMB also continues to enjoy optimal research conditions, as offered at other renowned research institutions, such as the Max Planck Institutes. All of this puts it in an excellent competitive position, which will make this institute in Mainz highly attractive to scientists from all over the world,” Prof Dr Konrad Wolf, science minister of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate.

“This new – and once again – very generous support of the Institute of Molecular Biology will allow the success story to continue – of Mainz renewing itself as a place for strong and internationally competitive research in the life sciences. My expressed gratitude therefore goes to the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation and the government of Rhineland-Palatinate,” explains Prof Dr Georg Krausch, president of the University of Mainz. “This funding will support the project-related expansion of our cutting-edge research, especially the many scientific intersections of molecular biology with the established areas of research at the University itself, as well as at the University Medical Center.”

The IMB serves as the nucleus for reorienting the Faculty of Biology at the University of Mainz, which has also been assisted by the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation through a donation of 50 million euros, beginning in 2013. Since 2017 and in the favourable context of a generational shift within the Faculty (18 of its 23 chairs are currently in the process of being filled with new appointments), the Faculty has been concentrating on three main areas: organismic and molecular evolutionary biology; developmental biology and neurobiology; and molecular physiology. “On several occasions already, the IMB’s strong international reputation has assisted us in attracting excellent minds to Mainz,” remarked the University’s president, Prof Dr Krausch.

This strengthening of the region’s scientific profile is being accompanied by the University’s addition of two modern biology research buildings, whose construction was financially supported by the State of Rhineland-Palatinate. In June 2018, the first building, BioZentrum I, will be officially opened, and a ground-breaking ceremony will be held simultaneously for the second building, BioZentrum II. These two new buildings will offer appropriate working conditions to the newly appointed professors who will need excellently equipped, modern laboratory facilities, and scientific instruments. The new buildings lie in close proximity to the IMB and the other biomedical research institutes of the University Medical Center, thus creating a life sciences district on the campus of the University of Mainz. The short distances between the different institutes will foster close cooperation between the various institutions’ scientists and further enhance the reputation of life sciences research in Mainz.

“The IMB is still a young institute. But thanks to the funding of the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate, we’ve been able to develop very quickly and become an internationally recognized research institute. We are de-lighted that the Foundation and the State have once again supported the IMB so generously. The new funding is both a major recognition of the Institute’s accomplishments thus far and a great vote of confidence in its future,” says Prof Dr Christof Niehrs, scientific and founding director of the IMB. “This unprecedented

financial support provides our scientists with the freedom to pursue their self-defined goals, as well as the optimal conditions to successfully conclude ambitious projects. This will further enhance the Mainz campus's international appeal.”

Boehringer Ingelheim Stiftung

The Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization committed to the promotion of the medical, biological, chemical, and pharmaceutical sciences. It was established in 1977 by Hubertus Liebrecht (1931–1991), a member of the shareholder family of the company Boehringer Ingelheim. With its Perspectives Programme “Plus 3” and its Exploration Grants, the Foundation supports independent junior group leaders. It also endows the internationally renowned Heinrich Wieland Prize, as well as awards for up-and-coming scientists. In addition, the Foundation is donating a total of 154 million euros (from 2009 to 2027) to the University of Mainz for the Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB). Since 2013, the Foundation has been providing a further 50 million euros for the development of the life sciences at the University of Mainz.
www.bistiftung.de.

Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH

The Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH (IMB) is a centre of excellence in the life sciences that was established in 2011 on the campus of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU). Research at IMB is focused on three cutting-edge areas: epigenetics, developmental biology, and genome stability. The Institute is a prime example of successful collaboration between a private foundation and government: The Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation committed 100 million euros to be disbursed over a period of 10 years to cover the operating costs of research at IMB, while the State of Rhineland-Palatinate provided approximately 50 million euros for the construction of a state-of-the-art building. For more information about IMB, please visit www.imb.de.

The agreements are only available in German, but a fact sheet summarising the most salient points is available here.

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