

Cluster of Excellence "Balance of the Microverse"

Jena's proposal to be funded in the Excellence Strategy

September 27, 2018



Friedrich Schiller University Jena (Germany) has been awarded funding for a Clusters of Excellence. As the selection committee in Bonn announced today, the research cluster 'Balance of the Microverse' is among the 57 successful clusters that will be funded for the next seven years by the German Excellence Strategy. The Cluster of Excellence 'Balance of the Microverse' brings together Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Jena University Hospital and non-university research institutes. ILRS faculty member Axel Brakhage is the spokesperson of the cluster, and many more faculty members are participating. This is the first time that Jena has gained funding for two Clusters of Excellence; in 2007, the Excellence Graduate School 'Jena School for Microbial Communication' was among the winners.

Cluster of Excellence 'Balance of the Microverse'

From antibiotic-resistant bacteria to contaminated soils: society is facing huge challenges, which it is important to solve. The researchers of the Cluster of Excellence 'Balance of the Microverse' in Jena are making a significant contribution to this work. The natural world is characterised by complex communities of microorganisms – the microbiomes. These have a stabilising influence on organisms and the environment, that is to say the health of humans, animals and plants, as well as the fertility of soils or water quality. There is already considerable knowledge about the composition of these microbiomes. In contrast, research on the functions and dynamics of such systems is still in its infancy. The aim of the research is to discover the overarching principles that govern interactions between microbial communities. The key challenges are to find out which factors stabilise such systems and how humans can intervene in a targeted fashion to repair a microbiome that has lost its equilibrium. The research programme is developing further the topic studied by the Excellence Graduate School 'Jena School for Microbial Communication' and four existing Collaborative Research Centres, both as regards content and methods.

“We are of course very pleased that our commitment over recent years has been given the Excellence seal of approval, allowing us to take our place in the highest ranks of research,” says Prof. Axel Brakhage, spokesperson of the Microverse cluster. Researchers from all the participating disciplines and institutes have come together to create a fantastic team. “The clarification of the function of microbiomes will open up entirely new ways of preventing and treating diseases, as well as protecting the environment.”



Further information: www.microverse-cluster.de