



The cover illustration shows a simplified model of the human lysozyme. This enzyme is part of the innate immune system of animals, but is also found in plants, fungi, bacteria and bacteriophages. BIF fellow Anne Dhulesia is currently investigating the thermal unfolding of human lysozyme at the molecular level – see page 32 for more information.

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LIFE FROM THE LAB

The term 'synthetic biology' is on everyone's lips these days, but it means different things to different people. While techniques based on a combination of engineering and molecular biology may give rise to entirely new forms of technology, creating new life from scratch has not been achieved – yet. Page 8

FELLOWS

PROJECTS In March 2011, the Board of Trustees of the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds met in Heidesheim, Germany, to discuss 43 applications preselected from the 138 applications originally sent to the secretariat. The limited funds available meant that a considerable number of excellent applications had to be turned down. The board approved 17 grants and all 17 fellowships were taken up. Page 13

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BIF fellows participated in the SOLA relay race in Zurich, Switzerland. Page 38

THE ART OF COMMUNICATING SCIENCE

BIF fellows met in Lautrach, Germany, and Cold Spring Harbor, US, to enhance their communication skills. Page 40

A BIF FELLOW'S GUIDE TO ... LAUSANNE

PhD fellow Maria Rompf from Lausanne guides you around the city. Page 42

WHO'S WHO AT BIF

BIF team member Dr Sabine Achten answers the BIF questionnaire. Page 43

FELLOWSHIPS The Board of Trustees of the Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds includes six renowned scientists and, as a permanent guest, a representative of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation). Their expert judgment characterizes the work of the foundation. The trustees meet three times annually to decide on the allocation of PhD fellowships. In March 2011 they came together in Heidesheim, Germany, to discuss 43 applications pre-selected from the 138 submissions originally sent to the secretariat. The limited funds available meant that a considerable number of excellent applications had to be turned down. The board approved 17 grants and all 7 fellowships were taken up.

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RESULTS The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds does not intervene in the scientific work of its fellowship holders who, together with their supervisors, decide whether new findings should make them alter their original aims. The extent to which intentions and results correspond at the end of the fellowship is demonstrated in the final report from the fellowship holders. Here we present a synopsis of their work and their publications.

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THE FOUNDATION The Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds (BIF) is a public foundation – an independent, not-for-profit institution for the exclusive and direct promotion of basic research in biomedicine. The foundation pays particular attention to fostering junior scientists. From the start it has provided its fellowship holders with more than just monthly bank transfers: seminars, events and personal support have nurtured the development of a world-wide network of current and former fellows.

SOLA RELAY RACE IN ZURICH

BIF fellows from Switzerland and Germany participated in the SOLA relay race in Zurich, Switzerland 38

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