

The aim of the Priority Program 1144 (Schwerpunktprogramm 1144 or "SPP") is to carry out a multi-disciplinary, multi-segment scale study of the mid-ocean spreading system in the Atlantic. For this work two areas (15°N and 4-11°S) have been selected. The program has two particularly highly innovative features:

- The integrated study of pre-defined areas by groups covering the highly disparate fields of petrology, volcanology, geodynamics, geophysics, hydrothermalism, microbiology, macrobiology, oceanography, water chemistry and convection modelling
- The use of a state-of-the-art remotely-operated vehicle (ROV) for precise, well-located sampling and observation of the seafloor.

In this proposal we seek funding for the infrastructure necessary to make the SPP function and to get the most value out of the individual projects. These consist of three distinct components: (1) a coordination office to act as an interface between the various research groups, coordinate ship time proposals, workshops etc. and to link the SPP into the wide InterRidge community; (2) the necessary equipment to enable the ROV (presently configured for work in the water column) to function as a work base for all sea-going projects (high-resolution cameras, floodlights, equipment docking bay, transponder location system); (3) database management to provide all members of the SPP with all information available from the areas being studied and to provide a lasting record of the results of the SPP.