

Bilateral Research Collaboration with Asia 2021-2024

2023 Special Call for Applied Research Partnership Grants with East and Southeast Asia Guidelines

Background

In 2020 the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) renewed the Leading House (LH) mandate to ETH Zurich for bilateral collaboration with partner institutions in Asia. In the current phase 2021 - 2024, one single bilateral programme covers the entire East and Southeast Asia region. All activities and instruments in this phase build strongly on the activities, outcomes and experiences from the previous phases. An additional important element for this phase of the bilateral programme is fostering innovation and the application of research results to economy and society.

Goals and objectives

The **2023 Special Call for Applied Research Partnership Grants** is a special call that supports **applied** research projects with collaborating institutions in **China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, South Korea, Taiwan and ASEAN member states**¹. The collaboration can be based on a new partnership or on an existing partnership between researchers and scientists affiliated to a Swiss institution and researchers affiliated to an Asian institution.

The goal of this instrument is to allow researchers to conduct feasibility studies or pilot projects in order to apply for grants from other funding agencies. **Applied Research Partnership Grants** can fund the preparation of a joint project proposal for submission to other funding agencies (e.g. national funding agencies or EU funding schemes)² or research projects to develop long-term partnerships between two institutions or research groups. Activities to intensify joint teaching or curriculum development are also eligible for this grant.

Eligibility

The call is open to **all** scientific disciplines and fields of research, including social sciences and humanities. The call aims at strengthening **applied** research collaborations.

Professors, senior scientists and postdoctoral researchers of Swiss federal and cantonal universities, universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education, as well as public research institutes, are eligible to apply³. The Switzerland-based scientist is the main applicant (Principal Investigator).

Note to applicants from UAS/UTE: UAS/UTE staff with research responsibility (group leaders, researchers with 5+ years of experience) and in equivalent functions are eligible to apply. If in doubt or in case you are not sure whether your position is eligible to act as a Principle Investigator (PI), please email elise.nardin@sl.ethz.ch.

¹ ASEAN member states: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

² Indicate in the proposal the call and agency the research team plans to submit the proposal to.

³ Eligible institutions, see [here](#).

The Asian-based partner must be a scientist affiliated with a university or a public research institute from one of the partner countries. The collaborating partner must hold a faculty or senior scientist position or a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or equivalent) with several years of research experience.

Asian-based researchers interested in acting as co-applicants should contact their Switzerland-based peers.

Partnership

The mutual commitment of the scientists in both countries will be considered as an indicator for the strength of the partnership. This includes commitment of funds and in-kind resources by all involved partners.

The KFPE Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships⁴ shall be used as a guideline for the project process.

Funding and budgeting

The maximum grant sum is **25,000 CHF**. The grant will be disbursed in two instalments: 80% after signing the grant contract and 20% after approval of the final report.

A detailed budget must be submitted with the project proposal. Budgeted expenses must be justified and related to the proposed research activities. A financial contribution of each partner is expected and must be made explicit in cash and in-kind.

The **Applied Research Partnership Grant** does not cover salary costs. However, there are two exceptions.

1. Partial salary costs can be granted to the author of a joint proposal for a larger project to be submitted to a funding agency (salary costs cannot be covered for the Switzerland-based Principal Investigator and the Asia-based main co-applicant).
2. **Only for applicants from UAS/UTE:** Up to 20% of the requested grant can be budgeted for work-related institutional costs. This covers time dedicated to the project by staff in Swiss institution(s) (person-hours). The work-related institutional costs cannot be used for the work done by the Switzerland-based PI and cannot be used by partners based at collaborating institutions outside of Switzerland.⁵

Application

The main applicant (PI) must be employed at a Swiss university of applied sciences, university of teacher education, a federal or cantonal university, or a public research institute. Researchers of all nationalities are eligible to apply as main applicant.

The main applicant must apply to the Leading House Asia at ETH Zurich. The submission of the application is done [online](#):

1. Submission of the application details via the online application form.
2. Upload of the research proposal including the requested appendices in **one single pdf** document via the online application form.

Applications that do not follow the compulsory two steps, and/nor respect the one single pdf document guideline **will be automatically dismissed**.

⁴ https://kfpe.scnat.ch/en/11_principles_7_questions/uuid/i/13beb0f7-4780-5967-a257-bd6cc3d5e424-A_Guide_for_Transboundary_Research_Partnerships_3rd_edition_-_2018

⁵ The objective of work-related institutional costs is to facilitate equal opportunities to researchers of all institutions of higher education and to reduce obstacles in bilateral research and innovation cooperation. This specifically applies for institutions where research activities depend largely on external funding (UAS & UTE).

Timeline

Call launch:	1 November 2023
Deadline for submission:	31 January 2024
Evaluation and funding decision:	February - March 2024
Notification:	End of March 2024
Project start (earliest):	1 July 2024
Project start (latest):	30 Sept 2024
Project duration:	Up to 12 months

Evaluation and selection

Applications will be assessed by an evaluation panel. The evaluation is based on the following criteria:

- Scientific and technological merit of the anticipated outcomes
- Potential for long-term collaboration and follow-up activities
- Originality and feasibility of the proposed activity
- Expertise and complementarities of the partner laboratories/institutes and the applicants
- Contributions by all involved partners, including funding and in-kind contributions
- Promotion of early-career and female researchers

Priority will be given to highly competitive applications from researchers of universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education.

Independent reviewers

Please indicate in the online application form **three** independent reviewers. In order to prevent any conflict of interest, the suggested reviewers should not have collaborated with the applicants nor with her/his team members in the past, nor be affiliated at the same research institution. The reviewers are preferably located in Switzerland, in exceptional cases they can be located abroad.

Reporting

The Swiss main applicant (PI) is responsible for managing the funds and reporting. He or she must submit a final technical and financial report one month after the termination of the innovation project. Reporting forms are provided on the website.

Export control

Activities conducted under this grant may be subject to export control rules and regulations (see [State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO](#)) regarding export, re-export of goods, technology and/or information procured/obtained. These rules and regulations may affect the research activities. The Switzerland-based PI and his/her home institution are responsible for compliance with possible export control restrictions.

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