

## Bilateral Research Collaboration with Asia 2021–2024

# 2024 Consolidation Grants – Call for Projects 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 **2024 Call for Consolidation Grants** is a special call that supports research projects with collaborating institutions in **China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, South Korea, Taiwan and ASEAN member states**<sup>1</sup>. The collaboration must be based on an existing partnership between researchers and scientists affiliated to a Swiss institution and researchers affiliated to an Asian institution.

The **Consolidation Grants (CG)** aim to encourage more advanced, solid projects between Switzerland and the East Asia or the Southeast Asia region. The impulse for the CG proposals should come from previous collaborations between the Switzerland-based and the East- or Southeast Asia-based applicant, with the goal to develop further and deepen those partnerships. The objective of this instrument is to allow researchers to conduct fieldwork, laboratory feasibility studies, to organize conferences and workshops, to fund the preparation of a joint project proposal for submission to other funding agencies (e.g. national funding agencies or EU funding schemes)<sup>2</sup> 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

To be eligible to apply, the partners must have already conducted at least one activity together. Applications which do not specify any ongoing or completed joint activity will not be considered for funding.

The call is open to **all** scientific disciplines and fields of research, including social sciences and humanities.

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 apply<sup>3</sup>. 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

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

<sup>2</sup> Indicate in the proposal the call and agency the research team plans to submit the proposal to.

<sup>3</sup> Eligible institutions, see [here](#).

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](mailto:elise.nardin@sl.ethz.ch).

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 Partnerships<sup>4</sup> shall be used as a guideline for the project process.

## Funding and budget

The maximum grant sum is **50,000 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 **Consolidation 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.<sup>5</sup>

## 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**.

<sup>4</sup> [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](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)

<sup>5</sup> 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:	14 March 2024
<b>Deadline for submission:</b>	<b>15 June 2024</b>
Evaluation and funding decision:	Mid-June – early September 2024
Notification:	Mid-September 2024
Project start (earliest):	14 October 2024
Project start (latest):	15 November 2024
Project duration:	Up to 12 months
<b>Latest report submission deadline:</b>	<b>15 December 2025</b>

## Evaluation and selection

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

- Academic originality and consistency
- Feasibility of the project
- Relevance of the expected results
- Project maturity
- Contributions by all involved partners, including funding and in-kind contributions
- Promotion of early-career and female researchers (soft factor)

## 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 for submitting a final technical and financial report one month after the termination of the project. Reporting forms are provided on the website. The latest deadline for reporting is **15 December 2025**. The LH Asia will **not grant any** no-cost extension for projects funded by this call.

## 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.

## Contact:

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