

Research Partnership Grant 2023 – Call

Bilateral research cooperation with the Latin American Region 2021-2024

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has mandated the University of St. Gallen as the Leading House for the Latin American Region (LH) for the bilateral collaboration with partner institutions in Switzerland and Latin America for the period 2021-2024 and to explore new research in the region.

The Research Partnership Grant 2023 aims to promote mono- or interdisciplinary projects and involve bilateral or multilateral partnerships with Latin American countries. Researchers of all disciplines are invited to apply. Grants up to CHF 25,000 will be awarded.

Aims and objectives

The aim of the Research Partnership Grant (RPG) is to strengthen or initiate a scientific exchange between Swiss and Latin American researchers and institutions by enabling them to jointly undertake preliminary research and organize meetings, conferences, or workshops.

RPGs are particularly useful for developing new joint project proposals or connecting already existing and independently funded projects in Switzerland and the Latin American partner countries for long-lasting cooperation.

Eligibility and responsibility of project members

Each proposal must have one principal applicant based in Switzerland and one in Latin America.

The Swiss Principal Investigator must hold at least a PhD degree and employment as a scientist in an eligible Swiss institution (Swiss federal institutes of technology, cantonal universities, federal and cantonal research institutes, universities of applied sciences) with a permanent position contract (minimum of 40%) unrelated to the RPG project. Research institutions in Switzerland must be accredited by swissuniversities.

The Principal Investigator in Latin America must be affiliated with an accredited university or a public research institute and hold a faculty or scientist position or a doctoral degree and several years of academic experience. They must have a permanent position contract unrelated to the RPG project. For multilateral projects conducted with more than one Latin American partner, projects might have one Principal Investigator for each country.

Co-investigators based in Switzerland and Latin America can also participate as team members, including MA, PhD, and postdoctoral students.

The Swiss Principal Investigator bears the main responsibility for the project, including its technical and administrative coordination as well as timely delivery of scientific and financial reports.

Primary Investigators (PIs), or research teams cannot apply for two grants from the Leading House for the Latin American Region at the same time. Partnership projects and principal investigators who received a previous Leading House for the Latin American Region grant are welcome to apply if projects are finished by April 14, 2023 (final Scientific and Financial reports submitted and approved).

Funding and budgeting

Research Partnership Grants fund a minimum of CHF 10,000 and a maximum of CHF 25,000 per project. The grant will be disbursed in two instalments: 80% upon signing the grant contract and 20% after approval of the final report.

All expenses must be justified and related to the proposed research activities. Financial contributions from each side of the partnership and in-kind contributions are expected – likewise third-party contributions, if applicable – and should be detailed in the Budget Form.

The mutual commitment of the partners in both countries will serve as an indicator of the strength of the partnership and the project's financial sustainability. It includes financial co-funding and in-kind contributions by all partners and possibly third-party contributions. The Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships shall be used as a guideline for the project process.

The budget will be checked and might be cut if expenses are not calculated or justified correctly according to LH available resources and the number of approved projects.

The grant received from the Leading House must be spent in both Switzerland and one or several Latin American countries. Expenses outside of Latin America and Switzerland can only be covered in exceptional cases and upon the prior consultation with the Leading House. The LH expects a balanced budget distribution between Switzerland and Latin America.

Administration of funds and reporting

The Principal Investigator at the Swiss institution is responsible for administrating the funds and reporting. They must submit a final Scientific and Financial Report one month after the termination of the Research Partnership Grant project. The latest deadline for reporting will be December 31st, 2024.

Grantees must account for all expenses with a purchase receipt or invoice. Scanned copies must be presented to the Leading House with the final Financial Report. The originals are to remain with the principal investigator for 5 years after the termination of the agreement. Costs without or with insufficient receipts cannot be accepted. Credit card statements are not official receipts. If receipts cannot be provided, an official receipt book can be used.

Grant expenditures must adhere to the specific items of the budget. Shifts between individual budget items are permitted under the condition that they do not exceed 10% of the total budget. The Leading House's prior written approval is mandatory for any other intended budget changes.

Application

Applications shall be submitted in electronic format only. Please submit the complete application on the University of St.Gallen Leading House for the Latin American Region (LH) website according to the instructions. The Principal Investigator in Switzerland is responsible for ensuring that the formal requirements are fulfilled, and the content is accurate and complete. Otherwise, the Leading House for the Latin American Region cannot consider the application.

All information provided in the administrative part and all uploaded documents must be written in English. The Leading House does not give the applicants contact details of possible project partners in Switzerland and Latin America. It is the responsibility of the researchers applying for the grant to find their contacts. The Leading House provides a list of organizations that can support the search for project partners on its website.

Evaluation and selection of projects

Applications will be evaluated by independent experts and decided upon in a committee meeting. The LH distinguishes between formal eligibility criteria and academic merit criteria. Projects only qualify for funding if the eligibility criteria are fulfilled and will be finally selected based on the evaluation criteria.

The following evaluation criteria will apply in this call:

Relevance

- The project must pursue a direct transfer to society. Researchers also must present socially, culturally, or technically innovative projects that foster resilience.
- Researchers must demonstrate that the studied topics are relevant to the global agenda, especially for Switzerland and Latin America.
- The proposal must demonstrate the need for international cooperation for the success of the inputs and outputs.

Academic originality and consistency

- An adequate state-of-the-art literature review and identification as well as justification of a research gap.
- Novel and clearly defined research question(s) and hypothesis.
- Comprehensive and detailed research method along with original and feasible proposed activities.
- The accuracy of the research plan and application.
- Quality and experience of the team members involved in the project. Expertise and complementary proficiency of the partner laboratories/institutes and the applicants.

Expected results and follow-up

- The feasibility and relevance of the expected impact, outputs, and scientific production (e.g., publications, workshops).
- The projected dissemination strategy.
- The sustainability of the project and long-term collaboration through follow-up grants or the establishment of permanent partnerships.

Timeline

Call launched:	April 14, 2023
Deadline for submission:	July 09, 2023
Info Session:	May 25, 2023
Evaluation and funding decision:	July – October 2023
Notification:	October 27, 2023
Contract:	November 2023
Earliest project start:	December 1, 2023
Project Duration:	12 months
Latest project end:	November 31, 2024
Project report due:	December 31, 2024

The research team must conduct the project within a maximum of 12 months. It can start at the earliest in December 2023 and must be finished at the latest in November 2024.

The Leading House reserves the right to change and adjust this call and its conditions if the Federal Council decides to reintroduce COVID-19 measures or according to the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation guidelines.

Annex I: Guidelines for writing the Scientific Proposal

Please provide all the information listed below in a separate document (**max 2,500 words**). To ensure a blind peer-review process, do not make explicit references to members of the research team, institutes, or universities; the project proposal needs to be anonymous.

- 1) **Project title and abstract:** The abstract should be a maximum of half a page and include objectives, research plan, methodology, expected results, and purpose of the partnership.
- 2) **Relevance and justification:** The proposal should be relevant to Switzerland and Latin America and demonstrate the need for the international collaboration. Projects also must be socially, culturally, or technically innovative, fostering resilience.
- 3) **State of the art and research gap:** Briefly describe the current state of the art in research and identify a research gap: include the main research question(s) and hypothesis(es).
- 4) **Research plan, methods, and timeframe:** Include approach and methodology, milestones and timeframe of feasible proposed activities. The research project must be conducted within 12 months (2023-2024).
- 6) **Expected results and follow-up:** Explain the expected impact, output, scientific production, follow-up activities, and the possibility of a long-term collaboration of the research project. The proposal should ensure a direct transfer to society. This grant should also be used to prepare and submit proposals to larger funding agencies and instruments in Latin America, Switzerland, and Europe (e.g., SNF, ERC). Applicants ought to explicitly indicate to which call and funding agency the research team plans to submit its proposal in the next step.
- 7) **Experience of the applicants:** Outline the applicants' previous work areas and performance of the applicants relevant to the proposed research. Describe the strengths and complementarities of the research teams.
- 8) **Promotion of female and emerging researchers:** Briefly describe the gender and career-stage balance of researchers involved in the project.
- 9) **Intended Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):** Include IPR agreements (if applicable).
- 10) **Ethical, safety, and regulatory issues:** Does the proposed work raise ethical, safety, or regulatory issues? If so, how will the team deal with them?
- 11) **Bibliography:** the list of references does not count for the 2,500 words limit.

The proposal must be uploaded to the Leading House website together with the following:

- **Budget**
- **CVs** Curriculum Vitae and publications (max. 2 pages) of the Swiss and Latin American Principal Investigators (PIs), including a list of the five most important publications related to the proposal.
- **Co-Investigator(s) form** with personal data from Swiss and Latin American team members.

Budget and co-investigator(s) form must be submitted in excel format, using the template provided on the website.

CVs and proposal must be submitted in PDF format.

Annex II: Guidelines for preparing the budget

- Travel expenses of up to CHF 2,200 (round trips) per person may be granted. It covers all travel expenses per person within Switzerland and Latin America (e.g., flights, car, train, bus). Travel insurance, as well as costs for a visa, can be covered within this limit. COVID-19 tests that are mandatory to travel can be covered. Travel expenses that surpass this limit will only be covered as an exception and must be thoroughly justified.
- The Research Partnership Grant can only cover economy-class flights and public transport tickets. Car rental, taxi and Uber rides will only be covered as an exception and must be thoroughly justified.
- Costs for accommodation and consumables can be granted. Please indicate the estimated costs in detail. Accommodation: max CHF 120-150/night in Switzerland, max CHF 60-80/night in Latin America. For research stays that surpass two consecutive weeks, alternative accommodation options are recommended (Airbnb, apartment rental). Consumables: max CHF 60/day in Switzerland, max CHF 40/day in Latin America.
- Members of the project team can benefit from paid accommodation and consumables for up to a maximum of 3 months.
- Research Partnership Grants can fund software for qualitative and quantitative data collection and processing (e.g., online data management, survey platforms) and communications software for virtual seminars/workshops (e.g., Zoom, Skype). The platform subscription must be justified, and this fee can only be covered if the Principal Investigator's university does not provide it.
- Work-related institutional costs (exclusively for Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teaching Education): the RPG can be used to cover for the time dedicated to the project by staff in the Swiss institution(s), not including the principal investigator. This expense should not exceed 20% of the overall grant. These funds cannot be used to create new positions. The payment of work-related institutional costs to partners outside of Switzerland is not allowed.
- Subcontracting: Costs generated by third parties mandated by the research project (outsourcing through subcontracting) may be charged to the grant in exceptional cases if the involvement of third parties is justified and necessary and if the costs of services provided within the scope of subcontracting corresponds to no more than 10% of the grant.
- As a result of the project, costs for publication can be financed.

For all costs, a purchase receipt must be provided.

Specification of costs that cannot be covered

- Salaries.
- Conference rooms and other infrastructure. Should be provided by the host universities (in-kind contribution).
- Hardware and other equipment usually provided by universities.
- Overhead.

Contact

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