



Call for Research Partnership Grants with South Asia and Iran 2023

Background

The ZHAW was commissioned in 2017 and confirmed for a 2nd mandate period in 2021 as Leading House by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) to foster bilateral research collaborations with partner institutions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Research Partnership Grant is one of the instruments implemented to serve this purpose.

Goals and objectives

The Research Partnership Grant (RPG) has three main purposes:

- **foster new partnerships:** RPGs are useful at an early stage in developing new partnerships with partners in South Asia and Iran AND/OR
- **allow existing partnerships to grow and develop:** The RPG offers Swiss researchers who have already successfully completed a project with a partner in South Asia and Iran the possibility of continuing joint research with the objective of preparing a grant application for a full joint research project (e.g. through the Swiss National Science Foundation, EU funding or a national or regional funding body). These grants may also allow for joint teaching or curriculum development to be intensified, AND/OR
- **support emerging research talent:** The RPG may also be used to support the next generation of scientists, i.e. those who have gained a Master's degree but who have not yet completed their PhD and who have no more than six years of professional research experience, in becoming integrated in collaborations with partner institutions in South Asia and Iran.

The call is open for activities in all scientific disciplines and fields of research.

Eligibility criteria (all criteria must be met)

Projects only qualify for funding if the eligibility criteria are fulfilled and will be finally selected based on the evaluation criteria. All of the following eligibility criteria must be met for a grant application to be examined:

- The Leading House South Asia and Iran accepts grant applications solely from applicants with permanent employment or employment lasting until the end of the project with a federal or cantonal university, university of applied sciences, university of teachers' education or any officially recognized research institute in Switzerland.¹ Applicants from public research institutions (as defined in art. 5 of the Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation), are also eligible. This description defines the term "Swiss applicant".
- The Swiss applicants need to have a proposed or an ongoing research project with an institutional partner (i.e. a university or research institute recognized or accredited by the local government's concerned authorities) in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan or Sri Lanka, or need to have a joint teaching or a joint curriculum development project with an institutional partner in one of the aforementioned countries.
- The Swiss applicant's collaborator in the concerned partner country needs to be a scientist with permanent employment or employment lasting until the end of the project with the institutional partner. The principal investigator/researcher in South Asia or Iran must be affiliated to an accredited university or a public research institute and must hold a faculty or scientist position in addition to several years of research or practical experience.

¹ In accordance with the listings under <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/de/home/hs/hochschulen.html>



- Swiss applicants must submit their grant application from their personal institutional email address (e.g. `firstname.second name@examplewissuniversity.ch`). **Applications from other types of email addresses will be discarded and the senders will not be notified.**
- Matching funding is available (please see details below)
- This call aims to promote research related to sustainability, specifically in the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):
 - SDG 3 (good health and well-being),
 - SDG 4 (quality education),
 - SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy),
 - SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and
 - SDG 13 (climate action).

It has to be stated clearly in the proposal which SDG the project will approach.

Budget

The maximum grant amount per project is 35,000 Swiss francs. All details with regards to submitting your budget and funding request can be found on the budget table provided with this call document. An outline to the eligible cost is given below. The grant is not to be shared with the research partner abroad.

- **Equipment:** The costs of equipment are eligible for funding if the equipment is of key importance to the research work and is acquired specifically for the research project.
- **Work-related institutional costs:** The RPG can be used to cover for the time dedicated to the project by staff (not including the main applicant) in the Swiss institution(s), should not the whole time dedicated to research be financed by the institution(s). This option must not exceed 20% of the Leading House's overall grant and is **only available for Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education**. The payment of work-related institutional costs to partners outside of Switzerland is not allowed². The concrete use of work-related institutional costs needs to be described in the application.
- **Travel:** Only travel costs directly linked to the research project may be covered by the grant.
- **Subcontracting:** Costs generated by third parties mandated by the research project (i.e. outsourcing through subcontracting for e.g. laboratory tests) may be partially covered by the grant if the involvement of third parties is justified and necessary.
- **Networking and communication:** Costs for Open Access publications, the organisation and travel costs for conducting conferences and workshops related to the project activities are eligible.

Matching and in-kind funding

Both the applicant and the partner institute abroad are required to make in-kind (e.g. work hours, usage of office or laboratory equipment, field visits, etc.) contributions to the proposed research project.

The Swiss applicant is required to make a financial contribution in addition to the one in-kind.

It is recommended that the partner institute abroad make a financial contribution as well. Such financial contribution can be funds of that institute and/or funds raised from funding bodies in their country.

² Please note that the funds available for the time dedicated to the project cannot be used to create new employment positions.



Application

Applications must be submitted as follows:

Step 1: Read this call document carefully to ensure that you meet all eligibility criteria.

Step 2: Download the budget table [from our website](#)³, and complete it before proceeding to the next step.

Step 3: Visit the [online application form](#) and enter all mandatory data in the online form.

NOTE: Incomplete application forms and budget tables will be discarded.

Equal treatment, evaluation and selection

The Leading House South Asia and Iran treats fundamental research and applied research, types of Swiss universities, language regions, age groups, and genders equally.

An independent panel of experts from a diversity of types of Swiss universities, language regions, age groups and genders will evaluate and select which of the proposed research projects will be awarded a grant. The expert panel's decision will be final.

The Leading House South Asia and Iran anticipates receiving many grant applications. The evaluation and selection will therefore be highly competitive.

Evaluation criteria can be decisive when comparing similarly-ranked projects. Among the evaluation criteria for this call are:

- Scientific relevance, merit or impact of the anticipated outcomes
- Potential for long-term international collaboration and follow-up activities
- Originality and feasibility of the proposed activity
- Expertise and complementarities of the applicant and their partner institute abroad
- 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 the involved partners. [The KFPE Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships](#) shall be used as a guideline for the project process
- Contributions by all involved partners, including funding and in-kind contributions

NOTE: This list is neither comprehensive nor in order of priority.

Disbursement of grants

Grants will be disbursed in two instalments: 80% after signing the grant contract and 20% after approval of the final report and financial statement. Prior to the disbursement of grants, grant recipients will be required to sign a grant agreement provided to them by the Leading House South Asia and Iran.

Any grant money that was not spent by the grant recipient will have to be returned to the Leading House South Asia and Iran.

Reporting

The Swiss applicant is responsible for administrating the grant money in the spirit of this grant. He or she must submit a final scientific report as well as a financial statement no later than one month after the end of the Research Partnership Grant project. This final step is mandatory.

³ Visit www.zhaw.ch/leadinghouse, click on funding instruments by country, then select Research Partnership Grant



Timeline

- Launch of this call: 06 November 2023
- Applications will be accepted until: 15 January 2024
- Evaluation and funding decision: End of April 2024
- Notification of applicants: End of May 2024
- Project start date: Must be as soon as possible in 2024
- Project duration: Up to 12 months
- 1st payment (80 %): After signature of grant agreement
- 2nd payment (20 %): After receipt of midterm-report by End of November 2024

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.

Independent reviewers

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

Correspondence and assistance

The Leading House South Asia and Iran responds to inquiries from Swiss universities, universities of applied sciences and universities of teachers' education only.

The Leading House South Asia and Iran will only notify Swiss applicants about the funding decisions.

The Leading House South Asia and Iran does not provide any assistance (e.g. travel arrangements, logistics, etc.; this list is not exhaustive) after the funding decisions.

Important note

The LH has the right to modify the terms of this call according to the circumstances related to e.g. pandemics, environmental issues or any decision made by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).