

Leading House Region Africa Seed Funding 2020

Call for Proposals

on

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in South Africa

Grant period: 2020–2021

Research areas / disciplines: **All disciplines relevant for SDGs, especially health, gender, WASH and climate**

Total budget available: CHF 240,000

Grant per project: Maximum CHF 25,000

Additional third party funding: Strongly encouraged

Submission deadline: 5 June 2020, 17:00 hours MESZ

BACKGROUND

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has commissioned the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) with support from the University of Basel as the Leading House (LH) for its bilateral collaboration with partner institutions in sub-Saharan Africa¹ for the funding period 2017–2020. Switzerland and a number of sub-Saharan African countries, including South Africa, have been working together on bilateral programmes for science and technology since 2007. In this frame, more than 100 research projects, together with student and faculty exchange activities were funded and jointly implemented. Switzerland and South Africa have in particular a long-standing research collaboration. Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>) is the designated main area of joint research action.

Being among the poorest provinces of South Africa, Limpopo province was already particularly vulnerable to climate variabilities prior to the COVID-19 crisis, with predicted negative impact to the economy, natural resources, community livelihoods and health. The COVID-19 crisis will, almost certainly, exacerbate and compound the challenges for addressing the SDGs in Limpopo province. SDG 3 (health), SDG 5 (gender), SDG 6 (water, sanitation and hygiene; WASH) and SDG 13 (climate) are of high importance in Limpopo province and among the most vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic.

The LH Africa is launching a fast track call for applications from Swiss academic institutions that can support the partners' efforts in Limpopo province to accelerate the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, especially SDGs 3, 5, 6 and 13, in the Limpopo province to mitigate some of the impacts of COVID-19. The current seed money call aims at developing new or consolidating existing partnerships with institutions in South Africa. It will offer to the collaborating institutions an opportunity for opening or strengthening their potential of long-term collaboration and follow-up activities.

Eligible costs cover supporting staff, equipment, research funds and travels.

Scientific domains to be funded

We welcome proposals from all scientific domains addressing any of the SDGs, especially those pertaining to health (SDG 3), gender (SDG 5), WASH (SDG 6) and climate (SDG 13). The projects with a concrete research–cum–action approach will be encouraged that show clear intended benefits for partners and communities in South Africa in general and in Limpopo province in particular.

Application requirements

Lead applicants from Swiss academic institutions are required to be senior researchers. The project lead applicant should involve at least one institutional partner from South Africa. Research partners must be scientists affiliated to a university or a public research institute in South Africa. The principal investigator there must hold a faculty or senior scientist position with several years of research experience. The Swiss scientist is the principal applicant to this seed money grant call. The main applicant will submit a joint proposal for the partners planned research work. All applicants submit their proposal to the LH Region Africa via e-mail to Dr. Jasmina Saric j.saric@swisstph.ch.

All proposals should be accompanied by a cover letter that clearly explains the reasons for applying, gives a succinct overview of the current research collaboration of the institution with South Africa. If scientific collaborations with the partner are already established, this should be stated in the cover letter as well. The complete set of documents to be included in the proposals are:

- (i) a **cover letter** (see above);
- (ii) the **application form** including a research proposal of the planned collaborative activities (max. 2 pages);
- (iii) **Curriculum vitae** of the main applicant and the main partner involved (max. 2 pages each); and
- (iv) a **letter of support of the partnering institution in South Africa** (if possible), or a co-signature of the main partner on the application form).

A period of 3 months to a maximum of 12 months can be applied for. Applicants are furthermore encouraged to seek for additional sources of third-party funding that they and/or their partners could contribute to the project.

All documents have to be submitted **in English, by the 5 June 2020** 17:00 hours MESZ.

Eligible costs

- Research funds
- Supporting staff costs and students support costs
- Travel costs local and international
- Equipment costs

Please note that overhead costs are not admissible.

Grant payment

At the beginning of the project period, 80% of the approved amount will be paid out. The remaining 20% are transferred after acceptance of the final report.

VAT

In Switzerland:

The grants are not subjected to VAT or other taxes and charges (under the provision that relevant cantonal tax authorities do not consider these as taxable income). However, research expenses are not excluded from VAT. All costs budgeted for research visits (e.g. equipment, consumables, etc.) can therefore be charged to the project budget, VAT included, unless the research institution (e.g. university, public research organization, etc.) is able to recover the VAT

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

The application consists of two parts:

- An administrative part:
 - Basic data on the project (e.g. title, research field, starting date, duration, summary)
 - Personal data of the main applicant
 - Personal data of the lead partner in South Africa
 - Amount of funding requested
 - Information on authorizations required in Switzerland and/or South Africa
- The research related part:
 - Research activity plan (max. 2 pages)
 - Cover letter of main applicant
 - CVs of main applicant and main collaborator in South Africa (max. 2 pages)
 - Letter of support from the partnering institution/department

Evaluation

Peer review: The evaluation of proposals will be assessed by the LH Africa and an independent evaluation panel, and outcomes of the review will be communicated and submitted for final approval to the Steering Committee.

The criteria used to evaluate the scientific quality of the proposals:

- Scientific excellence of the project
- Feasibility and local relevance of the project
- Potential for developing a new or consolidating an existing partnership
- Capacity building component
- Quality and contributions of other involved contributing partners and stakeholders

The evaluation results will be communicated to successful main applicants via e-mail. The main applicant will be responsible for transmitting the decision to the co-applicants.

The review of the submitted applications will take place within 3 weeks following submission and results will be announced by the **30 June 2020**.

The earliest possible starting date for the project is 15 July 2020.

Reporting

The Swiss principal applicant is responsible for administrating the funds and for reporting to LH Basel. Scientific and financial reports are to be submitted by the last day of the month following the project end. Grant holders will have a common template available for the scientific report. Scientific reports include a qualitative and a quantitative part (output data).

Publications and intellectual property

The main applicants are strongly encouraged to publish research results stemming from their joint research work in appropriate form and acknowledging the partner institutions and this funding programme. The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) requirements for Open Access publication must be fulfilled. Applicants must consult both the Swiss and South African institutions concerning the internal intellectual property regulations. For market-oriented projects, it is important that an agreement be reached in advance. It is the responsibility of both applicants to make sure such an agreement is signed before the project start.

Further information can be obtained with:

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