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LEADING HOUSE AFRICA

**Call for Proposals: Research Partnership Grant I**

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| Total Budget Available: | CHF 85,000 |
| Grant per Project: | Maximum CHF 15,000 |
| Project Duration: | Minimum: 3 months; maximum: 12 months |
| Eligible Applicants (Lead): | PhD students in their final year of study and postdoctoral scientists with a **maximum** of 2 years postdoctoral research experience. (Lead applicants must be affiliated with a Swiss Institution of Higher Education) |
| Eligible Partner Countries: | All African countries, except Maghreb region and Egypt |
| Additional Third-Party Funding: | Strongly encouraged |
| Submission Deadline: | 1 September 2023 (17:00 CET) |
| Review Process: | 4 September 2023 – 27 October 2023 |
| Decision: | 31 October 2023 |
| Earliest Project Start Date: | 1 November 2023 |

**Background**

The Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has commissioned Swiss TPH with support from the University of Basel as the Leading House for its bilateral collaboration with partner institutions in Africa[[1]](#footnote-1) for the funding period 2021–2024. Switzerland and a number of African countries have been working together on bilateral programmes for science and technology since 2007. Within this framework, the funding cycle will involve the launch of a set of instruments (i.e. research partnership grants I & II, consolidation grants, PhD graduate programme and lectureship schemes) throughout the upcoming funding period.

Leading House (LH) Africa is calling for applications for **Research Partnership Grant I** from **final year PhD students and researchers with a maximum of 2 years post-doctoral experience** and who are affiliated with a Swiss Institution of Higher Education1. The goal of this instrument is to further develop, consolidate and expand relations and foster new collaborations between Swiss researchers and partners in Africa2.

Applications should demonstrate collaborative work with an African2 University or research institution in desk work, field research or laboratory with a minimum duration of 3 months and a maximum of 12 months. Projects may or may not include mobility component.

**Scientific Domains to be funded**

Proposals are expected from the following two areas:

* Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and
* STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), including Biological Sciences and Medicine.

**Application Requirements**

The Swiss-based Principal Investigator (the main/lead applicant) must have **3 to 5 years of post-doctoral experience** and **must be employed** as a scientist in an eligible Swiss institution (cantonal universities, Swiss federal institutes of technology, federal and cantonal research institutes, universities of applied sciences) **before, during and on** the project completion date.

The main applicant will submit a joint proposal on behalf of the research team that includes one or more African-based1 partners for their planned research work.

The Principal Investigator in Africa1 must be affiliated with an accredited university or a public research institute and hold a faculty or scientist position or a doctoral degree with more than five years of academic experience.

For Swiss-based applicants pursuing the mobility option, the host institution in Africa1 must provide a letter of acceptance confirming that the fellow will be granted access to appropriate facilities and infrastructure needed to conduct the project.

A minimum project **duration of 3 months to** a maximum of **12 months** can be applied for. Furthermore, applicants are encouraged to seek for additional sources of third-party funding that they and/or their partners could contribute to the project- be they national (from the partnering institution in Africa), SNSF or ESKAS, or others.

**Funding and budgeting**

The mutual commitment of the applicants in Switzerland and the African country will serve as an indicator of the strength of the partnership and the project’s financial sustainability. This includes **financial co-funding** and **in-kind contributions** by all partners and possibly **third-party contributions**.

The **Research Partnership Grant I covers** the following costs:

* **Work-related institutional costs (exclusively for Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teaching Education):** funding 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.**
* **Costs of material of enduring value (indicate manufacturer, type and distributor)**

Equipment not exceeding 10% of the total award

* For visits to Africa, a **maximum of CHF 120 per diem** is deemed eligible for funding. For stays exceeding one month, a **monthly rate of CHF 3,600** is deemed eligible for funding. This includes room and board costs and unavoidable sundry expenses. Grant recipients in this case are required to obtain a health insurance policy for their period of stay
* Transportation costs are deemed eligible for funding, **provided they do not exceed** **CHF 2,200 in total.** This includes the cost of flight (economy class) for a round trip to the African country and cost of local public transportation (train, bus, etc.). Car rental, taxi and Uber rides will only be covered as an exception and must be thoroughly justified.
* Costs associated with the attendance at specific workshops, conferences, seminars, summer schools or presentations during the planned visit may also be covered by the current funds
* 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
* Cost of publications of project findings is an eligible expense that can be covered by the grant. This includes expenses such as article processing charges (APCs) for open access journals or fees for depositing publications in open access repositories. **A maximum of CHF 3,000 can be budgeted for this purpose**
* **VAT**

All costs budgeted for research visits (e.g. equipment, consumables, etc.) can 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.

**Please note that overhead and salary costs are not admissible.**

**Disbursement of Funds**

At the onset of the project period, 80% of the approved funds will be disbursed, and the remaining 20% will be remitted after LH Africa has received and approved the final project report. The funds will be transferred to a cost center or a dedicated project account that has been created explicitly for this project by the lead applicant's institution in Switzerland.

**Proposal Submission**

The application consists of two parts:

**Administrative part**

* Basic data on the project (e.g. title, research field, starting date, duration, summary)
* Personal data of the main / Swiss-based applicant and African-based applicant
* Personal data of the host (for mobility options)
* Amount of funding requested with budget narrative

**Research related part**

* Cover letter of the applicant
* Research activity plan (maximum of 5 pages)
* CV (max. 1 page)
* Complete list of publications from theapplicant
* Letter of support from the applicant’s supervisor
* Letter of support from the host institution/department (for the mobility option)

All documents must be submitted **in English by 1 September 2023** 17:00 CEST as a single pdf document addressed to Dr Kobina Ampah via e-mail: lhafrica@swisstph.ch

**Evaluation Procedure and Timeline**

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

* Scientific relevance and excellence
* Mutual interest of the project at national and international level
* Originality of the aims and objectives
* Appropriateness of the methodology
* Feasibility of the project
* Capacity building
* Experience and past performance of applicants
* Strength of collaboration and complementary skills of research partners with respect to the project
* Budget (Cost sharing)

**Peer-review:** Proposals will be evaluated according to international peer-review standard procedures, organized by LH Africa. External peer-review experts will be designated.

**Decision:** Outcomes of the peer-review will be consolidated and approved by the LH Africa team. Subsequently, LH Africa will communicate the final decision to the main applicant by means of a decision letter. In case of rejection, the reasons leading to the decision will be given. In case of approval, the conditions and possible budget adjustments will be shared with the main applicant who will be responsible for transmitting the decision to the co-applicant.

Review of the submitted applications will take place from **4 September 2023 to 27 October 2023** and results will be announced on **31 October 2023**.

The earliest possible commencement date for the awarded projects is **1 November 2023.**

Please note: Applications must meet all formal requirements (number of pages, budget limit, etc.) Applications that do not meet all of the requirements and / or are manifestly inadequate will not be considered for funding by LH Africa.

**Extension of completion date**

Request for any extension of project completion date (including no-cost extension) shall be granted **only once.** All applicants are thus encouraged to carefully plan their project timelines before submitting their applications.

**Reporting**

The lead applicants together with their respective African project partners shall submit a consolidated report to LH Africa. Scientific and financial reports are to be submitted by the last day of the month following the end of the project. Grant awardees 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 findings of their joint research work in an open access (OA) publication or database, acknowledging the partner institutions and this funding programme. The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) guidelines for Open Access publications must be adhered to. Applicants must consult both Swiss and African institutions concerning their 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 (main and co-applicant) to make sure such an agreement is signed before the project start.

**Export control**

Activities conducted under this grant may be subject to export control rules and regulations (see [State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO](https://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=22737&d=hKiQ5Kop5mhieBTHsAZocwFZRe8lCBvmsMXXDae42g&u=https%3a%2f%2fwww%2eseco%2eadmin%2ech%2fseco%2fen%2fhome%2fAussenwirtschaftspolitik%5fWirtschaftliche%5fZusammenarbeit%2fWirtschaftsbeziehungen%2fexportkontrollen-und-sanktionen%2fexportkontrollpolitik%2ehtml)) 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.

**Questions?**

**Please check first with our FAQs:** <https://www.swisstph.ch/en/research/leading-house-africa/>

**Further Information can be obtained from:**

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1. All African countries except the Maghreb region and Egypt [↑](#footnote-ref-1)