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**EPFL Leading House – Swiss Bilateral Programmes**

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**Exploratory Mandate: Bilateral Research Collaboration with Latin America 2013-2016**

**Seed Money Grant 2015 – Call for Projects with Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru**

**Introduction and background**

As part of Switzerland's strategy to promote bilateral research cooperation with extra-European countries, the [State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation \(SERI\)](#) mandated the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) as the Leading House for the development and coordination of joint research cooperation programmes with India (since 2008, following a pilot phase between 2005-2007) and Brazil (since 2008).

For the 2013-2016 period, EPFL has also been asked to lead exploratory activities with Latin America aimed at establishing new strategic partnerships.

Five countries, namely **Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru** stood out in the mapping study of existing scientific and academic links done in 2013, particularly because of the magnitude of their already existing collaborations with Switzerland and the potential in terms of increasing scientific and academic cooperation with Swiss scientists or institutions.

**Goals and objectives**

In order to encourage these collaborations further, a new funding instrument focusing on these countries was introduced. The Seed Money Grant seeks to initiate or intensify research collaboration between Switzerland and the above mentioned countries. The project proposals should seek to achieve the following objectives:

- intensify interaction and scientific cooperation between Swiss scientists or institutions and those of these countries;
- establish or reinforce research partnerships of mutual interest and benefit.

The Seed Money Grant can furthermore be used to develop a joint project proposal to be submitted to other funding agencies.

**Thematic scope**

The call is open to all scientific disciplines and fields of research.

## Funding and budgeting

The maximum granted amount for one project is CHF 25,000. This funding may be used to cover research activities, field visits, travel expenses, equipment and to organise workshops or meetings. Partial salary costs may be covered for the preparation work of a new research proposal that would be submitted to a larger funding agency. The proposal should indicate the call and agency the research team plans to submit the proposal. A detailed budget must be provided (see annex). Foreseen expenses must be justified and coherent with the proposed research activities. Financial and in-kind contributions from each partner are expected and must be clearly indicated in the budget.

A Grant Agreement will be signed between the EPFL Leading House and the main Swiss Principal Investigator once his or her project has been approved. 80% of the funding will be transferred following the signing of the Grant Agreement. The remaining 20% will be transferred once the final scientific and financial reports have been approved.

## Project start and duration

Projects start in September 2015 and the duration must not exceed 12 months.

## Eligibility

- Switzerland: The call is open to all scientists at federal and cantonal universities, universities of applied sciences, universities of teachers' education and public research institutions. Applications from doctoral students must be submitted by their supervisors.
- Cooperation partner abroad: The research partners must be affiliated to a university or a public research institute in one of the five countries. The Principal Investigator must hold a faculty or a senior scientist position or have a doctoral degree (PhD or equivalent) as well as several years' of research experience.
- Private sector: Partners from the industrial sector in Switzerland or in one of the above mentioned countries may collaborate as third parties with their own resources.

## Submission of applications

Applications must be prepared jointly by the Swiss and the Latin American applicants. The main Swiss applicant must send the application form in electronic format (including all documents in modifiable formats – doc, xls) to the EPFL Leading House at the following email address: [leadinghouse@epfl.ch](mailto:leadinghouse@epfl.ch)

Completed applications must be submitted no later than **26 May 2015**. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered.

## Timeline

Call release:	23 March 2015
Deadline for submissions:	26 May 2015
Evaluation and funding decision:	June 2015
Notification:	early July 2015
Starting date of project latest:	1 September 2015
Project duration:	up to 12 months

## Evaluation and selection

Applications will be assessed by a panel of experts on the basis of the following criteria (not listed in order of priority):

- Scientific merit of the anticipated outcomes
- Originality and feasibility of the proposed activity
- Expertise and complementarity of the partner scientists/laboratories/institutes
- Coherence between the budget and the proposed activities
- Co-funding or in-kind contributions from all partners involved
- Gender balance and the promotion of young researchers
- Potential for long-term collaboration and follow-up activities

Applicants will be notified of the results by the EPFL Leading House early July 2015.

## Partnership

The mutual commitment of the partners in both countries will serve as an indicator of the strength of the partnership. The KFPE Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships will be used as a guideline for the project process (<http://www.kfpe.ch/11-Principles/>).

## Reporting

The Swiss Principal Investigator must submit a final scientific and financial report to EPFL Leading House no later than two months after the end of the grant period.

## Contact

If you have any questions or queries please contact:

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