

Consolidation Grants 2022 – 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 current call for Consolidation Grants 2022 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.

Project proposals should ensure a direct transfer to society, benefiting local communities and building capacity. Researchers also must present socially, culturally, or technically innovative projects, fostering resilience.

Aims and objectives

The Consolidation Grant (COG) aims to encourage more advanced, solid projects filling in the gap between smaller instruments and bigger calls (e.g., SNSF, SNIS, ERC). It promotes sustainable, longer-term research cooperation between Swiss and Latin American scholars to produce accountable scientific outcomes in domains that have been identified as priorities by both Latin American and Swiss institutions. The impulse for the Consolidation Grant proposals should come from previous partnership projects between the Swiss and Latin American teams, with the goal to evolve and deepen those collaborations to prepare for more extensive applications (*Anschubfinanzierung*). Along with the organization of collective workshops, conferences, and fieldwork, the COG fosters initiatives for the mobility of young researchers (PostDocs, PhD, and MA students).

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 COG 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. He or she must have a permanent position contract unrelated to the COG 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 and PhD 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. 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 March 31, 2022 (final Scientific and Financial reports submitted and approved).

Funding and budgeting

Consolidation Grants fund a minimum of CHF 25,000 and a maximum of CHF 50,000 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.

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 of a Swiss institution is responsible for administering the funds and reporting. They must submit a final scientific and financial report one month after the termination of the RPGs project. The latest deadline for reporting will be on February 28, 2025. All expenses must be accounted for in the form of a purchase receipt or invoice. Scanned copies need to be presented to the Leading House with the final Financial Report. The originals are to remain with the PI for 5 years after the termination of the agreement. Costs without or with insufficient receipts cannot be accepted.

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. Other budget changes are not permitted without the Leading House's prior written approval.

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 (Swiss PI) must complete the application. Their responsibility is to ensure 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.

Evaluation and selection of projects

Applications will be evaluated by invited experts and decided upon in a committee meeting. The LH distinguishes between formal eligibility criteria and evaluation criteria. Projects only qualify for funding if the eligibility criteria are fulfilled and will be finally selected based on the evaluation criteria. The promotion of female researchers is mandatory.

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.

Project Maturity

- The track record of results achieved in the past collaborations between the Swiss and Latin American team members.
- The evolution of the partnership over the years and the relevance of the present proposal for upgrading the research cooperation.

Timeline

Call launched:	April 22, 2022
Deadline for submission:	July 31, 2022
Evaluation and funding decision:	August – November 2022
Notification:	December 9, 2022
Contract:	January 2023
Earliest project start:	February 1, 2023
Project duration:	18 months
Latest project end:	January 31, 2025
Project report due:	February 28, 2025

The research team must conduct the project within a maximum of 18 months in a 24-month period. It can start at the earliest in February 2023 and must be finished at the latest in January 2025.

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

In a separate document (**max 2,500 words**), please provide all information listed below. To ensure a blind peer-review process, do not make explicit references to members of the research team; 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 ensure a direct transfer to society. 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.
- 4) **Project's Maturity:** Specify past or existing collaboration and its main results. Explain how the Consolidation Grant will enable the partnership continuation. Identify the need for the grant for the Swiss-Latin American research cooperation progress.
- 5) **Research plan, methods, and timeframe:** Include approach and methodology, milestones and timeframe of feasible proposed activities. The research project must be conducted in 18 months in a twenty-four-month window (2023-2025).
- 6) **Expected results and follow-up:** Explain the expected impact, output, scientific production, follow-up activities, and long-term collaboration of the research project. This grant should 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?

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

- **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** from Switzerland or Latin America, Personal Data.

Budget and co-investigator(s) form must be submitted in excel format.

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.
- Only economy class flights and train tickets (2nd class) can be covered. 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, depending on the country.
Consumables: max CHF 60/day in Switzerland, max CHF 40/day in Latin America, depending on the country.
- Members of the project team can benefit from paid accommodation and consumables for up to a maximum of 3 months.
- Consolidation 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.
- Traditional communication tools (phone calls and mail) can be financed only in exceptional cases and need justification.
- 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.
- Daily rates/flat rates/lump sums for accommodation and food.

Contact

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