

CALL FOR “YOUNG SCIENTISTS MOBILITY GRANTS” WITH MENA COUNTRIES

1. Background

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has commissioned the HES-SO as Leading House for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The mandate will last from 2017 to 2020 and its overall goal is to develop scientific collaborations between Switzerland and countries of the MENA region.

The following countries have been identified as priority countries for the first phase of the LHMENA: **Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.**

This call allows funding of approximately 26 mobility grants, subject to the number of applications received as well as compliance with the criteria for evaluation and selection (see section 8 in this document for details).

2. Goal and Objectives

Mobility represents a strategic element to develop new partnerships between countries. Through the exchange of students and researchers, higher education institutions can establish new partnerships, thus enlarging their international network.

Mobility grants allows researchers and students to build personal contacts and relationships, which represent the foundation of fruitful and long-lasting collaborations between institutions. Moreover, when mobility grants target young scientists, they allow to include the next generation of scientists in the collaborations making them more sustainable.

The “young scientists’ mobility grant” will target:

- Developing individual capacities (human capital),
- Fostering scientific progress and innovation (scientific prospects),
- Establishing or enhancing networks between young researchers (networking).

3. Eligibility

a) All applicants

Mobility grants can be awarded to young scientists who hold a Bachelor or Master’s degree but no PhD yet, and with not more than 6 years of professional research experience.

The call is open for activities in all scientific disciplines and fields of research. Activities may include field work and/or an internship in relation to the applicant’s research project.

Host researchers must be permanently employed principal investigators at a university or research institute in their respective country.

The applicant's mobility visit should have a minimum duration of 4 weeks and the amount not more than CHF 5,000 per grant.

b) Additional information for Swiss scientists going abroad

Applicants need to be scientists with a Swiss federal or cantonal university, university of applied sciences and arts or university of teachers' education, or a public research institution.

They need to hold Swiss nationality, or permanent residence in Switzerland, or cross-border commuter permit for Switzerland, or be in marriage or in a registered partnership with a Swiss citizen.

Applicants with multiple nationalities, who have indicated the citizenship of a MENA country and who have attended high school in the same MENA country, cannot be considered for a stay in the MENA country they hold the citizenship. For example, an applicant with double Swiss and Lebanese citizenship, who attended high school in Lebanon, is not eligible for a stay in Lebanon.

c) Additional information for scientists of the MENA region

Applicants need to be scientists with a government accredited, mandated or appointed, or public research institute in their respective country.

They need to hold nationality of the country where their home institute is or permanent residence, or cross-border commuter permit there, or be in a marriage, or in a registered partnership with a citizen of the country where their home institute is.

Applicants with multiple nationalities, who have indicated the Swiss citizenship and who have attended high school in Switzerland, cannot be considered for a stay in Switzerland. For example, an applicant with double Lebanese and Swiss citizenship, who attended high school in Switzerland, is not eligible for a stay in Switzerland.

4. Partnerships

The mutual commitment of the partners in both countries (i.e. Switzerland and a partner in one of the countries listed above) will serve as a criteria of the strength of the grant application. This includes commitment of funds and in-kind resources by all partners.

5. Funding and budgeting

The maximum amount for a mobility grant is 5'000 CHF.

a) *Budget for Swiss scientists going abroad*

The Leading House will fund flights for Swiss candidates (actual cost up to CHF 1,000) and will provide a living allowance of a maximum 4,000 CHF for the entire duration of the stay. The grant can include living costs, a flat rate for travel expenses and, if justified, a contribution towards research and conference costs.

The hosting partner abroad should fund the working position for Swiss candidates: this can include, but it is not limited to, adequate office space, disposal of appropriate research facilities, access to internet and other services, ect.

b) Budget for scientist from abroad in Switzerland

The Leading House will fund living allowances for candidates from abroad (actual cost up to CHF 2,500 per month), while the partner institute abroad should fund their flights.

Please note that the Leading House will disburse funds to the Swiss sending and/or host institute only. It will make no remittances to any other organization (e.g. host institution, tax authorities, insurance companies, etc.) or individual. The Swiss institute will be responsible for spending the grant money in the spirit of this application.

6. Application

The application form must be completed by the Swiss main applicant, both in the case of hosting a MENA young scientist in Switzerland or sending a Swiss scientist to countries of the MENA region.

The Swiss main applicant must be permanently employed at a Swiss federal or cantonal university, university of applied sciences or university of teachers' education, or a public research institution.

The application should include:

1. Completed application form
2. Supporting/nomination letter from the supervisor at the sending institution, explaining also why an exchange with a specific scientist in the host country is planned
3. Acceptance letter from the supervisor at the host institute.

Applications shall be submitted in electronic format only. Please email your full application to the Leading House MENA: lhmena@hes-so.ch

7. Timeline

Applications will be accepted between:	Latest mobility visit start date:
06 March 2018 – 31 December 2019	March 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation and funding decision: Within 2 months after an application is received (subject to timely response from research partner institutes abroad) • Notification: Within 1 week after the funding decision • Mobility visit duration: more than 4 weeks 	

8. Evaluation and selection

Applications will be evaluated by the Leading House MENA on a rolling basis according to the following criteria (not listed in order of priority):

- a) Conformity with the “Young scientists mobility grant” Programme’s aims;
- b) Suitability of the candidate and the host supervisor for the proposed project;
- c) Benefit of proposed exchange for cooperation between the MENA countries and Switzerland, synergies between the two involved research organisations (previous contacts between the groups are considered an advantage);
- d) Quality of the proposal.

9. Reporting

After completion of the visits, the applicant together with the Swiss university (whether sending or host) shall submit a scientific report as well as a financial statement to the Leading House MENA not later than one month after the visits.