



## LEADING HOUSE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

# COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND ENGAGEMENT GRANTS CALL FOR PROJECTS 2026

## 1. PURPOSE

International research collaborations require dedicated efforts beyond research activities alone. Communication, dissemination and engagement activities are essential to make collaborations visible, intelligible and sustainable, and to foster engagement with academic and non-academic audiences.

The **Communication, Dissemination and Engagement Grants (CDE)** are a flexible funding instrument of the Leading House MENA, designed to support **communication-, dissemination- and engagement-oriented activities** that strengthen collaboration between Switzerland and the MENA region.

**The CDE are not research grants.** They do not fund research activities as such, but complement existing funding schemes by supporting targeted, time-bound activities that pursue one or more of the following objectives:

- **Objective 1 – Visibility and intelligibility:**  
to make Switzerland-MENA collaborations visible and intelligible to relevant academic and non-academic audiences;
- **Objective 2 – Engagement and exchange:**  
to foster engagement and exchange with relevant external actors;
- **Objective 3 – Sustainability and follow-up:**  
to contribute to the sustainability, positioning and follow-up of Switzerland-MENA collaborations, including, where applicable, their societal relevance.

Importantly, the call can support activities where engagement with non-academic audiences, public dialogue or mediated forms of knowledge exchange play a central role. This is particularly relevant for, but not limited to, fields such as the arts, design, architecture and the humanities, and reflects an increasingly important dimension across all disciplines.

Each application should include activities taking place in, or in collaboration with, at least one of the eligible countries of the MENA region: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Occupied Palestinian territory, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.





## 2. ELIGIBILITY

### 2.1. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The CDE fund activities whose primary purpose is communication, dissemination or engagement, **rather than the conduct or preparation of research**. All eligible activities must contribute clearly to one or more of the objectives of the call (see Section 1). The call is open to all disciplines and fields of research. However, proposals planning developments for military application will be rejected.

#### A) Events (conferences, workshops, exhibitions, etc.)

The CDE fund the organization of events that support a Switzerland-MENA collaboration by enabling knowledge exchange with clearly identified target groups. Events may be academic, non-academic or mixed in nature and may take place at different stages of a collaboration.

Events must:

- demonstrate an outward-facing character;
- go beyond internal coordination or exploratory discussions;
- contribute clearly to one or more of the objectives of the call (see Section 1);
- involve clearly identified target group(s);
- have a defined purpose, format and timeframe (see Section 6.3).

Events with a primarily academic target audience must take place in an eligible MENA country, whereas events with a primarily non-academic or public-oriented target audience may take place either in an eligible MENA country or in Switzerland, where justified by the target audience and objectives.

#### B) Communication materials and support

Communication materials (e.g. leaflets, websites, digital tools, audiovisual content) are eligible only when they are embedded in a clearly defined outreach or dissemination strategy and serve a concrete function in the development, visibility or sustainability of the collaboration.

Communication materials must:

- be addressed to clearly identified target audience(s);
- have a defined intended use;
- provide added value for the collaboration beyond general promotion.

#### C) Open access academic publications

Academic publications are eligible only as finalized dissemination outputs of Switzerland-MENA collaborations and only when no other dedicated funding instrument applies.

Publications must :

- contribute meaningfully to the visibility or recognition of the collaboration;
- support its further development or positioning;
- not entail additional research activities or project extensions.





## 2.2. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following activities are **not eligible** for CDE funding:

- open access article publications arising from SNSF-funded projects, which must be covered by the corresponding SNSF funding instruments;
- open access publication of academic books, which is covered by SNSF instruments);
- academic events taking place in Switzerland, which may be funded through the SNSF instrument *Scientific Exchanges* (the CDE support academic and non-academic events in eligible MENA countries, and non-academic events in Switzerland);
- research activities, including data collection or data analysis;
- activities primarily aimed at research design, proposal writing or internal project coordination;
- attendance at existing events.

## 2.3. ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS

All researchers of Swiss federal and cantonal universities, universities of applied sciences and universities of teachers' education, as well as public research institutions (as defined in art. 5 of the Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation), are eligible to apply.

The main applicant in Switzerland must:

- hold a permanent position or a position lasting at least until the end of the project;
- have a minimum of three years of research or relevant professional experience.

Each proposal must identify at least one main academic or institutional partner in an eligible MENA country. This partner must:

- be affiliated with an accredited university, public research institute, or a relevant non-academic institution (e.g. museum, association, NGO, publisher);
- hold a position lasting at least for the duration of the proposed activity;
- have a minimum of three years of research or relevant professional experience.
- play an active role in the implementation and/or dissemination of the proposed activity.

Additional academic (including MA, PhD, and postdoctoral students) or non-academic partners relevant to the project may be included.

## 2.4. LIMITATIONS ON APPLICATIONS

An applicant who has already been awarded a CDE is not eligible to submit a new application within 12 months following the end of the funded activity.

Only one application may be submitted per Switzerland-MENA partner pair under this call. The same applicant may, however, submit multiple applications with different partners. In such cases, no more than one application may be funded per call.





## 3. PROCEDURE

### 3.1. APPLICATION

Applications shall be submitted on the platform accessible on the LHMENA website. Only applications in English and submitted jointly by the Swiss and MENA partners (i.e., including one eligible main applicant based in Switzerland and at least one co-applicant in the MENA region) will be considered eligible.

### 3.2. SELECTION

Applications will be assessed by the Leading House MENA team. **Only proposals that fulfil all eligibility requirements will be considered for evaluation.** Rather than focusing on scientific merit as such, final selection will be based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

#### 1) Relevance and alignment

- The activity addresses a clear need at the current stage of the collaboration.
- The activity falls within the scope of the call (communication, dissemination or engagement).

#### 2) Clarity of objectives and target groups

- Objectives are clearly formulated, specific and realistic.
- Target group(s) are clearly identified and appropriate for the activity.
- Objectives are coherently linked to one or more objectives of the call (see Section 1).

#### 3) Quality and feasibility of the approach

- The proposed format and methods are coherent and feasible.
- The approach is appropriate for the objectives, target groups and timeframe.
- Engagement is likely to be effective, with innovative or creative elements where relevant.
- The planning and budget are realistic and adequately justified.

#### 4) Strategic value beyond the activity

- The proposed added value is plausible given the scope, format and resources.
- The activity is likely to strengthen the collaboration beyond immediate delivery.

#### 5) Team and partnership quality

- The team has the appropriate expertise to implement the activity.
- Roles, responsibilities and coordination are clearly defined, including financial contributions.
- Swiss and MENA partners are actively involved, with balanced roles and contributions.

#### 6) Additional considerations

In addition to the evaluation criteria above, gender equity and equal opportunities and inclusivity will be considered, with attention to fair opportunities for participation, contribution and recognition within the proposed activities, where relevant (e.g. in relation to early-career researchers, under-represented groups or partners with fewer resources).





For proposals of comparable quality and impact, discipline and country representation may also be considered, with particular attention to collaborations involving domains or MENA countries that have been under-represented in previous calls.

## 4. FUNDING AND BUDGETING

The maximum amount depends on the type of activities. **For open access academic publications**, the CDE cover the article processing charges (APC) up to a maximum of **CHF 2,500**, including any third-party funding. **For all other eligible activities**, the maximum amount is **CHF 5,000**. The grant will be disbursed in one instalment after approval of the final report and will be reduced if actual costs are lower than budgeted.

A detailed budget must be provided in the project proposal. **Eligible cost categories and applicable conditions are detailed in Annex 1**. All budgeted expenses must be justified, directly related to the proposed activities, and described in the *Details* column of the budget table. The total project costs must be indicated, including financial and in-kind contributions from all partners, as well as the amount requested from the CDE. Shifts between individual budget items after the project approval are allowed. They must be approved by the LHMENA if they exceed 10% of the grant.

A meaningful co-funding or in-kind contribution from the applicants is expected, demonstrating active engagement in the collaboration. It includes financial co-funding and/or in-kind contributions by all partners, and possibly third-party contributions. The contribution must be clearly related to the proposed activities or to their immediate collaboration context. **Proposals that do not indicate any contribution will not be considered eligible.**

Funded activities must be led and coordinated by the Swiss and MENA partners. External service providers may be engaged for specific, clearly defined tasks (e.g. design, catering, technical services), but may not replace the active involvement of the applicants in the conception, implementation, and follow-up of the activity.

## 5. MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Funded applicants are required to submit a final activity report describing the implementation and outcomes of the funded activity, in relation to the objectives of the call. Applicants must also submit a final financial report detailing all costs incurred in relation to the funded activity.

## 6. TIMELINE

### 6.1. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

The call opens on 15 February 2026. Applications may be submitted continuously via the online platform accessible on the LHMENA website.





## 6.2. EVALUATION ROUNDS

Applications are evaluated in comparative batches during three evaluation rounds per year, with the following cut-off dates:

- **Evaluation Round 1:**  
Applications submitted between 15 February and 15 May 2026
- **Evaluation Round 2:**  
Applications submitted between 16 May and 15 August 2026
- **Evaluation Round 3:**  
Applications submitted between 16 August and 15 November 2026

A limited number of grants (approximately three per evaluation round) will be awarded, depending on the available budget and the quality of the applications received. Applicants will be informed of the funding decision within approximately one month after the relevant cut-off date.

The call closes on 15 November 2026.

## 6.3. TIMING OF FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Funded activities must be time-bound and realistically planned. The timing refers to the start and implementation of the funded activity, not to the underlying research or collaboration.

As a general rule, proposed activities should start within six months after the cut-off date of the relevant evaluation round, in order to ensure timely implementation and fair access to funding across evaluation rounds.

In the case of events, the funded activity should take place within this six-month timeframe. For all other activities, the funded activity should start within this timeframe and be completed within a maximum of 12 months after the funding decision.

Activities planned to take place shortly after an evaluation round may be considered, provided that their feasibility and level of preparation are clearly demonstrated at the time of application.

## 6.4. REPORTING

Final reports must be submitted no later than one month after the end of the funded activity.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

The Leading House MENA reserves the right to adapt the terms and conditions of this call, where necessary, in light of changing circumstances or decisions by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).





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## ANNEX 1 : COVERED COSTS

The categories below are indicative. All costs must be directly related to the funded activity, proportionate to its scope, and necessary for its implementation. A single proposal may include costs from several categories, where relevant.

Category	Eligible	Conditions
Work-related institutional costs	Limited	Staff time may be charged <b>only</b> for Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education in Switzerland. The work of the main applicant is excluded. No new positions may be created. <b>Maximum 20% of the total grant.</b>
Travel	Yes	Travel directly linked to the funded activity (e.g. flights, train, local transport). Economy class only. Visa and travel insurance costs are eligible where required.
Subsistence (accommodation and meals)	Yes	A living allowance may be paid as lump sum to cover room and board costs. Rates applicable to mid-range hotels and restaurants constitute the maximum reference.
Event organisation costs	Yes	Venue and equipment rental, catering and hospitality, exhibition materials, technical support, costs related to hybrid or online formats, and honoraria (e.g. external experts, guest speakers or moderators).
Production costs	Yes	Design and production of physical and digital materials (e.g. brochures, posters, infographics, educational materials, videos, podcasts).
Promotion and dissemination	Yes	Advertising and promotion of events or dissemination materials (e.g. social media ads, print or online promotion), where justified by the target audiences and objectives.
Translation and interpretation	Yes	Interpretation (simultaneous or consecutive) or translation of materials directly linked to the funded activity and target audiences.
Open access publication fees	Limited	APC for open access journal articles, up to CHF 2,500 (including third-party funding). Academic open access books are not eligible and must be submitted to the SNSF.





**The following costs cannot be covered by the CDE:**

- research activities, including data collection or data analysis;
- salaries or personnel costs not explicitly allowed above;
- overhead or general administrative costs;
- purchase of equipment or hardware normally provided by institutions;
- infrastructure that can reasonably be provided as an in-kind contribution.

