



LEADING HOUSE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP GRANTS CALL FOR PROJECTS 2025

1. BACKGROUND

The Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) commissioned the HES-SO as the Leading House (LH) for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. HES-SO has been in charge of the development of scientific collaborations between Switzerland and countries of the MENA region since 2017. The funding period 2025-2028 will include a yearly call for Research Partnership Grants (RPGs).

The following countries of the MENA region are eligible for this call: **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Occupied Palestinian territory, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.**

This call will fund approximately 10 grants, subject to the number of applications received as well as compliance with the criteria for evaluation and selection (see section 5. Evaluation and selection in this document for details).

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The RPGs aim to support the development of new joint project proposals or to connect existing, independently funded projects in Switzerland and in the MENA partner countries into long-lasting collaborations. Open to all scientific fields, the RPGs recognize and support a wide range of research approaches and methodologies. These may include desk-based research, fieldwork, feasibility studies, archival research, qualitative interviews, surveys, artistic practices, design thinking, or other forms of collaborative work, depending on the needs and methods of the discipline. The ultimate objective is to build partnerships that can lead to applications for further funding from other agencies (e.g., national funding agencies or EU funding schemes), and/or to develop long-term partnerships between two or more institutions or research groups.

3. ELIGIBILITY

The call is open to all scientific disciplines and fields of research. However, proposals planning developments for military application will be rejected.





All scientists 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 Swiss scientist is the main applicant. He or she must hold a position, either permanent or lasting until the end of the project, and have a research or practical experience of three years or more.

The principal investigator/researcher in the MENA region must be affiliated to an accredited university or a public research institute and must hold a faculty or scientist position in addition to several years of research or practical experience.

4. FUNDING AND BUDGETING

The maximum amount for a research partnership grant is CHF 25,000. The grant will be disbursed in two instalments: 80% after signing the grant contract and 20% after approval of the final report. At the end of the project all funds received and unspent must be reimbursed to the LHMENA.

A detailed budget must be provided in the project proposal. Budgeted expenses must be justified and related to the proposed research activities, according to the expense categories listed in the table below. The total costs of the project should be made explicit, including the contribution of all partners and the remaining amount requested via the RPG. The mutual commitment of the partners in both countries will serve as an indicator for the strength of the partnership and the financial sustainability of the project. It includes financial co-funding and in-kind contributions by all partners, and possibly third-party contributions. During the project, shifts between individual budget items are allowed. They must be approved by the LHMENA if they exceed 10% of the grant.

Researchers can apply for coverage of research costs as well as for the funding of scientific cooperation, networking and communication. The table below indicates which costs can be covered for the different types of partners:

Category	Swiss partner(s)	Partner(s) in the MENA region	Comments
Material	Yes	Yes	Costs are eligible for funding if they are directly related to the research work (equipment, consumables, field expenses, cost of computing time, use of research infrastructure). Equipment and facilities that generally form part of the basic infrastructure, operation and standards of a scientific institution may not be funded. These include, in particular: standard IT equipment incl. hardware and software, laboratory facilities and equipment, any other facilities and equipment routinely made available for the relevant research field in a research institution or environment.





Category	Swiss partner(s)	Partner(s) in the MENA region	Comments
Work-related institutional costs	Yes with restrictions (see Comments)	No	The RPG can cover the time dedicated to the project by staff in Universities of applied sciences and Universities of teacher education. The work of the main applicant is not included. The funds available should not be used to create new positions. Maximum 20% of the overall grant can be used for this budget line.
Travel	Yes	Yes	Only travel costs directly linked to the research project may be charged to the grant. Economy class flights may be charged to the grant.
Subsistence costs	Yes	Yes	A living allowance can be paid as lump sum to cover room and board costs. The rates applicable at mid-price hotels and restaurants constitute the maximum reference price. Please note that this instrument is not designed to support the mobility of researchers in itself; thus, applications consisting only of research stays will be considered as ineligible.
Publications	No	No	The publication and dissemination of results are supported by the “Connect & Collaborate Grants” of the Leading House MENA. A separate application to this instrument should be submitted in due time.
Subcontracting	No	Yes with restrictions (see Comments)	Research activities that cannot be conducted by the Swiss partner, in particular those that must be conducted in the partner country (field work, data acquisition, interviews, surveys, translation), can be outsourced to the partner(s) in the MENA region or to third parties. Maximum 20% of the overall grant can be used for this budget line.
Conferences and workshops (attendance)	Yes	Yes	Registration fees, travels, accommodations and daily expenses related to the attendance of an event, in Switzerland, in the partner country or, in exceptional cases in another country, are eligible.





Category	Swiss partner(s)	Partner(s) in the MENA region	Comments
Conferences and workshops (organisation)	Yes with restrictions (see Comments)	Yes with restrictions (see Comments)	Events integral to the project may be eligible for funding. However, they must be justified within the project's scope and objectives. For events beyond the project's core activities, an additional application for funding via the "Connect & Collaborate Grants" instrument should be submitted separately in due time.
Overhead	No	No	

5. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The eligibility of the project proposals will be checked internally by the Leading House. Eligible projects will be evaluated externally by reviewers. Each project will be evaluated by two reviewers from two different institutions. The final decision will be taken by a selection committee composed of the Leading House management team and members of the rectorate of the HES-SO.

The evaluation is based on the following criteria:

- Accuracy of the research plan and application
- Feasibility of the project
- Relevance of the expected outputs
- Budget adequacy
- Contributions by all involved partners, including funding and in-kind contributions
- Expertise and complementarities of the partners
- Potential for long-term collaboration and follow-up activities

6. MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The Swiss main applicant is responsible for managing the funds and reporting. He or she must submit a final activity and financial report one month after the termination of the innovation project. The latest deadline for reporting is end of February 2027.

Agreements between the Swiss main applicant and project partner(s) are the responsibility of the Swiss main applicant, who remains solely responsible for project implementation.





7. APPLICATION

Applications shall be submitted on the platform accessible on the LHMENA website.

8. TIMELINE

Launch of the call	05.05.2025
Deadline for submission	22.08.2025, 17:00 CEST
Result notification	November 2025
Latest project start date	January 2026
Project duration	Up to 12 months
Reporting due	February 2027

9. CONTACT

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