Bilateral research collaboration with the Asia-Pacific region 2013-2016

Call for pilot activities with Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam

Introduction and background

In 2013, the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) renewed its contract with ETH Zurich as the Leading House (LH) for bilateral collaboration with partner institutions in China, Japan and South Korea as well as exploratory activities in additional Asia-Pacific countries. EPFL has the Leading House (LH) mandate for Vietnam.

The strategic goals related to exploring the Science and Technology landscape in the Asia-Pacific region are:

i. to identify countries with promising potential for future research collaboration,
ii. to develop pilot collaboration activities in the region,
iii. to provide comprehensive exploration and provision of information of the emerging countries in the region to SERI

Based on a survey conducted among all Swiss institutions of research and higher education, and a national workshop in Switzerland in November 2013, 18 potential candidate countries have been identified, out of which Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam\(^1\) (hereafter “focus countries”) clearly stand out due to the intensity of already existing collaboration with Switzerland. During a workshop held in June 2014 in Singapore, delegations of these four focus countries had a chance to explore scientific interests and potential research collaboration mechanisms between their countries and Switzerland.

This call for pilot activities is a follow-up action to kick-off or intensify research collaboration between Switzerland and these four focus countries.

Goals and objectives

The goal of the pilot activities is to establish links with the focus countries. Specifically, the activities shall achieve the following objectives:

i. to intensify interaction and scientific cooperation between Swiss scientists or institutions and the focus countries
ii. to establish research partnerships of mutual interest and benefits
iii. to connect existing but separately funded research projects in Switzerland and the focus countries.

Proposals linked to larger national and international programmes\(^2\) that aim at improving the research output and internationalisation of research activities are particularly welcome.

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

Thematic scope

The call is open for activities within all scientific disciplines and fields of research.

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\(^1\) All proposals with partners in Vietnam will be managed jointly with EPFL.

\(^2\) Such as the World Bank funded Higher Education Development Policy Program Vietnam (2013-2014) or the Research and Innovation in Science and Technology Project Indonesia (2013-2020)
Instruments

The following instruments are available for pilot activities:

**People exchange**
- Support for faculty exchange
- Support of short-term stays in the partner laboratory/institution for PhD students and postdoctoral fellows

**Conferences and Workshops**
- Joint workshops and meetings
- Attendance of conferences at the partner’s institution
- Jointly organised short courses (e.g. summer schools)

**Seed funding for initiating larger joint activities**
- Seed funding for preparing joint project proposals to be submitted to other funding agencies
- Seed funding for institutional partnership development
- Seed funding for Industry-Academia-Cooperation

The details of each instrument are specified in the Annex.

Project duration

The duration of the pilot activity may not exceed 12 months.

Funding and Budgeting

The maximum grant sum for a pilot activity is **CHF 10,000**. Salary costs will not be covered.
A detailed budget is required. Projected expenses must be justified and related to the proposed research activities. The contribution of each partner must be made explicit in cash and in-kind.

Eligibility

**Switzerland**

The call is open to all scientists of federal and cantonal universities, universities of applied sciences or universities of teachers’ education, or public research institutions. Applications by doctoral students must be submitted by their supervisors. The Swiss scientist is the main applicant.

**Focus countries**

Research partners must be scientists affiliated with a university or a public research institute. The principle investigator must hold a faculty or senior scientist position or a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or equivalent) with several years of research experience.

**Private sector**

Industry partners in Switzerland or in the focus country may collaborate as third parties with their own resources.

Application

The main applicant must be employed at one of the above mentioned Swiss institutions. Applications must be submitted to ETH Zurich. The main applicant will be responsible for administrating the funds and for the financial and scientific reporting.
Timeline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call release</td>
<td>15 October 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for submission</td>
<td>23 November 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation and funding decision</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notification</td>
<td>15 December 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project start date</td>
<td>January 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project duration</td>
<td>Up to 12 months</td>
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Evaluation and selection

Applications will be assessed by an evaluation panel and notified by ETH Zurich in the case of partnerships with Indonesia, Malaysia or Thailand, and by EPFL in the case of partnerships with Vietnam. The evaluation is based on the following criteria (not listed in order of priority):

- Scientific, educational and technological merit of the anticipated outcomes
- Originality and feasibility of the proposed activity
- Added value for ongoing research on both sides
- Expertise and complementarities of the partner laboratories/institutes
- Potential synergies between the partners
- Contributions by all involved partners
- Experience and past performance of applicants
- Potential for long-term collaboration and follow-up activities
- Promotion of young and female researchers

Reporting

The Swiss main applicant must submit a final scientific and technical report to ETH Zurich in the case of projects with Indonesia, Malaysia or Thailand and to EPFL for partnerships with Vietnam at the latest one month after termination of the pilot activity.

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Annex: Application forms and specifications for each funding instrument