



## Internationalizing Finnish science: Building Sustainable Bridges to Africa, Asia and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES

1<sup>st</sup> March, 2019

### CALLS FOR FUNDING UNDER THE FINCEAL PLUS BRIDGES PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT INSTRUMENT

#### 1. Background

FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES is a project financed by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture in 2019-2020 with the purpose of supporting collaboration between the Finnish research community and their counterparts in Africa, Asia and the LAC regions. Previously, the focus of FinCEAL has been on supporting research collaboration in the thematic areas determined by the EU's bi-regional science, technology and innovation (STI) policy dialogues with Africa, Asia and LAC. FinCEAL BRIDGES will continue to contribute towards strengthening bi-regional cooperation, while expanding the thematic focus to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and [the 17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG's\)](#), particularly [Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals](#). On a national level, BRIDGES also supports the [International Strategy for Higher Education and Research 2017-2025](#).

The specific objectives of the project are to:

1. Support Finnish participation in research collaboration with partners from the target regions;
2. Strengthen Finnish participation in and understanding of key national and international science, technology, and innovation (STI) policies and dialogues with the regions, specifically those related to the Sustainable Development Goals, the European Union's STI policy dialogues with the target regions, and the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture's International Strategy for Higher Education and Research 2017-2025; and
3. Gather, disseminate, and promote awareness of Finnish expertise, cooperation, and know-how in the target regions and in Finland. In line with the planned activities and project objectives, we are pleased to announce the opening of the rolling call for FinCEAL Plus funding under the Partnership Support Instrument.

#### 2. The Partnership Support Instrument



The Partnership Support Instrument is a granting system that offers small-scale financial support for building and maintaining the Finnish scientific

community's research and innovation cooperation initiatives with their peers in the target regions and addressing one or more of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). The grants are issued on a rolling basis until the designated funds have been committed. The grants should not be used to supplement the funding of already-existing projects such as those funded by the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI-ICI).

Through the Partnership Support Instrument, researchers based in Finnish institutions can apply for one of the following funding modalities:

- Open Travel Grants,
- Event Grants
- Research Visit Grants.

Due to significantly reduced funding and a shorter project period for FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES, the following changes to the Partnership Support Instrument have been implemented:

- Project Preparatory Grants will not be available in the current phase. Proposal preparation is still supported through the other grant modalities.
- Funding thresholds have been reduced, and fewer grants will be awarded than before.
- Grants will only be available through this Call in 2019. Applications are evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The Rolling Call can be closed at any time when all the designated funds have been committed.
- The evaluation criteria for the awarding of grants have been updated to reflect the changes made in the focus of the project, and in particular the focus on the SDGs.
- Competition for the grants is likely to be higher than in previous phases, and the evaluation and selection process more rigorous. Preference is given to applicants who have not received FinCEAL funding before. We encourage all applicants to pay extra attention to the evaluation criteria outlined in 5.2.

### 3. Target group

The target group for the Partnership Support Instrument are senior and early career researchers and research teams in Finnish universities, universities of applied sciences and independent research institutions. All the grants, including the Research Visit Grants, have to be applied for by, and will be issued to, a researcher that has a contractual relationship with a Finnish higher education or research institution and resides in Finland.

In the case of the Research Visit Grants, the funds are used to cover for the costs of partners visiting a Finnish institution from one of the target regions in compliance with the plan outlined in the accepted grant application. Event Grants can also be used to cover for the costs of experts invited from the target regions as speakers, for example.

### 4. Specifications of the Call

#### 4.1 What can you apply for

##### Open Travel Grants

The purpose of Open Travel Grants is to facilitate participation in thematic conferences, networking meetings, international dissemination events, and other events strategic for strengthening research cooperation with partners from Africa, Asia or the LAC region. The event should be relevant to one or more of the SDG's.

A portion of the funding is reserved for PhD students. PhD students who are at middle or late-stage of their PhD studies will be given priority. PhD students are required to send a recommendation letter from their supervisor as an annex to the application. Recommendation letters should be sent by email directly to the designated FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES Coordinator (contact information is provided at the end of the Call).

Eligible costs include travel, accommodation, per diem, and possible visa costs and registration fees for events. Travel should be with the most economical means possible. Per diem regulations for 2019 are available at: <https://www.vero.fi/en/detailed-guidance/decisions/47405/tax-exempt-allowances-in-2019-for-business-travel/>

## Event Grants

The purpose of Event Grants is to support the planning of workshops, seminars, conferences or other types of events related to the SDG's and science, technology, and/or innovation cooperation with Africa, Asia or the LAC region. Event Grants can be used to support the organization of 1) seminars or conferences that are open for participation from other Finnish and international institutions, or 2) workshops or consortium meetings for a closed group, with the aim of preparing a funding proposal for an EU or other international funding instrument. The event can be organized in Finland or abroad.

Eligible costs include travel and accommodation costs for speakers or partners and other expenses related to event organization such as coffee breaks. Travel of speakers should be by the most economical means possible and catering costs kept to a reasonable level.

## Research Visit Grants from the target regions to Finland

The purpose of Research Visit Grants is for Finnish research institutions to invite partner researchers from the target regions for short-term visits. The invited expert should be either a senior researcher (already has a PhD) or a senior staff member. The joint research activity should be relevant to one or more of the SDG's. These visits could have a number of different aims, but in particular, preference is given to those that include preparing a proposal for an EU or other international funding instrument.

The grants can be used to cover travel, accommodation and daily allowances of the visiting researcher, for a maximum of one month. Salary costs are not eligible and should be covered either by the home or host institution. In the case of a longer visit, supplementary funding should be secured. FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES does not restrict the duration of the visit itself. Travel of the visiting researcher should be by the most economic means possible.

### 4.2 How much can you apply for

The funding thresholds for the different modalities are:

- Travel Grants – max. 1700€,
- Event Grants – max. 3500€,
- Research Visit Grants – max. 3500€.

Researchers can no longer submit more than one application at once. This also includes team members applying funding for the same activity, such as an event or a research visit. If more than one application for the same or a closely related activity is submitted, only the first one will be evaluated, and the others considered ineligible.

Generally, FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES will not fund 100% of the total costs but requires applicants to have partial support from their home institution or other supplemental external funding. Applications for 100% of the total costs need to be well justified. Exceptions can be made especially in the case of PhD students. Applicants will be required to declare other funding granted or applied for the same activity.

## 5. Application and evaluation process

### 5.1. How and when to apply

Applications can be sent in at any time, but applicants are advised to apply for funding **at least 2 months before** their planned activity. All funded activities must take place between **April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019**. Funding for activities outside of this period cannot be applied for. The Call can be closed at any time when all the designated funds have been committed. Applications are submitted by completing an online application form specific for each grant modality. Please note that applications are not processed during holiday periods. The application forms can be accessed through the following links:

- Application form for Open Travel Grants: [www.unipid.fi/psi\\_forms/form1/](http://www.unipid.fi/psi_forms/form1/)
- Application form for Event Grants: [www.unipid.fi/psi\\_forms/form2/](http://www.unipid.fi/psi_forms/form2/)
- Application form for Research Visit Grants: [www.unipid.fi/psi\\_forms/form3/](http://www.unipid.fi/psi_forms/form3/)

Applicants will receive an automatic email confirmation when submitting their application.

## 5.2. Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated on the last week of every month. Grant decisions will be sent by email to each applicant during the following month. The list of recipients may also be published on the UniPID website.

The applications are evaluated according to the following main criteria:

- How relevant is the event to the SDGs?
- How well has the applicant justified the importance of the activity in regard to his/her own work and the larger framework of international cooperation of the team/institution?
- How likely is it that the activity will lead towards concrete research cooperation with partners from the target region, especially new externally funded projects?
- To what extent does the activity increase the visibility of Finnish expertise in the target region?
- How active a role will the applicant have in the event?
- How well planned is the activity and what is the overall quality of the application?
- How realistic is the budget estimation and is it in proportion to the proposed activity?
- Has the applicant received previous funding from the FinCEAL Initiative?

As secondary criteria, we also evaluate and award extra points for the following:

- The activity is relevant to innovation or multi-sectoral cooperation
- The planned activity contributes to science, technology or innovation policies with Africa/Asia/LAC?
- The activity contributes significantly to the visibility of Finnish STI's contribution to the SDGs
- The applicant or his/her team have projects registered in the FinCEAL Infobank

## 6. Issuing of funds and reporting

### 6.1 Grant payment

University of Jyväskylä is responsible for issuing grants related to Africa cooperation, University of Eastern Finland for Asia-related activities and University of Helsinki for Latin America and the Caribbean. Grantees will sign a consent form with the University of Jyväskylä, the University of Eastern Finland or the University of Helsinki depending on which regional component the funds will be issued from. Further instructions on disbursing funds will be sent with the grant award notification.

As a rule, the home institution of the grantee is required to invoice the grant. Only in exceptional cases can travel grants be paid directly to the grantee. Travel grants will be issued against accrued costs and not in advance. Research Visit Grants and Event Grants are awarded in advance, before accrued costs. Grantees are required to arrange their institution to invoice the grant within 1 month of receiving the grant award notification (Research Visit Grants and Event Grants) or within one month of attending the event (Travel Grants).

## 6.2 Reporting

Grantees are required to submit an online evaluation form to the FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES Coordinator of the selected region within one month of the end of the funded activity. A link to the form will be sent with the grant award notification. Recipients must also be willing and dedicated to sharing information regarding the proceedings and findings from the activity to a wider audience, e.g. in the FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES newsletter.

To verify costs, recipients of Travel Grants are required to attach copies of all costs covered by with the grant to the grant invoice. For the other grant modalities, pdf copies of all costs covered by the grant must be sent to the corresponding FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES Coordinator within one month of the activity. The link to the evaluation form and detailed instructions on reporting are included in the consent form sent with the grant award notification.

## 7. Data protection

The University of Jyväskylä, acting as coordinator for the Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID Network) and FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES project, is committed to collecting and processing your personal data in a fair and transparent manner and in compliance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation and the Finnish Data Protection Act.

For more information on the categories of personal data we collect and their processing, please see our privacy policy available through this link: <http://unipid.fi/site/assets/files/4260/finceal-privacy-notice-clean.pdf>

## 8. More information

We offer an online Info session on the Partnership Support Grants on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 from 14 to 15.30 via Adobe Connect. In the Info session we will go through the guidelines on the application process, as well as the changes from the previous period. Ample time will be reserved for Q&A. You are warmly welcome to join!

Please register for the Info session latest on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at: *[link to be added]*  
Information on how to access the Info session from your computer will be sent to all registered participants prior to the session.

More information on FinCEAL Plus BRIDGES is available through our website: [www.unipid.fi/finceal](http://www.unipid.fi/finceal).

For any inquiries related to the grants or application process, please email the Project Coordinators:

Melissa Plath (Africa) [melissa.plath@jyu.fi](mailto:melissa.plath@jyu.fi)  
Jarkko Mutanen (Asia) [jarkko.mutanen@uef.fi](mailto:jarkko.mutanen@uef.fi)  
Kajsa Ekroos (LAC) [kajsa.ekroos@helsinki.fi](mailto:kajsa.ekroos@helsinki.fi)