

## Call for Regional Research Proposals in the Field of Social Sciences, 2013

**General** (see also <http://www.rrpp-westernbalkans.net>)

The Regional Research Promotion Programme (RRPP) Western Balkans, launched in 2007, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), aims to establish and **strengthen research capacities in the field of social sciences** in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The RRPP provides funding to researchers from the region conducting relevant research projects.

The RRPP Management, hosted at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, is launching a **Call for regional research project proposals**. The Call is open to institutions and researchers from the Western Balkans.

Research proposals submitted under the Call should contain a social science perspective, apply scientific theoretical concepts and focus on the following priority areas:

1. **Governance and decentralisation**, whereby the prerequisites for “good governance” shall be accentuated: rule of law, corruption, transparency of public institutions, the role of external actors in promoting “good governance”; law, morality and politics; independence of judiciary; “checks and balances” in the system of government; constitutions and political practice; democratic accountability and responsiveness of local (and central) government; legitimacy of political institutions; merits of decentralisation; local participation opportunities for citizens; political and administrative decentralisation and their relation to economic development; decentralisation as power dispersion and protection of liberty; ethnic diversity and rights of political minorities; social and economic cross-border relations in the border regions; relationship between the central state and local administration (financial flows); horizontal

cooperation between local/regional governments; formation of local identities; regionalisation as a tool for political autonomy of minorities; political party organisations and local governance; the role of local media; models of decentralisation and regionalisation and the European accession process;

2. **Migration** with the particular focus on return, circular migration and political or economic participation (of returnees); international student mobility with a focus on gender; attitudes toward migration, perception of migrants and diasporas; media coverage of migration issues and policies; role between internal and international migration; impact of remittances within families and local communities; regional migration cooperation; migration and development with a focus on know-how transfer; relation between transnational economic activities, trade and migration; minority rights; a politics of community - the role of political elites in fostering the idea of “diversity in unity”; citizenship politics.
3. **Social disparities and the welfare state with a particular focus on the social and economic challenges in the post-conflict region:** distribution of wealth and other resources in society; welfare states and their impact on social inclusion and social cohesion; the structure of society and its impact on policy-making; the regulation of market systems; rural development and social and economic disparities; class, gender and minority groups and their access to social provision; women, social policy and the labour market; age-based disparities, social policy and the labour market.

The RRPP Website (<http://www.rpp-westernbalkans.net>) contains information on its partners in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia, as well as details on current and completed research projects.

## Funding Scheme

Min duration: 12 months, max duration: 24 months

| Number of countries included | Max. annual budget   |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| at least two countries       | CHF 75'000 annually  |
| at least three countries     | CHF 125'000 annually |
| at least four countries      | CHF 150'000 annually |
| five and up to six countries | CHF 175'000 annually |

The funding will cover the costs of honoraria, equipment and field work, access to knowledge, regional cooperation and networking, improvement of methods training, publishing, linking research and policy activities. Note: international mentoring will be funded through a separate budget once the projects and mentors are selected.

Funding is provided for projects with a timeframe of **12** consecutive months, up to a total of 24 months. Initial funding is provided only for the first 12 months and continuation of the projects will depend on an evaluation of progress on the project. Details will be duly provided. However, the envisioned budget plan to be sent with the application needs to relate to the whole duration of the project.

## Submission

The official application form must be used to submit research proposals by the deadline of **31 March 2014**. The first page of this form must be signed and scanned. All documents (RRPP Application form, RRPP Budget Research Grant 2012, CVs, annexes) need to be submitted as a single **PDF file to the RRPP Management** to the following e-mail-address: [rrpp@unifr.ch](mailto:rrpp@unifr.ch) and [office@rrpp-westernbalkans.net](mailto:office@rrpp-westernbalkans.net) (for security reasons, please use both addresses). For any queries or additional information, please use the office e-mail: [office@rrpp-westernbalkans.net](mailto:office@rrpp-westernbalkans.net).

When sending your application please state as the subject of your e-mail one of the following abbreviations for the country of the leading institution (AL=Albania; BH=Bosnia and Herzegovina; KS=Kosovo; MK=Macedonia; MNE=Montenegro; RS=Serbia), followed by the name of the leading institution. For instance: **AL\_Institute for Social Research**.

The submission of several applications is permitted; each application will be judged according to its individual merits. However, there are certain restrictions related to the participation in several projects. Firstly, the main (leading) applicant can only be an institution. Secondly, the same institution can be involved in a maximum of two projects simultaneously, once as a leading institution and once as a partner. Furthermore, individual researchers and technical staff can also only be involved in a maximum of two projects simultaneously, only once as a project coordinator.

*All applicants will receive a confirmation e-mail within three working days after their submission. If this is not the case, please contact us again.*

#### **Evaluation criteria:**

- Completeness of application; Note: applications which do not contain all requested documents and which are not provided in a single pdf file will be automatically rejected. Technical criteria include:
  - a. Applicant is a research institution;
  - b. All components of application need to be completed and submitted as a readable single pdf. file;
  - c. Budget correctly completed and corresponds with funding scheme;
  - d. Activity plan included and corresponds with funding scheme;
  - e. Application signed;
  - f. More than one country included;
  - g. Duration corresponds with funding scheme;
  - h. Participation at international conferences included;
  - i. Plagiarism test passed.
- Scientific quality (elaboration of research question, use of relevant scientific theoretical concepts, methods and research plan are the most important components);
- Relevance and link to the RRPP research topics;
- Feasibility;

- Innovation;
- Regional dimension (cooperation and networking), alignment with relevant initiatives for changes (regional, European, other), inclusion of at least two countries as research object;
- Coherence of proposed topic with research already conducted at home institution;
- Scientific competence of the applicants (scientific record);
- Involvement of both young and female researchers;
- Sound financial management capacities and adherence to good governance principles (accountability, efficiency, non-discrimination, participation, transparency).

*Note: institutions which are not eligible for application due to previous mishandlings will be automatically rejected. More information can be provided upon request to individual applicants who are not sure if their institutions are eligible.*

### **Selection timeframe**

- March 2014: Deadline to submit research proposals
- May 2014: Final decision of the Steering Board
- June 2014: Contracting and final negotiations
- July 2014: Start of approved research projects