

Guideline for the Hubert Curien Partnership (PHC) - Hibiscus – France-Malaysia

1. Presentation of the Program

The Partnership Hubert Curien-Hibiscus is a joint funding program with the objective of structuring and stimulating research cooperation between France and Malaysia (hereafter called together “the Parties”). It is hereinafter referred to as "the Program".

The Program is based on call for projects, an independent evaluation process and a selection of projects guided by a common interest and ambition for excellence.

Projects have a duration of two (2) years and are financed according to each party’s funding process on an equal basis by each of the Parties. The call for projects is open to all research teams of both countries, from research institutes or from public or private companies having started joint research. The eligibility for Malaysian applicants is in Annex 1.

2. Objectives

The Program aims to:

- a. strengthen scientific and technological exchanges between France and Malaysia on the basis of mutual benefit;
- b. support existing cooperation and encourage new collaborations and foster the development of innovative and high-level joint research projects;
- c. encourage the participation of French and Malaysian researchers, post-doctoral and PhD students in joint research projects by supporting academic and scientific cooperation between the two countries;
- d. foster the promotion and enhancement of joint research activities of the scientific communities of the two countries (scientific co-publications, seminars, workshops, joint patent registration);

- e. develop synergies between the scientific communities of the two countries in order to create structured and sustainable research networks of high level and recognized at European and international level.

3. *Areas of priority cooperation*

This list of the priority areas for joint research projects will be specified before each call for proposal.

4. *Joint Program Committee*

In carrying out the Program and achieving the objectives of this Guideline, the Parties shall establish a Joint Selection Committee, hereinafter referred to as "the Committee".

The missions of the Committee are as follows:

- a. the organization of the call for projects;
- b. the definition of priority research areas;
- c. selecting projects and determining the level of funding dedicated to each project;
- d. the technical and financial monitoring of the Program;
- e. the coherence of the Program with other actions carried out within the framework of Franco-Malaysian cooperation.

The Joint Selection Committee of the "Hubert Curien Franco-Malaysian Partnership – Hibiscus" is composed of:

- for the French side, experts appointed and led by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, including the French Embassy in Malaysia, in connection with the Ministry of Higher Education and Research;
- for the Malaysian side, experts appointed and led by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

The Committee is co-chaired by a representative of each Party.

The Committee meets once a year in France or Malaysia or at the written request of one of the Parties. Approved by the Parties, the meetings of the Committee may also be held by videoconference.

Costs related to the organization and holding of the meetings of the Committee shall be borne by the receiving Party, the cost of transport shall be borne by the Sending Party.

5. *Schedule of the Program*

The corresponding schedule is decided by the parties according to the following schedule:

- a. joint announcement of the call;
- b. deadline for submission of proposals within two (2) months;
- c. exchange between the Parties of the lists of nominations within one (1) week;
- d. completion of the evaluation procedure by the Parties within three (3) months;
- e. exchange between the parties of the evaluation results within one (1) week;
- f. Committee meeting within two (2) weeks;
- g. announcement of the list of selected projects within one (1) week;
- h. commitment of the projects within thirty (30) days for the French Party and (to be defined) days for the Malaysian part.

6. *Admissibility and evaluation of projects*

When selecting joint scientific research projects, the following conditions will be observed:

- a. Proposals must be submitted simultaneously in each of the two countries by a French project manager and a Malaysian project leader, after agreement with their respective institutions.

- b. The proposals must include detailed information on the objectives, methodology, composition and complementarities of each of the research teams, the expected scientific and technological results and the projected timetable for the implementation of the project.

Only joint proposals submitted simultaneously in each of the two countries shall be accepted.

Proposals are evaluated by each party, separately and independently, in accordance with their national evaluation procedures.

The Committee takes note of the classification of evaluations and selects projects that meet the common interests of cooperation. Only proposals approved by the Committee receive financial support jointly.

The evaluation criteria to be considered for both Parties are:

- a. existing collaboration;
- b. the scientific quality of the project;
- c. its innovative character;
- d. the competence and complementarity of the research teams;
- e. the involvement and training of young researchers, particularly doctoral or post-doctoral students;
- f. expected scientific and / or industrial results (co-publications, patents);
- g. the prospects for developing and structuring the partnerships in the longer term.

7. Financial issues

The Parties shall, within the limits of their resources, grant each other their annual contributions to the financing of the Program on a parity basis.

The French Government finances the first call for projects up to thirty-five thousand (35,000.00) euros and the Malaysian part up to one hundred and sixty-five thousand (around 165,000.00) Ringgits. From the second call for projects and for the following calls, the overall funding for the program will be increased to seventy thousand (70,000.00) euros for the French part and to three hundred and thirty thousand (around 330,000.00) Malaysian Ringgit by the Malaysian part. Malaysia applicants may apply up to RM33,000 per year for each project.

The Committee decides the number of new projects to be supported, within the limits of the jointly agreed budget for the implementation of the Program.

The duration of each project is up to two (2) years. Exceptionally, an extension of one (1) year may be granted after consideration by the Committee of a reasoned request submitted by the French and Malaysian project leaders.

Please refer Annex 2 for eligible costs and financial regulations for Malaysian applicants.

8. Reporting

Funding is granted to each project on an annual basis. The funds must be spent between 1 January and 31 December of the current year and cannot be carried over to the following year.

An activity report is sent to the Committee by both the French and Malaysian project leaders within three (3) months after the end of the projects, which specifies all the resources used by the institutions and partner laboratories. This final report will also pay particular attention to the scientific publications, communications and events carried out as part of the project, and to prospects for further collaboration.

Reporting and monitoring of Malaysian component of the project is subject to MOE's monitoring mechanism.

9. *Dissemination of results*

Each Party undertakes to maintain the confidentiality and secrecy of the information, documents and data exchanged with the other Party in the implementation of this Guideline. Each project team is also required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The protection of intellectual property rights and the use of research results, as well as their possible exploitation, are defined by convention by the research teams in accordance with the laws and regulations applied in both countries, before the launch of each selected project.

Eligibility of Malaysia Applicants

1. Principal Investigators may only submit one application to this scheme as Principal Investigator, but may be involved in more applications if listed as a Co-Investigator.
2. Research Organisations eligible to apply are Public Universities and Private Universities. Researchers based in other Research Organisations can be a Co-Investigator but not eligible to apply as a Principal Investigator.
3. The Malaysian PI must have been awarded a doctorate at the time of application. Applicants working towards a PhD, or awaiting the outcome of their viva/submission of corrections are not eligible to apply.
4. Applicants must be Malaysian citizens and hold a permanent or fixed-term contract (minimum one-year term) in an eligible university. Applicants with fixed terms contracts finishing before their grant end-date must secure confirmation from their Head of Department, stating that their contract will be extended to cover the duration of the award if their application is successful.
5. Contact between the Malaysian PI and French PI prior to the application is essential. This contact should lead to a clearly defined and mutually beneficial research project proposal. Please note that MoE will not be able to assist in locating a French collaborator.
6. Applications cannot be accepted from Principal Investigators in commercial organisations.
7. Applicants must be competent in oral and written English.
8. The Malaysian applicant's employing organisation must be willing to agree to administer the grant.
9. Malaysian applicants will need to adhere to MoE progress and outcomes monitoring requirements.

Eligible Costs and Financial Regulations for Malaysian Applicants

1. Eligible Costs

a. Vote 21000 (Travelling and Transportation)

The expenditure includes all domestic/overseas travelling and transportation of Malaysian researchers. Travelling overseas is only permitted to partner's country and subject to grant sufficiency. Attachment at partner's institution is subject to grant sufficiency. The vote is capped at 20% of the overall cost.

b. Vote 27000 (Research Supplies & Materials)

The expenditure may include supplies and materials relevant to the project.

c. Vote 29000 (Other Services)

The expenditure may include services relevant to the project.

2. Financial Regulations

- a. Malaysian applicants may apply up to RM33,000 per year for each project.
- b. Stipend for post-doctoral or post graduate students must not be paid from this grant.
- c. Complementary funding (including in-kind contribution from the university or other institutions) is highly encouraged. Proof of funding is required and must be attached in the application form (attachment in MyGRANTS).