Berlin Center for Global Engagement
Inaugural Call for Proposals

Through the establishment of the Berlin Center for Global Engagement – BCGE the Berlin University Alliance, consisting of Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin and the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, will (a) underline the credibility of the Alliance partners as responsible and recognized institutions of excellence whose outreach and institutional culture are truly global, (b) enhance the scholarly reach and recognition of Berlin as a center for knowledge production, that combines research in different disciplines with regional expertise on and from the so-called Global South\(^1\) and (c) develop and disseminate new insights into the ethical, political, and cultural challenges of scholarly interaction with academic partners worldwide.

The Berlin Center for Global Engagement (BCGE) will act as a platform for existing and new projects in the fields of (1) research on, from, and with the Global South, (2) science diplomacy and (3) academic freedom in order to reach the Alliances’ goal of “crossing boundaries towards an integrated research environment.” The BCGE aims to encourage and supports faculty members from the four partner institutions in all disciplines to develop existing as well as new projects that either seek to develop new partnerships with academic partners (individuals, institutions and networks) in the Global South; strengthen the exchange between researchers from different disciplines and policy-makers on topics of global interest, including but not limited to the Sustainable Development Goals; or integrate different local and international communities into the process of knowledge production.

This inaugural call is part of a mapping process that aims at identifying possible collaborative projects between faculty members of the four partners and partners in the Global South on themes of global interest and regional expertise. In this process the BCGE will support faculty members in matching their research interests with faculty members of the partners of the Alliance and encourage them to set up interdisciplinary research groups that might elaborate signature projects within the frame of the BCGE.

Objective:

Internationalization, as a driving force for higher education reform, has come under severe pressure in recent years. The rise of populist governments and movements, encroachments on academic freedom, flows of migration, an overheated planet, the spread of the COVID-19 virus and measures taken against it, all constitute major challenges for academic inquiry, its communities and its societal recognition. These different challenges require a new research contract that promotes new forms of scientific exchange with policy-makers, society and different, so-far underrepresented scientific communities, namely academic partners in

\(^1\) While we do not define the “Global South” preliminary as a geographical area but rather as a term that challenges existing hierarchies in knowledge production, the DFG country list might serve as a reference to choose possible international partners: https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/internationales/entwicklungslaender/entwicklungslaender_liste.pdf
developing countries, but also at-risk and refugee scholars in Berlin. Over the past years, Berlin has become a laboratory for exploring these challenges. On the one hand, all four Alliance partners have a long and diverse tradition of area studies and country expertise in different disciplines. They maintain extensive connections with scholars and partner institutions worldwide that might gain visibility if presented along thematic lines. On the other hand, Berlin acts as a major host for researchers from all over the world, many of them considered to be living “in exile.”

The objective of this call is to encourage projects that build on and (re)activate this heterogenous and unique knowledge and expertise in order to address the major challenges outlined above and make the knowledge available for policymakers and the wider public. Taking into account the aforementioned goals of the Center and the current challenges for scientific research we encourage in this first explorative call:

- **Multi-stakeholder dialogue**: Projects that pursue a multi-stakeholder dialogue on research topics of global interests and/or on different ways of distributing knowledge gained from interdisciplinary research on different countries and regions. Multi-stakeholder dialogues take place in form of e.g. workshops and rountables and connect researchers from different disciplines and scholars from the Global South as well as decision-makers and practioners that rely on local expertise

- **Science diplomacy**: Research projects on and outreach projects for science diplomacy in its various forms as “diplomacy for science,” for example, to support international cooperation through diplomatic channels / as “science for diplomacy,” to complement traditional forms of diplomacy / or as “science in diplomacy” to offer guidance to diplomacy through scientific expertise

- **Challenges of worldwide academic cooperation**: Research projects and/or multi-stakeholder dialogues on ethical, political and cultural challenges of scholarly interaction with academic partners worldwide, such as academic freedom, hierarchies, and inequality in knowledge production and a transcultural understanding of the various aspects of Responsible Research

- **Digital cooperation with the Global South**: Research and outreach projects that identify how online tools can particularly support academic collaboration with the Global South, how the use of digital tools might need to be changed in these contexts, and how we can learn from the experiences of partners in the Global South in the use of digital tools in an academic context.

Due to the current situation and travel restrictions worldwide the call in particular encourages projects that develop online formats and ways of collaboration that build on modes of communication with international partners, beyond researcher mobility. Priority will be given to proposals that present new and innovative instruments to implement the aforementioned goals.

**Funding:**

The inaugural BCGE Call for Proposals explicitely invites submissions from all disciplines. The call is open to faculty members and postdocs with an employment contract of at least one year from project start with one of the Alliance partners. Prerequisite is that at least two Alliance institutions are involved in the application. Only in exceptional and duly justified
cases can an application from a single Alliance institution be considered. We encourage applications with our international partners (University of Oxford, National University of Singapore, University of Melbourne). Emphasis, however, should be on local and global outreach to academic and non-academic partners in the Global South.

Awards may range from €10,000.00 to a maximum of €40,000.00 per project. If other departments/faculties/units are providing additional support, their contributions will count as a supplement to the BCGE award. Proposals must detail how awarded funding will be allocated, and provide plans for developing the project into something long-term and sustainable once the initial funding period ends. Applications are also encouraged to explain how the research collaboration will generate third-party funding.

BCGE funds in this call will be available from 15 September 2020 to 30 June 2021 and must be spent according to the awarded budget and within the proposed timeframe. Please indicate in your proposal whether the project, or different project components, will take place in the 2020 budget year (through December 2020) or in 2021 (from January to June 2021).

**Eligible costs**

- Material costs for collaborative research / projects (especially costs for online and networking tools, contributions towards laboratory or field-based costs, costs for specific publishing and dissemination tools related to the project);
- Travel, accommodation and other associated costs for scientific workshops and outreach events with academic and non-academic partners;
- Costs associated with the preparation of joint grant proposals to respective national sources of funding, agencies, international bodies, philanthropic sponsors or foundations. With the exception of service contracts, personnel costs can not be covered.
- A direct transfer of funds to cooperation partners outside the Berlin University Alliance is not possible in the Excellence Strategy scheme. Depending on the procurement laws for budgets at the individual Alliance institutions, it may be possible to commission work from external sources.

**Evaluation Process:**

All proposals will be reviewed by a joint committee of all four partner institutions responsible for making the final funding decision. The evaluation will consider the quality, feasibility and potential of the proposal, as well as the competency and expertise of the faculty members involved. Other factors include the cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget, the plans to obtain external funding in the future, long-term prospects of including international and local partners and the added value of the collaboration for the Alliance. Please consider the funding criteria on the website.

**Grant payment conditions:**

- **Project timeline:** All activities should be completed and funds distributed as proposed and/or approved by December 2020 or June 2021.
• **Progress reports**: Recipients must report briefly after the end of the project on the activities to which the grant was applied.

• **Acknowledgement**: Grant recipients are expected to acknowledge the support of the Berlin Center for Global Engagement within the frame of the Berlin University Alliance in any publications or presentations, which should be listed at the end of project report.

**Submission Documents:**

Application materials should include:

- The completed application form with a narrative project description of no more than 3 pages, including:
  - An overview of the field of study and general intellectual content of the project suitable for a non-specialist audience; please specifically address aspects of interdisciplinary and inter-institutional cooperation that make the project innovative and promising in the long term for BUA;
  - A short description of prospective academic and non-academic partners;
  - A plan for the project's long-term third-party funding situation beyond the funding obtained through the award.
- Short CVs from all applicants (max. 500 characters each);
- The financial budget, with amounts specified by category (resources; invest) and year;
- Postdoc applications (with the exception of applications from junior research group leaders) should also submit a letter from a full-faculty member or the head of department in support of their application.

**Important dates for 2020:**

- Applications OPEN: 28 May 2020
- Webinar on Call for Proposals: 4 June 2020 (11-12:30) and 10 June 2020 (10:30-12)
- Applications DEADLINE: 30 June 2020
- Notification: August 2020
- Funding ACTIVITY starts: 15 September 2020

**Submission and Contact Information:**

The complete application in English or German with all aforementioned documents must be submitted as a single PDF document.

BCGE submission and contact details:
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