

**Berlin Center for Global Engagement**  
**Call for Proposals "Signature Projects"**

**Funding of Collaboration Projects to Structurally Strengthen Cooperation with the Global South**

Publication of the call:	November 15, 2021
Submission deadline:	February 1, 2022
Maximum duration of funding:	36 months
Eligibility for application:	Professors and post-doctoral researchers of the Berlin University Alliance
Start of funding:	July 1, 2022
Total funding volume:	€210,000 annually for funding of 2 to 3 Signature Projects
Funding volume per project:	max. €105,000 annually
Object of funding:	Personnel and material resources

With the founding of the Berlin University Alliance, Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin have set themselves the ambitious goal of shaping Berlin as an integrated research and career environment. The focus of the cooperation is on joint research into major societal challenges, increasing the exchange with society, support for junior researchers, questions about the quality and value of research, and overarching projects in research infrastructure, teaching, diversity, equality of opportunity, and internationalization.

The Berlin Center for Global Engagement (BCGE) has been created as a platform of the Berlin University Alliance for projects in the fields of research on, from, and with the 'Global South', science diplomacy, and academic freedom. With the BCGE, the four partner institutions have created a center that interconnects and systematically develops the disciplinary, regional, and country-specific areas of expertise and competence in the Berlin University Alliance to jointly seize the opportunities of global cooperation in science and contribute as responsible institutions to a more equitable and inclusive international research system.

## **Background and Objectives of the Call for Proposals**

Building on the BCGE's 2020 Inaugural Call, Signature Projects for the funding period July 2022 to June 2024/June 2025 are being solicited for the formation of additional structures to strengthen cooperation with the Global South<sup>1</sup> and in the topic areas of science diplomacy and science freedom.

<sup>1</sup>The BCGE understands 'Global South' primarily as the task of addressing global asymmetries in knowledge production, and is less focused on a geographical understanding of the term. However, the DFG's list of countries can be used as a guide for choosing international partners:

[https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/internationales/entwicklungslaender/entwicklungslaender\\_liste.pdf](https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/internationales/entwicklungslaender/entwicklungslaender_liste.pdf).

The primary objective of the funding is the development of exemplary, highly visible Signature Projects that make a sustainable structural contribution in the three topic areas of cooperation with and in the 'Global South', science diplomacy or science freedom and have an impact beyond individual research questions. The Signature Projects develop a perspective on how they will pursue a sustainable structural contribution to the goals of the Berlin University Alliance over the funding period of 2 years (+1 year) and acquire follow-up funding beyond the funding period.

## **Subject of the Funding**

Funding is provided for projects that aim to thematically deepen (1), interconnect, and consolidate (2) existing collaborations and transfer scientific results and debates beyond the academic audience to the public (3) through successful knowledge exchange.

### *(1) Thematic deepening*

Previously gained knowledge with and in the 'Global South' and/or in the areas of science diplomacy and science freedom will be explored in more depth regarding further aspects and new interdisciplinary focus areas will be set. Cooperation with new departments promotes innovative inquiry and research. Within the BCGE Inaugural Call 2020, projects with the following thematic focus areas in and with the 'Global South' were funded and can serve as orientation for a thematic and structural deepening:

- Food and Nutrition
- Global Health/Global South
- Southern/Postcolonial Theory
- Urbanity
- Academic Freedom Under Threat
- Chances and Challenges of Cooperation with the Global South
- Management Innovation
- Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security
- Science Diplomacy

### *(2) Interdisciplinary interconnection and consolidation*

Within the funded Signature Projects, existing projects and initiatives are interconnected across disciplinary boundaries, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, they deepen and consolidate already existing cooperations and networks with and in the 'Global South'. Interconnection serves the development of long-term structures and projects, e.g., through

- Jointly developed forums and associations
- Establishment of digital structures such as digital fellowships and online platforms
- Mobility in both directions
- Concept development for graduate programs such as curricula, leadership academies etc.

### *(3) Knowledge Exchange*

Research results are disseminated beyond the academic audience to the public, and dialog is fostered between non-scientific and scientific players with expertise in the subject matter. Possible activities include:

- Podcasts
- White Papers
- Discussion events with stakeholders
- Knowledge transfer in the Global South through events, research measures, and attracting new players
- Competitions

To support this, Objective 2 of the Berlin University Alliance "Fostering Knowledge Exchange" can be included.

### **Target Group/Eligibility for Application**

Due to the nature of the call, collaboration projects that have already received start-up funding under the BCGE are particularly suitable for funding. Funding is also available for new projects, provided they sufficiently serve the funding objectives. Professors and post-doctoral researchers who work in the institutions of the Berlin University Alliance are eligible for application. The call for proposals addresses explicitly researchers from all disciplines. Participation of at least two of the four partner institutions of the Berlin University Alliance is mandatory.

### **Volume and Duration of Funding**

The total annual funding volume is 210,000 euro; 2 to 3 Signature Projects are to be financed from these funds. The maximum funding per project is therefore 105,000 euro. The commitment is initially for 2 years; an extension for a third funding year is possible after an evaluation in March 2024. All the above-mentioned activities should be completed, and funds expended, by the end of June 2024/June 2025.

### **Eligible Measures**

The following costs can be covered within the framework of project funding:

- It is possible to employ other staff members and student assistants. Please refer to the [BUA](#) personnel cost rates. Applicants are responsible for providing premises, etc.
- Material costs for research material, mobility, accommodation, publication and communication costs, and work contracts,
- Funding of stays of incoming and outgoing researchers

Not fundable are:

- Investment costs

- The Excellence Strategy does not allow the transfer of funds to partners outside the Berlin University Alliance. It is possible to place orders externally within the framework of the allocation guidelines for budgetary funds of the respective partner institution. These are to be accounted for as full costs.

Financial project management is overseen by the staff units of the respective Berlin University Alliance institutions; the guidelines of the respective institution(s) apply here.

## **Application Deadlines and Submission of Applications**

All applications must be submitted in English via the [BIH portal](#).

Publication: **November 15, 2021**

Submission of a letter of intent to [bcge@berlin-university-alliance.de](mailto:bcge@berlin-university-alliance.de) naming national and international partners (for the purpose of preparing the review) by **December 15, 2021**

Deadline for submission of applications: **February 1, 2022, 12 noon**

**Planned start of funding: July 1, 2022**

A complete application includes:

A fully completed application form in the [BIH portal](#), where the following information is needed:

- Financial budget with amounts by category, year, and institution (see template).
- Brief description of prospective academic and non-academic partners and submission of an LoI from the joint partners.
- Resumes and other information of all applicants.
- Announcement form of the institutions, except for Charité (see template).
- Cover letter/introductory page on which the project managers confirm their acknowledgement and the correctness of the information provided in the application by means of a legally binding signature.
- Detailed project description of no more than ten DIN A4 pages (see template). The project description should contain:
  - Overview of the department/placement in the international state of research and the general content of the project.
  - Presentation of the project in terms of added value to the funding objectives.
  - Indication of which project(s) the planned Signature Project builds upon and what successes have been achieved to date as part of this project.
  - Outline how other Berlin University Alliance Objectives will be involved in the project and where support from the Berlin University Alliance is desired.
  - Formulate milestones that will be used in the evaluation.
  - Presentation of plans for follow-up funding of the project.
  - Timeline and Action Plan.

Incomplete applications will result in exclusion.

## **Funding Criteria and Review Process**

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The projects aim at thematic deepening in research on, from, and with the 'Global South', science diplomacy or science freedom.
- The thematic focus is innovative, interdisciplinary, and promotes collaboration inside and outside the Berlin University Alliance.
- Adequacy of the measure to enable networking, acquisition, and implementation of long-term strategic collaboration with and to the 'Global South' also beyond the funding period.
- Appropriateness of involving non-scientific players through multi-stakeholder dialog and/or knowledge exchange.
- Relevance of the project to the [goals of the Berlin University Alliance](#) and adequacy of the planned cooperation in the Berlin University Alliance with individual Objectives and Cross-Cutting Themes.
- Feasibility of the planned measures, especially in view of the unforeseeable pandemic developments.
- Plausible cost planning regarding the feasibility of the goals and measures
- Participation of at least two of the four Berlin University Alliance institutions
- Adequacy of the composition/development of the project team.

The submitted applications will be formally reviewed by the team of the Berlin Center for Global Engagement. Applications that meet the formal requirements are then reviewed by two external, technically qualified scientists in a single blind procedure. One of these reviewers works at a research institution in a country in the 'Global South'. The bias criteria are examined for all reviewers and the selection committee in accordance with the [Code of Conduct](#). Based on the reviews, the selection committee, composed of the Steering Committee of the cross-cutting theme "Internationalization" of the Berlin University Alliance and an equal number of external reviewers, will prepare a funding recommendation and submit it to the Executive Board of the Berlin University Alliance, which will make the final funding decision.

### **Obligations upon Successful Application**

- Compliance with the measures specified in the application within the requested project period
- Mention of the Berlin University Alliance in publications, events, etc.

### **Contact**

Questions regarding the call for proposals will be answered by the Berlin Center for Global Engagement team: [bcge@berlin-university-alliance.de](mailto:bcge@berlin-university-alliance.de). Dr. Romain Faure, Dr. Sarah Wessel, Anna Lebed, Roma Gendera

Projects funded by the BCGE Inaugural Call can be found [here](#).

To ensure equality and diversity, applications from women and other groups of people underrepresented in science (e.g., people with diversity characteristics such as disabilities, migration history, first-generation researchers, etc.) are especially welcome.