

## ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY TRAINING (AIT) COLOMBIA 2020-2021

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has mandated the University of St.Gallen as Leading House for the Latin American Region to develop scientific relations and bilateral collaboration with partner institutions in Latin America. The Academia-Industry Training (AIT) is an initiative by the Leading House and the Instituto Colombiano de Crédito Educativo y Estudios Técnicos en el Exterior (ICETEX). The AIT helps Swiss startup talents innovate and develop their entrepreneurial and business skills. ICETEX serves in cooperation with multiple university, startup, and industry partners as the main organizers for the AIT Colombia Camp in Colombia.

The AIT, whose goal is to connect Swiss researcher-entrepreneurs with their Colombian peers, consists of two phases: a training camp in Switzerland headed by the Leading House, and a second training camp in Colombia predominantly organized by ICETEX. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the AIT, running from June 2020 to March 2021. 10 Swiss startups will be chosen, and the Innovation Grant of CHF 10,000 will be awarded to the most promising Swiss research breakthrough project on the last day of the Colombia Camp in February 2021.

The AIT aims to transform high-level applied research into market applications. Entry is awarded on a competitive basis to selected projects with entrepreneurial potential. The main objectives of the program are to help participants advance business plans, establish further contacts with the industry, and clarify intellectual property issues. The AIT will provide the opportunity to network at an international level, to foster new partnerships and collaborations, and to have access to an emerging market. The program is meant for Master or PhD students, PostDocs, and researchers from Swiss universities, Universities of Applied Science, and research institutes as well as centers of technological excellence with research track-record working on a non-profit basis. The entire event will be free of charge for the 10 selected participants, including food, travel, and accommodation expenses in Switzerland and Colombia.

## Aims and Objectives

1. Promote innovation
  - Help participants transform their research into a high-potential startup
  - Augment relevant skills to take research from the lab to the marketplace
  - Improve market application by developing participants' ideas with the help of peers, experts, and potential customers
2. Favor the exchange of knowledge and expertise between Switzerland and Colombia
  - Provide connectivity to industry-specific, high-level researchers
  - Assist engagement between researchers and entrepreneurs to understand new market opportunities and exploit new synergies
  - Incentivize transfer of know-how
3. Provide researchers the tools needed for better understanding industry environment
  - Deliver interactive workshops on entrepreneurship, business plan writing, intellectual property, market entry scenarios, funding strategies, and pitching
  - Encourage best business practices and social impact
  - Induce an entrepreneurial spirit
4. Promote networks to foster new partnerships and collaborations
  - Accessibility to a wide, international network of peers, mentors, and industry experts
  - Support young scientists in establishing first partnerships with industry and potential investors
  - Maximize contact with top scientists from key institutions

## Eligibility

- Be a Swiss citizen or foreigner with a permanent visa
- Have minimum a Master's degree in any area of scientific knowledge
- Proof of English proficiency
- Provide a Curriculum Vitae
- Be affiliated to a Swiss University, University of Applied Science, or research institute

The eligibility criteria indicated above are mandatory. After the selection of the 10 projects/startups, results will be published on the website: [www.aitstartups.org](http://www.aitstartups.org)

## Evaluation and Selection

An internal panel, composed of startup, business, and industry experts from Switzerland and Colombia, and members from the Leading House for the Latin American Region will evaluate applications to select 10 startups according to the following criteria (equal weight):

1. Quality of overall idea, applied research, technology (product, service)
2. Market potential (competition, scalability and application possibilities of research project, product and/or service)
3. Feasibility of business plan (revenue and cost model)
4. Roadmap to success (next milestones)
5. Entrepreneurial personality and team (experience, skills, diversity)
6. Expected impact of the AIT program (motivation for the program)

After the careful evaluation of all applications, the selected candidates are required to pitch their scientific based project (product and/or service) during the Jury Day in Bern. Each candidate will make a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation, followed by a 10-minute question and answer round.

## Application

Applications must be completed through our official website [www.aitstartups.org](http://www.aitstartups.org)  
Instructions for applicants: please read the Colombia Call closely for dates and eligibility. Download the Application Form, fill it out, and upload all documents unto the official website.

Once selected, the 10 participants commit themselves to attend both the Swiss and Colombia Camps. If a participant drops out of the program before the Colombia Camp is completed in February 2021, the participant will be responsible to refund all expenses incurred by the AIT Program in the organization of both camps.

**The Leading House for the Latin American Region has the right to modify the terms of this call according to the circumstances related to COVID-19 and any decision made by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and/or ICETEX.**

## Timeframe

Steps	Dates
Launch of Call and application process	May 13, 2020
Info Webinar	May 26, 2020
Deadline submission of applications	June 15, 2020
Notification of invitation to pitch at the Jury Day	June 22 & 23, 2020
Jury Day in Bern	July 02, 2020
Swiss Camp	October 26–30, 2020
Colombia Camp	February 08–12, 2021

## Contact

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