

ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY TRAINING (AIT) MEXICO 2022-23

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 Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT). The AIT helps Swiss startup talents innovate and develop their entrepreneurial and business skills. CONACYT serves in cooperation with multiple university, startup, and industry partners as the main organizers for the AIT Mexico Camp.

The AIT, whose goal is to connect Swiss researcher-entrepreneurs with their Mexican peers, consists of two phases: a training camp in Switzerland headed by the Leading House, and a second training camp in Mexico predominantly organized by CONACYT. This is the 2nd cycle of the AIT, running from June 2022 to December 2022. 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 Mexican Camp in November. Camps will be held online. A trip to Mexico will follow if the pandemic conditions allow it.

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.

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 Mexico
 - 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 residence permit
- 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

Evaluation and Selection

An internal panel, composed of startup, business, and industry experts from Switzerland and Mexico, 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. Each candidate will make a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation, followed by a 10-minute question and answer round.

Application

Applications forms can be found at www.aitstartups.org and the Leading House for the Latin American Region website.

Once selected, the 10 participants commit themselves in writing to attend both the Swiss and Mexico 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 CONACYT.

Timeframe

Steps	Dates
Launch of Call and application process	June 20, 2022
Info Webinar	June 29, 2022
Deadline submission of applications	July 11, 2022
Notification of invitation to pitch at the Jury Day	July 13, 2022
Jury Day	July 25, 2022
Switzerland Camp	October 31 – November 4, 2022
Mexico Camp	October 10 – 14, 2022

Contact

Dr. Rocío Robinson: rocio.robinson@unisg.ch (Program Manager)

Veronica Miranda: veronica.miranda@student.unisg.ch (AIT Program Assistant)

University of St.Gallen
Leading House for the Latin American Region
Müller-Friedberg-Strasse 6/8
CH - 9000 St.Gallen
Switzerland
Phone: +41 71 224 25 49