

Impact Collaboration Program

Overview

The Geneva ecosystem gathers a rich variety of International Organizations, NGOs, foundations, networks, academic institutions and private sector actors that, together, have the potential to design impactful solutions to some of the most complex challenges of the 21st century. The [Geneva Science-Policy Interface](#) supports this work by facilitating opportunities for collaboration and partnership between Geneva-based international policy actors and scientific institutions in Switzerland and beyond.

We know that time and resources to initiate or boost purposeful collaborations early on can make all the difference to successful and sustainable collaborations in the long run. The Impact Collaboration Program (ICP) provides seed funding and in-kind support to build and boost science-policy partnerships so that they can create a foundation of trust, aligned interests and cooperation to deliver real impact.

What does GSPI offer?

Maximum 40,000 CHF per project (120,000 CHF total for projects selected in 2020) and in-kind support as needed.

Who is eligible?

The call supports projects that stem from consortia including researchers and international organisations and/or global NGOs. Researchers can be affiliated to any academic institution in the world, whereas international organisations and global NGOs must come from the Geneva ecosystem. Either side can apply to the call.

When does the call open and close?

The ICP has two rounds:

- Pre-proposal: open on 17 January 2020 and close on 29 February 2020 (23:59 CET)
- Full proposal: open on 9 March 2020 and close on 11 April 2020 (23:59 CET)

How to apply?

1. Send your 600 word application through [this platform](#).
2. Submit a full proposal if your concept is pre-selected

See below for more information.

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Impact Collaboration Program

Application Guidelines

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2020 ICP Theme: Data-driven decision-making

International and non-governmental organizations work on solving problems that are interconnected and changing over time, and therefore difficult to analyse and predict with total certainty. Indeed, all organizations must navigate complexity in the 21st century and so need relevant insights into what actions are most likely to achieve their strategic objectives.

The Geneva Science-Policy Interface understands accessible and usable data to be the foundation for data-driven decision making; but also acknowledges that data must be transformed into forms relevant to particular decisions at hand if it is to be truly valuable. Building organizational capacity and technical requirements for data-driven decision making in practice is important. The end goal, however, is to deploy this data science for enhanced performance, learning and supported strategic decision-making for the future¹.

The ability to advance to a higher level of data-driven decision making relies on a combination of internal activities and capabilities [executive commitment, organizational complexity, data accessibility and consolidation, analytic tools, employee ability, the collaborative spirit in the organization or partnership, comfort-level with change, the science-policy or science-practice culture] and external conditions [market leader behaviour, market standards, competition intensity].² With this in mind, the ICP in 2020 will give a specific focus to projects that develop or apply methodologies and tools for:

Data-rich contexts: International organizations generate massive amounts of data that can benefit from scientific tools and methodologies to generate decision-relevant insights. Examples of desirable ICP projects include Big Data programme creation³, data mining, collection, organization, data analysis and visualization for a particular decision, and ex-post impact evaluations.

Data-poor contexts: While digital data is increasing globally, access to data, analytic software and capacities are not well distributed.⁴ Decision-makers who face situations where data is scarce, such as in geographical areas that are difficult to access or when there is no time for data analysis, can benefit from methods for making robust decisions under many uncertainties. Examples of desirable ICP projects include scenario planning, futures thinking, foresight, ex-ante impact assessment, and grounded theory approaches.

Fostering a science-policy/science-implementation culture: The use of data and analytic tools requires interest, conviction and literacy across organisations. Examples of desirable ICP projects include training programs, standards, decision-support system design, and the creation of competency centres.

¹ Donoho, D. (2017). 50 years of data science. *Journal of Computational and Graphical Statistics*, 26(4), 745-766.

² Sleep, S., Hülland, J and R.A. Gooner (2019). "The Data Hierarchy: Factors Influencing the Adoption and Implementation of Data-Driven Decision Making." *AMS Review*, June 6, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-019-00146-8>.

³ **Big Data** is a term that refers to large volumes and varieties of data types and increasing the velocity at which these data are created, processed and analyzed (the 3 Vs). It is emerging as a new discipline in data science. Diebold, Francis X. (2012) On the Origin(s) and Development of the Term 'Big Data.' *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2152421>.

⁴ Leidig, Mathias, and Richard M. Teeuw. "Quantifying and Mapping Global Data Poverty." Edited by Wei-Xing Zhou. *PLOS ONE* 10, no. 11 (November 11, 2015): e0142076. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0142076>.

Grant description

Goals

The 2020 ICP scheme will provide support to collaboration projects which explicitly:

- Bridge science, policy and implementation in both aims and who participates;
- Seek to generate impact through data-driven decision-making.

What we offer

Projects can apply for a maximum of 40'000 CHF. The global amount of the ICP is 120'000 CHF in 2020.

Additionally, the GSPI may offer in-kind support on a needs-basis, which may include:

- Networking opportunities with academic institutions and international organizations and NGOs
- Advice around project design and science-policy strategy
- Scaling and dissemination support within academic and policy networks

What type of projects?

The GSPI will optimize for supporting three collaboration projects, each one of them falling into one of three tracks that characterise the stage of their impact potential.

1. The beginning	2. Chicken & egg	3. The last stretch
A collaboration is about to start and needs resources to build trust, set objectives, plan activities and deliver a proof of concept.	A collaboration already is in place but needs resources to produce impactful outputs that will allow the collaboration to prove its value and scale.	A collaboration already delivered important outputs and needs resources to convert such outputs into impact.
<p><i>Example</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and policy/implementation actors decide to form a collaboration to build a digital decision-support platform. 	<p><i>Example</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and policy/implementation actors are part of a collaboration and need to implement/build case studies around the platform they developed. 	<p><i>Example</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and policy/implementation actors developed a platform that produced outputs and want to scale and generalise its potential.
<p><i>In-kind support from GSPI</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice, connections and introductions to build your network • Offer a neutral space to facilitate a problem definition workshop • Science-policy engagement advice 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scaling and dissemination opportunities
<p><i>Examples of outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnership strategy defined/implemented ● Future strategy agreed ● Dissemination plans refined ● Research or case-study undertaken ● New entity created ● New knowledge has been integrated in a policy process ● Further funding opportunities
<p><i>Examples of long-term outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision-makers are better equipped to make decisions under uncertainty in complex contexts. ● Programs are more effective according to the available evidence on their counterfactual impact. ● Sustainable collaborations between scientists and decision-makers on producing and using knowledge are guiding important decisions. ● Sustainable collaboration between scientists and decision-makers.

Applicants can submit projects that are either *general* or *case-specific*:

- **General projects** include, for example, methodology development and testing for ways to collect and organise data that organizations generate for improved decision making and implementation on significant policy issues. Here, the idea is to deliver tested methods, digital technologies and protocols that could be tailored to specific organizational contexts in future. The policy-relevance must however be clear from the start.
- **Case-specific projects** include, for example, the conduct of an impact assessment of an existing programme for a specific organization or the application of a specific science-technology innovation to a practical challenge faced by an organization. Here, the idea is to develop a proof of concept that can be expanded to more cases and possibly generalise.

Please note that if you think that your project loosely relates to data-driven decision-making but strongly bridges science, policy and practice and has potential for evidence-based impact, **we still encourage you to apply.**

Duration & reporting

Impact Collaboration Program projects collaborative activities must be completed within 12 months maximum. Projects will be required to provide short updates to the GSPI every three months.

Who can apply?

The proposed collaboration must involve scientists and policy or implementation actors⁵. The collaboration may also involve actors from civil society and the private sector. Individuals, institutions and consortia can apply to the programme. The policy or implementation partner must be located in the International Geneva area and work on global issues.

Selection criteria

Projects are evaluated according to the five criteria below to assess their impact potential.

1. Project fit

A project must propose activities with goals that fit under one or more of the following:

- Foster data-driven decision-making in data-rich contexts;
- Foster sound decision-making in data-poor contexts; and/or
- Foster a culture that unites science, policy and practice

2. Science-policy-practice excellence

A project must show the extent to which they satisfy the following:

- *Partnership*: the project must be carried forward by a collaboration that constitutes of scientists and policy or implementation actors. Policy and implementation actors must be part of an international organization or a non-governmental organization from the Geneva ecosystem.
- *Need-driven*: the project must be designed to respond to practical needs from a clearly-defined policy or implementation organization.
- *Actionable outputs*: the project must aim to deliver outputs that can be used easily and quickly for a clearly intended purpose.
- *Timely*: the project must show its relevance to decision processes (ongoing or forthcoming) that can leverage the value of its outputs, noting the major milestones and timing of that process.
- *Strategic*: the project must present a clear but brief theory of change/action and an impact pathway including a stakeholder analysis which explains how and why it will generate impact.

3. Subject relevance

A project must focus on a subject that:

- Is *globally important*: it is relevant across multiple countries and affects large populations.
- Is *urgent*: it requires solutions rapidly.

⁵ We define 'scientists' as people who have a PhD and work as a researcher or equivalent in an academic institution. We define 'policy and implementation actors' as people who work for international organizations, state missions, non-governmental organizations and governments.

- Is *clearly a science-policy issue*: an interaction between science, policy and/or implementation is recognized as being part of the solution-finding process.

4. Applicant competences

Applicants must be able to undertake all project activities, including technical work and operational aspects. The applicants who represent the scientific part of the project must have a PhD.

5. Co-financing

Applying institutions (and/or their partners) are expected to contribute financial and/or in-kind resources to the realisation of the activity (financial/in-kind inputs do not have to proportionally match the ICP amount). If the subsequent stages of the activity extend beyond the ICP grant, projects must have identified possible fundraising opportunities.

Selection process

Application process

Applicants are invited to submit a pre-proposal between the 6th of January and the 29th of February, using [this platform](#). The **pre-proposal** must answer all the following questions (in maximum 600 words)⁶:

- Which problem does the collaboration aim to solve? Why is it important?
- Which solution does the collaboration aim to generate? Why is it impactful?
- What is the science-policy strategy? Why are the applicants a good fit to take it forward?
- Who is part of the collaboration?
- At which of the 3 stages defined in this call is the collaboration?
- What is the total amount of financial support requested from GSPI?
- Which non-financial science-policy support from the GSPI does the collaboration require?

If their pre-proposals are accepted (see selection procedure below), applicants are invited to submit their **full proposal** by the 11th of April through our online platform.

Proposals must include the following elements in approximately 2500 words:

1. Project description and total budget (summary)
2. What is the project's background and rationale?
3. What are the project's immediate objectives and long-term impact?
4. What are specific activities to address the science-policy-practice challenge?
5. What are expected outputs?
6. What is the implementation plan and the timeline?
7. What is the implementation partnership?
8. What are your relations with other partners/stakeholders?

⁶ A tutorial is available [here](#) to help applicants navigate the platform.

9. What are the risks related to your project?
10. What is the amount requested from GSPI in CHF?
11. What is the added-value of the GSPI?

Lastly, proposals must submit a detailed budget based on [this template](#).

Evaluation process

The evaluation process includes the following steps:

1. The GSPI Executive Team selects pre-proposals based on how well they respond to the information required and notify successful and unsuccessful applicants.
2. Full proposals are assessed by an independent committee composed of 4 reviewers with specific expertise on science-policy-practice engagement mechanisms. Expertise of the specific subject covered by the project might be sought on a case-by-case basis. Experts formally agree to disclose conflicts of interest and to evaluate the proposals based on the formal evaluation criteria provided by the GSPI as impartially and objectively as possible. The assessment process is anonymous (i.e. reviewers do not receive the applicants names), non-archival (i.e. the GSPI does not keep a public database of the submissions) and based on the five criteria specified above. Reviewers are anonymous.
3. Selected and rejected full proposals are notified at the end of the evaluation (3-4 weeks). Rejected proposals are notified without specifications about the reasons for non-selection.

Grant regulations

Grant transfer

The GSPI transfers up to 75% the approved amount as soon as the project is selected. The transfer triggers the project start date (expected 10 May 2019). The balance, in accordance with the budget approved by the GSPI, will be paid after the grantees fulfilled the duties specified below.

Grantee duties

Six months after the grant transfer, grantees are expected to submit a short mid-project activity and financial report. Fourteen months after the grant transfer, grantees are expected to submit a final activity and financial report together with a short reflexive piece in the form of a blog post or a short video interview.

Eligible expenses

The ICP does **not** fund conferences. Workshops and round tables may be funded as part of partnership building or dissemination activities, however.

The ICP grant does **not** cover infrastructure, equipment (computers or otherwise), or operating expenses for an existing structure. Moreover, the ICP grant covers only a maximum of 10% of overhead costs.

Among others, the ICP grant funds salaries, travel, and publication costs.

It is expected that participating academic institutions, international organizations and other partners will supply infrastructure and a significant percentage of staff time under co-financing arrangements.

Compensation for travel and other expenses will be handled in accordance with the rules of the institution where the project funds are managed. In cases where those rules are not applicable, the University of Geneva's regulations will apply.

ICP tentative timeline

Years	2020												2021						
Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pre-proposal	■	■																	
Pre-selection			■																
Full-proposal			■	■															
Evaluation				■															
Notification				■															
Grant transfer (75%)					■														
Project start					■														
Project duration					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
GSPI in-kind support					■	■			■	■				■	■	■			
Mid-activity report											■								
Final report																			■
Grant transfer (25%)																			■