

## 2019 seed money call for projects – HABITAT Research Center

### HEALTHY CITIES Towards a *One Health* agenda for urban space

#### Introduction and Background

The HABITAT Research Center is a trans-disciplinary research platform whose aim is to explore urban phenomena to produce visions, strategies and projects for the future. Cities are at the same time complex societies, material sedimentations, technical systems and ecological organizations. These four aspects lie at the foundation of HABITAT.

HABITAT seeks to enable and encourage a profound interdisciplinary collaboration among EPFL laboratories that share a common urgency: the need to explore the interactions between spatial, social and environmental processes through the dimensions of sustainability, biodiversity and public health. Nowadays, cities and territories have to face economic, environmental and social crises with multiple and complex dynamics that are replacing processes that were thought to be more predictable. Through “Healthy Cities”, HABITAT aims to explore the potentialities of interdisciplinary collaborations and support emerging synergies between teams working on the built, natural and social aspects of urban environments.

#### Description of the call

Sustainability can only be achieved in urban areas if they become healthy: not only for their human inhabitants but also for animals and plants – enabling the urban ecosystem as a whole to become healthier. This call launched by HABITAT has a combined focus on human health, biodiversity, and the very practical interventions and infrastructures that can be rolled out in urban areas in order to promote the emerging One Health agenda, i.e. the simultaneous and integrated taking into account of the interests of humans and other species, who live together in a given (e.g. urban) environment.

This call is looking for interdisciplinary projects focusing on how the contemporary urban environment may be modified to improve the health of the human populations as well as the survival and thriving of various plant and animal species whose co-presence is not only compatible with human health, but favorable to it and vice versa. The call is for projects that go beyond traditional parks and green areas concepts, or hub-and-spoke park systems, and towards innovative whole-city concepts that integrate human activities with those of other species, wild and/or domestic. Due to the scale of the challenge, pilot projects or demonstration projects focusing on distinct urban or suburban areas are also welcome.

#### Partners and project background

This call benefits from a collaboration between HABITAT and the University of Geneva’s Institute of Global Health. Within this context, HABITAT and the Institute of Global Health’s Division of environmental health and health promotion have decided to collaborate to explore how new ideas emerging at the intersection of multiple disciplines can lead towards the innovative solutions that are required to help urban areas face an array of seemingly intractable ecological problems, from the epidemiological transition (linked to aging and the increase in non-communicable diseases) to loss of biodiversity (linked to habitat dispersion and topsoil depletion) and climate change (for which mitigation and adaptation are both necessary, not just one of the two).

#### Eligibility

Any cluster of EPFL labs can apply to this call as long as the proposed project is interdisciplinary and at least one lab in the cluster is part of the ENAC School. The teams must propose a relevant interdisciplinary project and case study to investigate a well-defined research question. Case studies within Switzerland (in particular the Léman region) are welcome, but all geographical areas will be equally considered. Proposals upon on-going

research case studies are strongly encouraged: the call aims at building research connectors between and reaching out from ENAC research projects.

### **Funding and budgeting**

This call will grant up to 30'000 CHF for each multi-lab project (proposed by two labs or more, one of which must be within ENAC). This funding may be used to cover data acquisition and raw data processing, field visits, travel expenses, equipment and salary costs for EPFL staff. A detailed budget must be provided.

### **Submission of applications**

Applications must be sent via the electronic format application form to the Habitat Research Center at: [habitat@epfl.ch](mailto:habitat@epfl.ch)

Each application must include:

- Project title and abstract (max. 150 words)
- ENAC laboratories involved (+ external partners if applicable)
- Name of project leader and deputy
- Project description: 1500 words maximum, indicating research questions, case study/studies and expected results/dissemination.
- Detailed description of any data or datasets it proposes to use
- Detailed budget allocation
- Project timeline with milestones

Completed applications must be submitted no later than **7 May 2018**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

### **Evaluation and selection**

An evaluation committee will select the successful proposals on the basis of the following criteria:

- interdisciplinarity
- coherence and quality of data proposed
- prototypical, future oriented, dimension

The committee will be composed by the director of Habitat Center (Paola Viganò), a representative of Institute of Global Health and by at least one component for each ENAC institute (Architecture IA; Civil Engineering IIC; Environmental Engineering IIE).

### **Timeline**

30 March 2019 Launch of the Call

~~7 May 2019 Deadline for submission~~

**24 May 2019 Deadline for submission**

30 June 2019 Notification of acceptance

15 July 2019 Projects begin

September 2019 – First Workshop – methodology and synergies

December 2019 – Second Workshop – intermediary results

February 2020 – Third Workshop – final presentation of the

results Spring 2020 – Public session (to be confirmed)