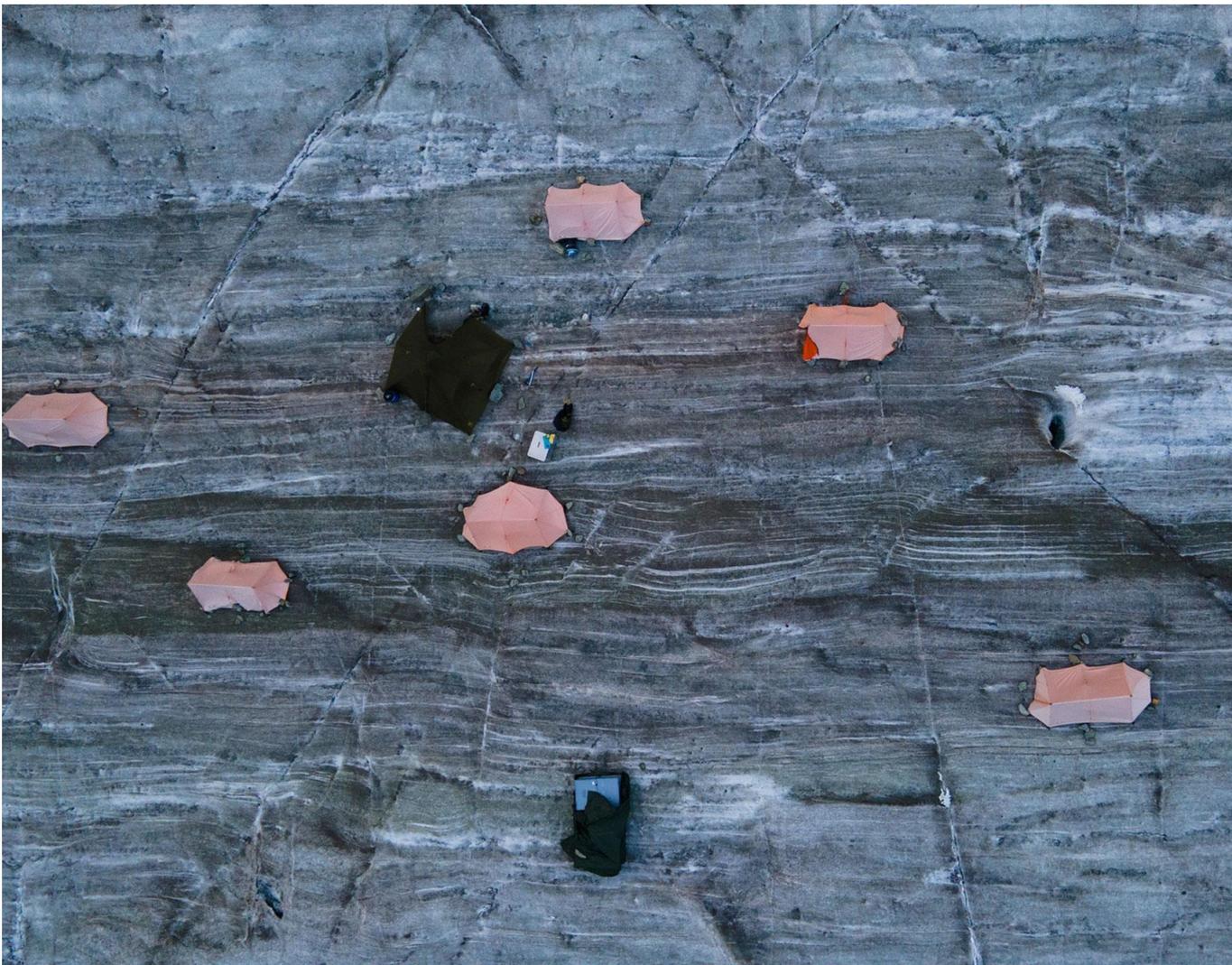


# Action Plan 2025–2028



We invest in researchers  
and their ideas

## We invest in researchers and their ideas

Switzerland is a global leader in research and innovation. Our success is the result of consistent policies that prioritise education, research and innovation (ERI). Switzerland's international reputation in this area is excellent.

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) supports scientific research in all academic disciplines. We select and fund the best research projects and early-career researchers at national level based on competition. The knowledge generated in such projects provides a sound basis for Switzerland's economic and societal progress.

Our aim is to help create optimal conditions for Swiss researchers during the 2025–2028 ERI period. The current funding period is marked by cuts in the federal budget. Given the foreseen reductions to its federal contributions, the SNSF stands to be significantly affected by relief package 27. This Action Plan defines and specifies how the funding policy measures and funding schemes proposed in the Multi-Year Programme 2025–2028<sup>1</sup> can be implemented with the financial resources available. In the following, we provide an overview of our priorities for supporting research in Switzerland during the 2025–2028 period. The SNSF will nevertheless continue to advocate for a reduction in the planned cuts.

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<sup>1</sup> [Multi-Year Programme 2025–2028 \(pdf\)](#)

## Our priorities for 2025–2028

During the 2025–2028 period, the SNSF is prioritising the following objectives by implementing targeted measures.

### Overarching measures strengthening research funding

#### Strengthening Project funding

In the Multi-Year Programme 2025–2028, we had planned to strengthen the SNSF's main funding scheme, project funding. Demand for this scheme has increased by 6 percent annually since 2017. Because the budget has not increased at the same rate, success rates in project funding have fallen sharply. The discrepancy between budget and demand is a potential brake on innovation. The SNSF was able to implement the planned budget increase to strengthen project funding for 2025. However, the SNSF has had to significantly reduce the budget for 2026 to respond to the cuts foreseen in relief package 27.

#### Adjusting salaries of doctoral students to the increase in nominal wages

We have increased the salary ranges of doctoral students employed in SNSF-funded projects as of 1 January 2026. We want researchers at the beginning of their careers to have good working conditions, and these salaries had not been adjusted to the evolution of nominal wages in Switzerland since 2014.

#### Supporting early-career researchers across the SNSF portfolio

We will strengthen our efforts to achieve good working conditions and career perspectives for early-career researchers, whether they are supported in Career funding schemes or others. We will a) continue developing our strategy and funding schemes to promote talent and to better accommodate non-linear scientific careers, b) further intensify cooperation and dialogue with universities, c) be more demanding with regard to the conditions that universities offer SNSF-funded early-career researchers, and d) monitor the situation of early-career researchers.

#### Fostering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We will enhance our efforts to ensure equal opportunities in research. Discrimination due to personal attributes of researchers, e.g. their sexual orientation, migratory or ethnic origin and disabilities, still prevents talents from developing their full potential. By combining our efforts to promote gender equality with actions addressing other factors of exclusion, we will strengthen our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across all schemes. In line with SNSF's EDI vision and mission, activities to work to remove barriers will include:

- the development of new EDI-related supplementary measures to support employees funded by the SNSF;
- measures to raise EDI awareness throughout the evaluation process;
- policy interventions and debates to promote an inclusive academic culture.

At the beginning of the funding period, we will continue to offer the Flexibility Grant aimed at supporting researchers with parental duties. To streamline our efforts with the support offered by the employing institutions, we will subsequently replace the Flexibility Grant with new supplementary measures to be introduced in the medium term in the context of EDI.

#### Remaining flexible and adaptable

To maintain flexibility in times of financial uncertainty, a portion of the budget is strategically allocated to specific funding schemes on an annual basis.

## Priority 1: Strengthening international collaboration and competitiveness

### Ensuring bottom-up and open topic international research

The SNSF wants to encourage research projects that Swiss research groups develop in collaboration with international colleagues on a bottom-up and open-topic basis. In this respect, we will ensure as far as possible the availability of resources to meet the increasing demand for projects submitted under the Weave, Lead Agency and International Co-Investigator schemes. Furthermore, we will work to enlarge the network of funding agencies involved in these agreements.

### Consolidating European research consortia

In order to consolidate Switzerland's participation in Europe-based research consortia in specific fields, we will continue our involvement in the European Partnerships, which replace the ERA networks. In this respect, we will continue existing collaborations and join new ones in areas such as brain health and social transformation.

### Expanding the networks of Swiss research

Under a new federal mandate, we will create new funding opportunities to support the expansion of research networks beyond existing patterns, while consolidating and strengthening established international programmes. We will focus on multilateral agreements aimed at fostering research cooperation between Switzerland and partners outside Europe and the global West. The SNSF will ensure the coherence of these efforts with existing international schemes.

## Priority 2: Exploiting research potential in its entirety

### Involving non-academic actors from the outset in National Research Programmes (NRPs)

New approaches for the involvement of non-academic actors in NRPs will be continued, intensified and extended. Concrete measures will be implemented such as

- engaging non-academic actors in the Steering Committees or Sounding Boards,
- enabling collaboration of academic and non-academic actors through transdisciplinary research funding,
- promoting knowledge exchange between science and politics via the pairing scheme,
- supporting knowledge and technology transfer measures and implementation programmes.

The SNSF will provide clear guidelines on the role expected of non-academic actors and on their eligibility for funding.

### Strengthening the analysis of research results from funded projects

As part of its activities to monitor and analyse research results, the SNSF will build new means to better understand key developments in the research carried out in funded projects. Using these insights, it will a) develop new ways of making research results visible to potential users and fostering collaboration, and b) increase the availability of data for analysis.

### Strengthening clinical research

In the Investigator Initiated Clinical Trials programme (IICT), the SNSF funds clinical trials that are not in the industry focus. Between 2025 and 2028, we plan to a) strengthen patient and public participation in the choice of study topics and design as well as in the conduct of studies, b) provide mentoring and training for young clinical researchers, c) support research into trial methodology (e.g. trial design, recruitment and monitoring) to enhance the efficiency of clinical research, d) cover rising costs of studies, and e) facilitate (inter)national networks of clinical trial leaders.

### Expanding BRIDGE together with Innosuisse

Since 2017, the BRIDGE programme, run by the SNSF and Innosuisse, has been funding researchers who want to develop their scientific results that have high implementation and innovation potential. In 2025–2028, Innosuisse and SNSF want to a) further diversify BRIDGE by strengthening the promotion of social innovation and using appropriate measures to increase the participation of women, UAS / UTE researchers, and younger target groups, b) extend funding and expand towards implementation, c) introduce systematic consulting services for younger target groups in particular (Proof of Concept) to bridge cultural differences between research and application and establish contacts to expedite implementation and d) focus the evaluation of grant applications in Discovery more strongly on the implementation potential of projects. The SNSF is committed to further strengthening the partnership and the synergies generated between both agencies, and to deepening the conceptual framework for BRIDGE.

## Priority 3: Working together for a sustainable future

### Setting incentives for sustainable research

For research to make a comprehensive contribution to sustainable development, it must itself use resources sustainably, whether in the laboratory or at international conferences. From this perspective, we aim to create incentives for sustainable research. Together with its strategic partners and stakeholders, the SNSF is specifically developing measures to promote a culture of responsible scientific travel.

### Ensuring the sustainability of the SNSF's activities

The SNSF aims to make its own activities sustainable. Resource-efficient operations are one of our key concerns. We strive to continuously reduce the impact of our activities on natural resources. In line with this approach, sustainability certification was successfully pursued from the outset in the planning of the new building in Bern-Wankdorf, with careful attention paid to ecological optimisation. We have enshrined the topic of sustainable development in our organisational structure for the long term and are continuing to strengthen our competencies in this area.

### Supporting research for sustainable development

The SNSF and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are participating in funding the SOR4D programme. SOR4D encourages transdisciplinary research that opens up new ways to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty in the least developed, low and lower middle-income countries.

## Priority 4: Expanding, extending and critically reflecting on digitalisation in science

### Promoting discoverable, accessible, interoperable, reusable and open research data (ORD)

All researchers funded by the SNSF are required to manage their data in accordance with the FAIR principles and to make their data as accessible as possible, while also complying with legal and ethical requirements. In the 2025–2028 funding period, we will continue to contribute to ORD-related costs in SNSF-funded projects. In addition, we will raise our expectations regarding the application of the FAIR principles and the fulfilment of reporting requirements related to research data. Finally, we will participate in policy debates aimed at developing the framework for ORD.

### Monitoring developments in the field of AI

In order to define effective and targeted measures for the future development of funding, the SNSF will explore how AI methods and tools are applied, developed and analysed in research.

## What we cannot implement

The SNSF had to consolidate its portfolio in order to be able to comply with the measures listed in the ERI Dispatch 2025–2028. As announced, we are focusing on direct Career funding from the postdoctoral level onwards, and we have discontinued the Doc.CH and MD-PhD schemes as of 2025. We have discontinued the R'Equip scheme; going forward, we will fund research equipment within projects. We are also not continuing the Practice-to-Science scheme. The evaluation of the pilot scheme revealed that experts from the practical field were not supported as intended in progressing to a professorship at a university of applied sciences or a university of teacher education.

Even prior to relief package 27, the federal funds approved for the 2025–2028 period were insufficient to fully implement the measures outlined in the Multi-Year Programme. Consequently, the SNSF could not realise several envisioned measures, including the following:

- Supporting cross-border, medium-sized consortia initiated by researchers to enhance the involvement of Swiss researchers in international thematic initiatives
- Expanding opportunities for early-career researchers from abroad in order to attract international talent to Switzerland
- Increasing the budget for implementation networks to connect researchers with potential users of research results
- Financing research on sustainable development within real-world laboratories, a new forum that links researchers with non-scientific stakeholders
- Strengthening research skills in relation to digital transformation through the new "Digital X" funding scheme for early-career researchers
- Creating incentives for the active and innovative (further) development of explorative ORD practices and methods
- Supporting new data infrastructures and services (DIS) to ensure the quality, security and accessibility of research data.

The federal budget cuts foreseen in relief package 27 necessitated further adjustments in our funding activities. To ensure forward-looking and reliable financial planning, the SNSF is taking the following measures starting in 2026:

- The Spark funding scheme for novel and unconventional ideas is paused until at least the end of 2027.
- The implementation networks will not be continued after their pilot phase.
- The international funding scheme SPIRIT is paused until and including 2028.
- The SNSF is not launching any new calls for COST projects. (Switzerland will continue to participate in the international COST Actions.)
- The budget for European Partnerships is reduced by 25 percent.
- In future, fewer applications will be approved for the SNSF's main funding scheme, project funding, and for Career funding than at present. The Research Council will assess the extent of these cuts each year based on the current financial plans of the federal government.

## Publication details

**Published by**

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**Image credit ©**

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