

Transitional measures of the SNSF – initial assessment

Since June 2021, Switzerland has been considered a non-associated third country in Horizon Europe, the EU's framework programme for research and innovation. This means that researchers no longer have access to the individual projects of the Horizon Europe programme, including the prestigious instruments of the European Research Council (ERC).

In the meantime, the SNSF has launched five transitional measures on behalf of the federal government to support Swiss researchers who are no longer able to participate in Horizon Europe, as well as to strengthen research in Switzerland as a whole. The measures are: SNSF Advanced Grants, SNSF Swiss Postdoctoral Fellowships, SNSF Starting Grants, SNSF Consolidator Grants and the Quantum Transitional Call. As part of the transitional measures, the SNSF has already launched twelve calls for proposals since October 2021. Eight have been completed and four are still ongoing.

The transitional measures of the SNSF correspond as far as possible to the European calls. Panels composed of international experts, comparable to the panels in the original European instruments, evaluate the applications based on the same evaluation criteria.

Strong interest in transitional measures

So far, the SNSF has received more than 2800 applications from more than 1100 female and 1700 male researchers. The SNSF is currently supporting 381 projects. More than 75% of the researchers whose projects were approved by the SNSF were already conducting research at a Swiss institution. The rest worked mainly in research institutions in Germany, France, UK, USA and China. These figures cover calls where the evaluation has been completed.

Furthermore, the SNSF received more applications from researchers in Switzerland for its calls than the original European instruments. For example, for the SNSF Advanced Grants 2021, the SNSF received 232 applications, more than double the number submitted by researchers in Switzerland to the ERC Advanced Grants 2020 scheme (108).

Funding

Funding for the SNSF transitional measures is provided by the government. In 2021, 2022 and 2023, it amounted to 420 million Swiss francs. (A detailed breakdown of the budget can be found on the website of the SERI.) The funds approved by Parliament for the Horizon package at the end of 2020 were made available for this purpose.

Detailed information on each transitional measure can be found [in this annex](#).