Swiss National Science Foundation

Swiss Quantum Call 2026

Call for proposals

The Swiss Quantum Call 2026 is addressed to researchers active in quantum science and technology and affiliated with eligible research institutions in Switzerland.[1, 2] Its objective is to establish, foster and further develop high-quality research projects and collaborations between research groups and institutions in Switzerland and abroad, as well as with partners from industry where appropriate. The participation of independent early career researchers is encouraged.

This call aims at strengthening Swiss quantum research by supporting outstanding and curiosity-driven projects that demonstrate clear scientific excellence. Alongside their scientific objectives, proposals are expected to clearly articulate a meaningful impact beyond academic research relevant to the Swiss quantum research and innovation ecosystem. Such an impact may, for example, stem from scientific breakthroughs, methodological advances or contributions to long-term industrial, technological and/or societal impact. Projects at any Technology Readiness Level (TRL[3]) between 1 and 4 are eligible under this call, provided that the proposal convincingly links scientific excellence with a plausible and well-reasoned pathway towards impact beyond academic research within the Swiss quantum landscape.

The call is based on the strategic priorities defined by the Swiss Quantum Commission (SQC) and aims to further strengthen Switzerland's leading role in quantum science and technology. The call follows the general principles of SNSF project funding. Specific features reflecting the strategic objectives of the Swiss Quantum Initiative are incorporated where relevant. Any deviations from standard SNSF project funding schemes are explicitly described in this call document.

A total budget of CHF 16 million [to be confirmed][4] is available to fund research projects under this call. Funding is provided through the Swiss Quantum Initiative.

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1. Purpose and scope

[1] The purpose of this call is to enable qualified researchers to conduct high-quality research in quantum science and technology, combining scientific excellence with clearly articulated perspectives on potential future applications.

[2] Funded projects are expected to pursue ambitious, curiosity-driven research questions while, where appropriate, situating the proposed work within a broader context of technological development, societal impact or future use. This includes, but is not limited to, identifying plausible pathways towards application, without imposing predefined objectives or compromising the bottom-up nature of the research.

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[1] Researchers affiliated at a higher education research center in Switzerland (according to RIPA Article 4, letter c)
[2] https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2013/786/en
[3] TRL framework as defined by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI): https://www.sbfi.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/UfD8TNda8p9u/technology_readinesslevelstrl.pdf
[4] Including 15% overhead and SNSF costs, subject to possible budget reductions under the Federal Relief Package 27 (RP27)

[3] Projects may be submitted in the following areas of quantum science and technology, addressing key scientific and technological challenges of the second quantum revolution:

- Quantum communication, including but not limited to quantum key distribution, quantum repeaters, and communication between quantum computers;
- Quantum computation, including but not limited to quantum processors, architectures and platforms, new qubits, error correction, algorithms, applications;
- Quantum simulation, including but not limited to quantum simulators including atomic and solid-state systems and synthetic quantum materials exhibiting entanglement, algorithms;
- Quantum sensing and quantum metrology, including but not limited to sensing approaches and platforms, algorithms, entanglement-enhanced sensing, quantum metrology standards, quantum clocks.

Proposals in the following fields are also eligible, provided that they are essential to the physical systems or engineering technologies within at least one of the areas listed above:

- Materials for quantum devices
- Quantum control hardware and software
- Quantum theory and quantum information theory
- Computer science for quantum technologies

[4] In addition to scientific objectives, applicants are encouraged to reflect on the potential longer-term relevance of their research beyond the immediate academic context. Where applicable, proposals should outline possible future application perspectives, relevant user communities, or anticipated contributions to Switzerland's quantum research and innovation ecosystem. These considerations are intended to support a coherent overall project narrative and will be assessed in relation to the project's scientific ambition and feasibility.

[5] Projects may address different stages of technological maturity. References to the TRL framework as defined by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)[3] may be used to situate the proposed work. The call primarily targets research at low to intermediate TRLs (up to level 4). However, projects that include elements at higher TRLs may be eligible, provided that they remain research-driven and that scientific excellence constitutes the core of the proposal.

[6] The call aims to contribute to the development and retention of talent within the Swiss quantum research landscape. The participation and scientific leadership of early-career researchers are explicitly encouraged. Proposals led or co-led by early-career researchers will be assessed according to the same standards of scientific excellence and feasibility as all other proposals.

[7] In deviation from standard SNSF project funding rules, this call allows higher equipment costs of up to CHF 400,000 per project and a higher share of up to 40% of the grant for project partners and subcontractors. In addition, the participation of applicants based abroad is possible (see Chapter 3.3.3). These deviations are intended to enable access to highly specialised infrastructure, technologies and expertise required for the successful implementation of complex quantum research projects.

2. Duration of funding, minimum grants

[1] Grants are awarded for a minimum of one year and a maximum of four years duration. Proposals requesting shorter or longer durations will not be considered.

[2] Over the entire duration of the grant, each applicant may request an average maximum amount of CHF 250,000 per annum. A higher amount than the average may be requested for any individual year, provided the total grant over the entire duration does not exceed the permitted maximum. The annual

instalments awarded may not be exceeded. Applicants from abroad are not eligible for more than their mathematical share (1/n for n applicants).

[3] The minimum amount that may be requested in research proposals submitted to the SNSF is CHF 100,000. The SNSF does not consider proposals for lower amounts.

[4] In collaborative projects with three or more applicants, the maximum grant is limited to CHF 3 million.

3. Personal and formal requirements for the submission of proposals

3.1. Personal requirements, general

[1] Natural persons may submit proposals if they meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Article 10 of the Funding Regulations of the SNSF[5]. In addition, the proposed research must comply with the requirements specified in Article 13 of the Funding Regulations of the SNSF[5].

[2] Applicants with a doctorate must have obtained the latter four years before the submission date of the proposal. Applicants without a doctorate must generally have completed three years of research work as their main source of income since obtaining their higher education degree. Such research work will be regarded as equivalent to a doctorate.

[3] Researchers who assume an independent research post less than four years after obtaining the doctorate may submit Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grant proposals as soon as they assume the said position.

[4] Applicants must be in a position to carry out research projects under their own responsibility and to lead project staff both scientifically and as personnel.

[5] Applicants must make a substantial contribution to the proposed research, and their work must not be directed by instructions from third parties.

[6] Only one application may be submitted per applicant.

3.2. Other personal requirements

[1] Applicants must be able to show that

(i) they are conducting their research activities along with any scientific teaching activities to an extent equivalent to at least 50% FTE. Researchers devoting less than 50% of their time to scientific activities are eligible if their scientific research and teaching activities are usually carried out in the context of another professional activity;

(ii) they are employed at least for the duration of the project at a research institution eligible for research funding from the SNSF or have been given assurance of such employment in writing;

(iii) the necessary research infrastructure is at their disposal.

3.3. Two or more applicants and project partners

[1] Proposals for Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grants are submitted by the corresponding applicant. This person is engaging in correspondence with the SNSF.

[2] Two or more applicants are eligible if they are needed to achieve the aims set for the planned project.

[3] In projects with three or more applicants, one applicant may be based abroad only if their expertise is essential and if a clear added value beyond existing expertise in Switzerland is demonstrated.

[4] Each applicant must meet the eligibility requirements for the submission of proposals pursuant to this call document as well as the Funding Regulations of the SNSF[5], and each is personally responsible for the project.

[5] https://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_reglement_16_e.pdf

[5] Project partners are researchers or industrial partners who contribute to a research project through cooperation without being responsible for the project. They must be designated as such in the proposal. Within the scope of their contributions such as analyses etc., project partners benefit from the grant. However, they do not count as (remunerated) employees of the project and are not among those responsible for the project as a whole. They may not refer to the support received from the SNSF as a grant they have acquired themselves.

[6] The relationship between the applicants and, after approval of the grant, between the grantees is governed by the Funding Regulations of the SNSF[5].

3.4. Formal requirements

[1] Swiss Quantum Call 2026 proposals must be submitted electronically to the SNSF.

[2] The submission date is 1 September 2026.

[3] In all other respects, any further formal requirements for the submission of proposals apply, in particular the Funding Regulations of the SNSF[5] and its Implementation Regulations[6].

4. Proposals and eligible costs

4.1. Proposals

[1] Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grant proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements issued by the SNSF for such grants and must contain all the necessary data and documents.

[2] Applicants are required to describe the proposed research project in a structured research plan in accordance with the SNSF requirements for the research plan.[7]

The **research plan** must be structured as follows and may not exceed 15 pages (17 pages for collaborative projects with two or more applicants) or 60,000 characters including spaces (68,000 characters for collaborative projects):

1. Current state of research in the field: Positioning of the project within the current state of research and identification of relevant knowledge gaps.
2. Current state of the applicants' own research: Summary of relevant previous work and preliminary results demonstrating the applicants' expertise.
3. Detailed research plan: Description of aims, approach, methods, data, risks, and roles of all project partners, demonstrating feasibility and scientific added value.
4. Schedule and milestones: Timeline with key phases and milestones for the project duration.
5. Relevance and **expected impact beyond academic research**:

   The research plan must include a dedicated section (max. 2–3 pages and 8000-12000 characters (with spaces)) describing the anticipated impact beyond academic research.

   While the funded research is expected to remain primarily at low to intermediate TRLs[3] (≤4), applicants are asked to outline plausible pathways beyond TRL 4 without conducting higher-TRL activities within the project.

   Applicants are expected to clearly identify one primary impact focus, specify the relevant current or potential user groups, and outline appropriate and feasible measures towards implementation, including indicative timelines where applicable. The proposed impact should contribute to strengthening the Swiss quantum research and innovation ecosystem in an international context. Possible impact foci include, but are not limited to, scientific breakthroughs, methodological advances, or contributions to long-term industrial, technological and/or societal impact.

[6] https://www.snf.ch/media/en/B0SWnPsrDCRTaiCx/snsf-general-implementation-regulations-for-the-funding-reg-ulations-e.pdf

[7] https://www.snf.ch/en/257qx6wxjo72ODHy/page/funding/documents-downloads/regulations-requirements-for-the-research-plan

[3] An application that cannot be clearly differentiated in thematic terms from an application submitted to another SNSF funding instrument will not be accepted for consideration.

[4] All research projects that overlap in time must have a clear thematic distinction from each other.

[5] Applicants must demonstrate that they are able to make a substantial personal contribution to all projects. Articles 15.2–15.4 of the Regulations on Project funding[8] apply.

[6] A Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grant is not counted as a regular project funding grant in respect to Article 15.1 of the Regulations on Project funding[8].

4.2. Eligible research costs

[1] Applicants may request funding for staff salaries, research costs, scientific equipment, as well as for scientific cooperation, networking and communication activities. Applicants may not request funding for their own salaries.

[2] Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grants may be used to cover the following costs:

(i) the salaries of scientific and technical staff in research projects within the scope of the salary ranges and rates prescribed by the SNSF;

(ii) material costs that are directly related to the research work, namely material of enduring value, expendable items, field expenses, travel expenses, third-party charges, cost of computing time and data as well as of providing open access to research data;

(iii) scientific equipment and equipment-related services (all expenses linked to the purchase, production, adjustment, and installation of the equipment, but no operation, maintenance and repair costs) up to CHF 400,000 per grant that are necessary to pursue the funded research, if the institution confirms that the maintenance and operation of the acquisition is guaranteed;

(iv) direct costs incurred through the use of research infrastructure linked to the research work;

(v) costs for the organisation of conferences and workshops in connection with the funded research;

(vi) costs for national and international cooperation and networking activities carried out in connection with the funded research;

(vii) additional costs for coordinating the research project in the case of proposals with three or more applicants;

(viii) for applicants from abroad, the rates of the respective country apply, whereby the maximum rates of the SNSF apply as an upper limit.

[3] Researchers employed by research institutions or private companies that are not recognised as eligible non-commercial research institutions under Art. 4 let. b and Art. 5 RIPA[2] are not eligible as applicants. They can contribute as project partners (as specified in Chapter 3.3.5) or subcontractors (as specified in Article 2.10 of the Implementation Regulations[6]). The cost of services provided by project partners and sub-contractors cannot exceed a maximum of 40% of the grant.

[4] The required funding must be applied for in the proposal. A justification for the requested funding is required.

5. Evaluation process, assessment criteria and grants

5.1. Consideration of proposals

[1] Applications must meet the formal and personal eligibility requirements set out in Chapter 3.

[8] https://www.snf.ch/media/en/FuUlveEikmunxb4X/projektfoerderungsreglement-e.pdf

[2] Proposals are not considered if their objectives manifestly do not match the purpose and scope of the Swiss Quantum Call 2026 as explained in Chapter 1 of this document, if the proposals manifestly do not fulfil one of the evaluation criteria listed in Chapter 5.2, or if they only request ineligible costs.

[3] The Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group (see Chapter 7.1) recommends the assignment of the proposals to one of the two following categories based on the corresponding applicant to the SNSF Administrative Office:

(i) Early career researchers, defined as applicants who meet the eligibility requirements set out in Chapter 3.1.2 and who are ready to lead an independent research project with their own line of research and to direct a team of researchers.

(ii) Established researchers, defined as applicants who have already led independent research projects and have made internationally recognised contributions to their research field.

5.2. Evaluation

[1] The Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grant proposals are evaluated by a panel of experts (Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel, see Chapter 7.2).

[2] The Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grant proposals are internationally peer-reviewed.

[3] The relevant criteria for the award of Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grants are the scientific quality of the proposed research, the scientific qualifications of the applicant(s), and the impact beyond academic research. While scientific excellence remains the primary objective of this call, proposals are also expected to give meaningful consideration to their impact beyond academic research. These considerations are assessed in relation to the project's scientific quality, in particular its originality, the suitability of the methods, and feasibility of the project.

[4] Scientific evaluation is conducted in accordance with the criteria set out in Article 24 paragraph 2 of the Funding Regulations[5]:

a) scientific quality of the proposed research project: scientific relevance, topicality and originality, suitability of methods, feasibility;

b) scientific qualifications of the researchers: scientific track record and ability to carry out the research project.

[5] In addition, proposals will be assessed on the quality, credibility and relevance of their impact beyond academic research and their expected contribution towards future advancement to higher TRLs[3] (beyond TRL 4). Applicants are expected to clearly identify one primary impact focus, specify the relevant current or potential user groups, and outline appropriate and feasible measures towards implementation, including indicative timelines where applicable. The proposed impact should contribute to strengthening the Swiss quantum research and innovation ecosystem in an international context. Possible impact foci include, but are not limited to, scientific breakthroughs, methodological advances, or contributions to long-term industrial, technological and/or societal impact.

[6] In the case of collaborative projects (with two or more applicants), the aspect of how cooperation is conceived and organised with a view to achieving the joint research goals is also evaluated (according to Article 9 of the Regulations on Project funding[7]).

5.3. Decisions

[1] Based on the evaluation results of the Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel, the Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group formulates funding recommendations to the Programme Committee TSOR (Thematic & Solution Oriented Research) of the SNSF.

[2] The Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group ensures that proposals from both categories (early career and

established researchers, see Chapter 5.1.3) have balanced chances of success. The allocation of grants within the two groups is based on the specific criteria of scientific evaluation (Chapter 5.2.4).

[3] The Programme Committee TSOR (Thematic & Solution Oriented Research) of the SNSF takes the final funding decisions based on the recommendation of the Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group.

6. Conduct of the approved projects

[1] Successful Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grants may start at the earliest on 1 April 2027.

[2] Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grants are managed according to the applicable rules of the SNSF, in particular according to the Funding Regulations of the SNSF[5] and its Implementation Regulations[6].

[3] Holders of Swiss Quantum Call 2026 grants are obliged to submit to the SNSF reports in accordance with the requirements stipulated by the SNSF.

[4] In particular, output data must be provided 18 months after the start of the project at the latest and a final report upon conclusion of a project.

7. Organisational provisions

7.1. Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group

[1] The Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group supports the evaluation of the Swiss Quantum Call 2026 proposals. It advises the Programme Committee TSOR on all matters related to the Swiss Quantum Call 2026.

[2] In particular, the Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group

i) suggests the Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel members and Chairs to the Programme Committee TSOR.

ii) recommends the assignment of the proposals to one of the two categories of applicants (depending on the corresponding applicant), as described in Chapter 5.1.3. to the Administrative Office of the SNSF.

iii) makes a proposal to the Programme Committee TSOR on which proposals will be funded, based on the result of the evaluation procedure described in Chapter 5.

[3] The Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group consists of national and/or international experts. The number of members of the Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group is between 3 and 10.

[4] The Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group members are selected by the Programme Committee TSOR of the SNSF. Members of the Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group are not eligible to submit proposals.

[5] The members of the Swiss Quantum Call Expert Group are remunerated in accordance with the usual SNSF rates.

7.2. Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel

[1] The Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel consists of national or international experts from the disciplines concerned. The number of members of the Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel is between 5 and 20.

[2] The Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel members are selected by Programme Committee TSOR of the SNSF. Members of the Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel are not eligible to submit proposals in the Swiss Quantum Call 2026.

[3] The members of the Swiss Quantum Call 2026 Evaluation Panel are remunerated in accordance with the usual SNSF rates.

8. Applicable law

[1] Unless these Regulations provide otherwise, the regulations of the SNSF, namely the Funding Regulations of the SNSF[5] and its Implementation Regulations[6] apply.