



SNSF STARTING GRANTS 2026

Info event, 19 February 2026, 10:00–11:30

Eligibility criteria and personal requirements



Objective

Develop your research expertise abroad with return to CH possible

Lead your research project

Lead your research project and your team

Scheme

Postdoc.Mobility (PM)

Return Grant (RG)

Ambizione

SNSF Starting Grants

Position

Postdoc abroad
24 months

After PM: Postdoc
in CH 12 months

Mid-career researcher
4 years

Assistant Prof. / Group leader
5 years

Duration

After the grant

You have enhanced your research profile

You developed your own line of research

You are a research leader contributing substantially to your field

Targeted career level of applicants

- The SNSF Starting Grants are the highest level of career funding at the SNSF and also highly competitive with a low success rates (StG2025 ca. 10%)
- Both you and your proposal will be evaluated against set evaluation criteria, and only the highest-scoring proposals can be funded – ensure you are competitive within these criteria!
- Applicants have major achievements, i.e., research projects and research output, that are independent of their work as a doctoral student and the associated doctoral project.
- Applicants will normally have complemented their scientific expertise with appropriate research collaborations, academic or extra-academic.
- The evaluation of the applicant's major achievements takes into account the scientific discipline, the net academic age and the career trajectory of the applicant.

Personal requirements

1

fit within the
window of eligibility

2

not have already
achieved the
objective of this call

3

have a Swiss-link

- In case of uncertainty as to whether you meet all three personal requirements, or for eligibility extensions, you may contact the SNSF Administrative Office at stg@snf.ch
- If you clearly fulfil all three personal requirements, the SNSF Administrative Office must not confirm your eligibility beforehand.

Eligibility window

1

fit within the
window of eligibility

After your PhD defense (PhD +2-8)

- You have at least 2 years of research experience
- You submit your application no more than 8 years after the date of your PhD defense.

After your medical degree (state exam. or equiv.) (MD +5-12)

- You have done at least 3 years of clinical work and have at least 2 years of research experience
- You submit your application no more than 12 years after obtaining your medical degree

**Due to the postponement of the SNSF Starting Grants Call 2026,
the eligibility window is calculated exceptionally up to 1 February 2026**

Extension of the window of eligibility

- The window of eligibility may be extended if one or more of the reasons set out in Clause 1.11 of the General Implementation Regulations apply:
 - a. paternity leave, “other parent” leave, adoption leave or parental leave;*
 - b. inability to work due to illness or accident;*
 - c. care duties;*
 - d. services that benefit the general public, particularly military or civilian service;*
 - e. continuing education in connection with the applicant’s research activities, e.g., internships or clinical work;*
 - f. preparatory activities connected to the dissertation, e.g. participation in classes at a doctoral school*
- **For maternity:** extension of 18 months per child
- Any extension of the eligibility window must be approved by the SNSF Office.

Requests for an extension of the eligibility window, accompanied by the relevant supporting documents, must be submitted by email to stg@snf.ch before the submission!

Career stage

2

not have already
achieved the
objective of this call

Applicants who have already achieved the target career stage as well as applicants who fulfil both of the following criteria are not eligible:

- a. you already hold a position that allows leading your research project and a team of researchers, e.g., group leader or university professor, or you have a binding agreement for such a position
and
- b. you have already received or approved significant third-party funding for a research project, e.g., a SNSF project grant, a Starting Grant, a Consolidator Grant, an Advanced Grant from the ERC or the SNSF, or funding from any similar third-party source.

Must be fulfilled at the call deadline of 5 May 2026

Swiss-link

3

have a Swiss-link

You fulfill **one** of these conditions:

- You have carried out research for the equivalent of at least two years with an average work-time percentage of at least 0.8 FTE at a Swiss research institution in the higher education sector in Switzerland.
- You hold a degree from a Swiss higher education institution (Master's, PhD, MD/FMH or equivalent).
- You have Swiss nationality.

Must be fulfilled at the call deadline of 5 May 2026

Repeated and parallel submissions I

- Applicants whose proposal for an SNSF Starting Grant was rejected may apply only once more for an SNSF Starting Grant, regardless of the subject matter of the project and previous ranking.
- Applicants can submit a revised version of the same project or a new project.
- Each proposal is evaluated independently of any previous submission
- Support for research projects already funded by the SNSF or third parties is excluded.
- Applicants must provide information on available and requested funding from any funding source
- During the evaluation process, applicants may not have other SNSF applications under evaluation with overlapping funding periods (e.g., SNSF Project Funding) with the requested SNSF Starting Grant with the exception of NRPs, NCCRs or other one-off funding calls.
- Ambizione grantees may apply for an SNSF Starting Grant 12 months after starting their grant at the earliest.

Repeated and parallel submissions II

- SNSF Starting Grant applicants may in parallel apply for other grants, in particular the ERC Starting Grant, with the same or a different project.
- Simultaneous funding of identical or similar projects is not permitted (Funding Regulations, art. 17).
- If a project with similar topics or project goals to the one submitted within the SNSF Starting Grant instrument is first funded elsewhere, in particular the ERC Starting Grants, the applicants will be given a deadline to make a binding decision between the other grant offer and the ongoing SNSF Starting Grants application. If no response is received within this deadline, it will be assumed that the recipient has chosen the other grant offer and the evaluation of the SNSF application will be terminated.

SNSF Starting Grants applicants and grantees have the duty to inform the SNSF of any third-party funding obtained, such as ERC Starting Grants, as soon as possible to define potential overlaps with the SNSF Starting Grant proposal or ongoing grant.

Application process

Proposal submission and management

SNSF Starting Grants Call 2026 proposals are submitted via the SNSF Portal.

- If applicants do not already have a [SNSF Portal](#) user account, they will need to open a new account. They should register their new account at least one month before the deadline.
- All documents and information in the SNSF Portal must be submitted in English.
- Follow the information and specifications on the [SNSF Starting Grants website](#) and in the [SNSF Starting Grants 2026 Call Document](#) (PDF).
- Furthermore, the conditions in the [Funding Regulations](#) (PDF) and [General Implementation Regulations](#) (PDF) as well as its [Annexes](#) apply to all submitted proposals.
- Additional information and clarifications are linked in the proposal form on the SNSF Portal.

The proposal must be submitted via the SNSF Portal no later than 17:00:00 CET (Swiss local time) on the submission date Tuesday, 5 May 2026. Late submissions will not be considered.

Employment and position

Host institution:

- The higher education institution or research institution must be established in Switzerland as legal entity and sign the confirmation letter (template on the SNSF Portal and StG website).
- At the time of submission, the applicant does not need to be employed by the host institution
- The employing host institution also guarantees the completion of the doctoral thesis (including necessary funding) of the PhD positions requested in the proposal, either upon the expiration of the grant or if the project is prematurely terminated, which may include relocating abroad

Position during the grant:

Assistant professor

higher education institutions that offer assistant professorships

Group leader

>> *with independent project and management responsibility*

research institutions that do not offer assistant professor positions and titles

Worktime commitment

Applicant has guaranteed and paid position (no salary requested from SNSF):

- applicant must be employed at least 0.5 FTE and spend at least 0.5 FTE on the project

Applicant requests salary from SNSF (in full or for part of the project):

- applicant must be employed at least 0.8 FTE and spend at least 80% on the project

Exceptions:

- If applicant is employed at UAS/UTE: employed at least 0.8 FTE and 70% dedicated to grant
- If applicant does clinical work*: employed at least 0.5 FTE and 50% dedicated to grant
- If additional significant third-party funding is secured, the time commitment may be reduced by request

** The salary related to the clinical work is not covered by the SNSF Starting Grant*

Requested funding

You need to finance your own salary

project funds (max. CHF 1 million)
+
the applicants' own salary

You have a guaranteed salary

project funds (max. CHF 1 million)

- SNSF Starting Grants are awarded up to a maximum of 5 years
- The maximum budget is reduced pro rata temporis for projects of a shorter duration
- Requested funding must be linked to the aims of the project for its entire duration.
- The requested project funds are part of the evaluation and may be reduced if not justified

Project funds

- **Project staff**
 - doctoral students, postdocs, other employees
 - add employees under “Team”
- **Further costs** must be classified in the correct expense category on the SNSF Portal under “Budget”
- **The costs for equipment can exceed CHF 100'000.-** provided that the maximum budget of CHF 1 million for the project funds is not exceeded.
- **Any funds** received or requested from the SNSF, or other funding institutions **must be declared** (refer to the SNSF Portal section “Relations”)

The image displays two screenshots of the SNSF Portal interface. The top screenshot is the 'Add employee' form, which includes fields for 'Function', 'Start date (month and year)' (with a calendar icon and 'Earliest start date: 02.2028'), 'End date (month and year)' (with a calendar icon and 'Latest end date: 01.2033'), and 'Level of employment'. Below these is a 'Salary' section with a 'Yearly salary at 100% (CHF)' field and a 'Total CHF (0 months): plus employer contributions (16%)' field showing '0'. The bottom screenshot is the 'Add expense' form, featuring a 'Designation' field, a 'Category' dropdown menu (highlighted with a red border) showing options like 'Travel, conferences and workshops', 'Equipment and material of enduring value', 'Costs for granting access to research data (Open Research Data)', and 'Infrastructure use, data procurement, expendable items and other material costs'. It also includes a 'Justification' text area and a note: 'Justify why the requested expenses in this amount are necessary for the proposed project.' Both forms have 'Cancel' and 'Add' buttons at the bottom right.

The applicant's own salary

- If you already hold a position for the duration of the grant that meets the SNSF Starting Grant requirements **your own salary cannot be covered by the grant.**
- **Your own salary can be covered by the grant in the following situations:**
 - You hold a position that does not meet the SNSF Starting Grant requirements
 - You hold a position that does not cover the entire duration of the SNSF Starting Grant, e.g. a tenure-track position. In that case, you may apply for your own salary for the duration that is not covered.
- To determine the salary level, contact the HR department of the host institution. If this information is not available on time, enter CHF 150'000.- per year (excluding social contributions)

If an appointment is changed to a paid position or tenure is received, the remaining salary must be returned to the SNSF and cannot be converted into project funds.

Research plan

- The research plan and the bibliography are uploaded as separate PDF files in the SNSF Portal section “Research plan”.
- The research plan must not exceed 15 pages (A4 paper size) and 60,000 characters (including spaces, font size 10, line spacing 1.5).
- This includes the cover page/title page and table of contents (both not mandatory), as well as any footnotes, figures, text on figures, captions, formulae, tables, etc.

Please note:

- The page and character count in the SNSF Portal is binding; **proposals with research plans that are too extensive cannot be submitted.**
- No modifications to the research plan are allowed after the submission.
- The SNSF does not consider proposals that do not meet the formal requirements for the research plan and/or are clearly inadequate (Funding Regulations, art. 22).


Summary, disciplines and keywords

- The SNSF uses the information provided in the “Summary” section on the SNSF Portal to allocate your proposal to an evaluation panel.
- The “Summary” section is also used to find suitable peer reviewers in evaluation phase 2, and the “Summary” is made available to peer reviewers when they are approached for a review.
- **Summary:** Summarise the main objectives and how these may exceed the state of the art. Give a brief overview of the research approach, utilized methods and implementation of the research.
- **Disciplines:** The selection of disciplines must be relevant to the research proposal. To ensure that the proposal is evaluated by the most qualified evaluators possible, select rather disciplines at the lower hierarchical level than the more general.
- **Keywords:** The chosen keywords should be precise and meaningful to further specify the topic. They might also describe a certain method or work subjects.

Academic CV

- Net academic age
- Education & Employment
- 3 Major achievements (narrative assessment)
- Works (up to 10)
- ORCID ID*

* Make sure your ORCID is set to “public”

 Swiss National Science Foundation

www.snsf.ch

CV

Jane Test
Current position(s): Assistant professor with tenure track or similar
Academic age: 8 year(s) 7 month(s)

Education

| Degree | Organisation | Duration |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| PhD / Dr.: Psychology | Italian Institute of Technology, IT Department of Robotics, Brain and Cognitive Sciences | 01.2008 - 04.2011 3 year(s) 4 month(s) |
| Master: Biology | Sorbonne University, FR Department of Psychology | 10.2005 - 07.2007 1 year(s) 10 month(s) |
| Bachelor: Psychology | Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, DE Department of Psychology | 10.2002 - 07.2005 2 year(s) 10 month(s) |

Employment

| Role | Organisation | Duration |
|--|--|--|
| Assistant professor with tenure track or similar | Universität Bern - BE, CH School of Health Sciences | 09.2019 - Present 2 year(s) 10 month(s) |
| Senior researcher | Universität Zürich - ZH, CH Department of Neuroscience | 03.2016 - 08.2019 3 year(s) 6 month(s) |
| Junior researcher / Postdoc | University of Wisconsin-Madison, US Center for Neuroprosthetics | 10.2013 - 03.2016 2 year(s) 6 month(s) |

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13 June 2022, Jane Test, ORCID ID [0000-0002-9560-4389](#)

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| Role | Organisation | Duration |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Junior researcher / Postdoc | ETH Zurich, CH Institute for Neuroscience | 05.2011 - 10.2013 2 year(s) 6 month(s) |

Major achievements

Achievement 1

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[1] journal-article, Carberry, J. (2012). A Methodology for the Emulation of Architecture. Journal of Psychoacoustics, 5(11), 1-3. [https://doi.org/10.5555/12345678](#). DOI

[2] journal-article, Carberry, J. (2011). The Impact of Interactive Epistemologies on Cryptography. Journal of Psychoacoustics, 8(11), 1-3. [https://doi.org/10.5555/987654321](#). DOI

[3] journal-article, Adin, D., Freeman, L., Stepien, R., Rush, J. E., Tjostheim, S., Kellihan, H., Ahern, M., Veneb, M., & Goldberg, R. (2021). Effect of type of diet on blood and plasma tauroline concentrations, cardiac biomarkers, and echocardiograms in 4 dog breeds. Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine, 35(2), 771-779. [https://doi.org/10.1111/jvim.16075](#). DOI

[4] journal-article, Sannino, C., Cannone, N., D'Alò, F., Franzetti, A., Gandolfi, I., Pitino, F., Turchetti, B., Mezzasoma, A., Zucconi, L., Buzzini, P., Guglielmin, M., & Onofri, S. (2022). Fungal communities in European alpine soils are not affected by short-term in situ simulated warming than bacterial communities. Environmental Microbiology. [https://doi.org/10.1111/1462-2820.18090](#). DOI

Achievement 2

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13 June 2022, Jane Test, ORCID ID [0000-0002-9560-4389](#)

Please note: The “Major achievements” serve as a general description of your most important scientific contributions to date. However, they will also be used to assess the qualifications of the applicant.

Section 4.3 call document

Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)



- The SNSF aims to guarantee a fair assessment of scientific achievements by implementing the DORA principles
- The scientific content of the research output matters.
- Journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors or the reputation of a journal, are not appropriate to evaluate the quality of the research output as a whole.
- **Don't refer to citation metrics, journal rankings, institutional rankings, your h-index, or any other proxy indicators of scientific quality in your proposal, research plan or CV.**

Collaborations

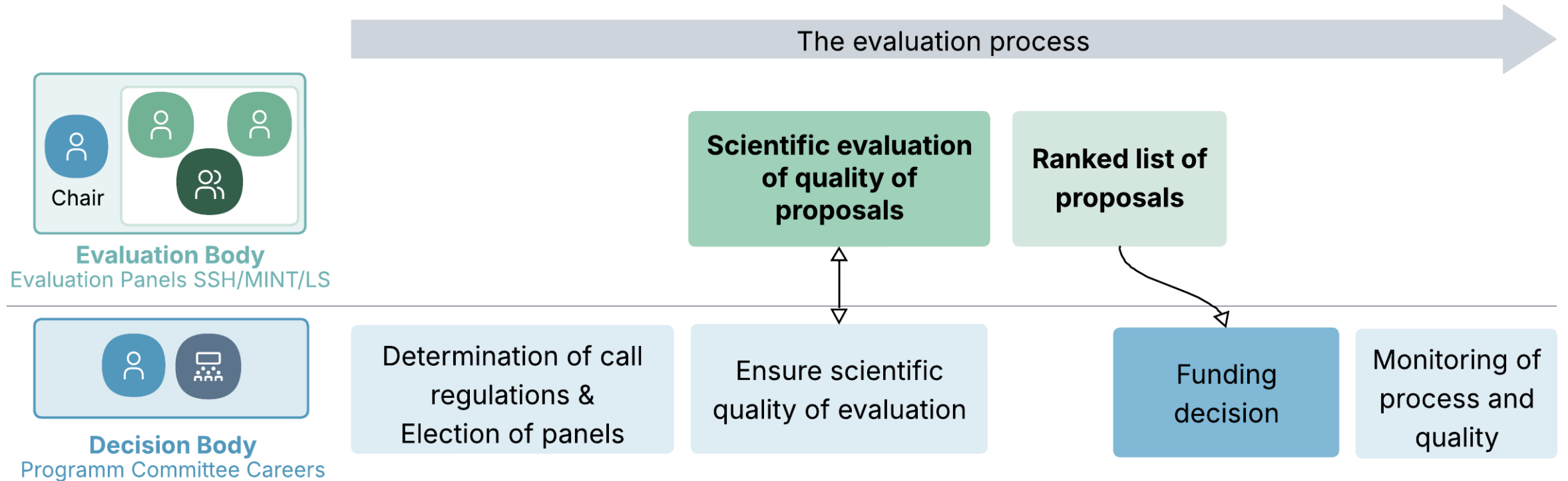
- In the SNSF Portal section “Collaborations” list all national and international collaborations relevant to the project. For collaborations with institutions or groups, add the full names of the main collaborators.
- For each entry, chose the correct type of collaboration and use the textbox to describe the collaboration and why it is required for the proposed research project.
- **Collaboration letters are no longer required and cannot be uploaded in the proposal or submitted elsewhere.**
- Applicants must confirm in the “Collaboration” section that they have discussed the planned collaborations in detail with their collaborators and that they have the full support for the planned work, use of infrastructure, exchange of personnel or similar.
- If further discussion of the collaborations is necessary, this must be included in the research plan.

Some advice from the SNSF office

- Start preparing your application well in advance (deadlines are strict and non-negotiable)
- Do not submit at the last minute/second (submission deadline: 5 May 2026, 17:00:00 Swiss time)
- **Read the [SNSF Starting Grants 2026 call document](#) closely** – important details may have changed from the last StG call
- Invest enough time for preparing all required documents and the entries in the SNSF Portal.
- Remember: you are competing with hundreds of applicants, **i.e. your proposal must stand out and make a difference.**
- Check the [SNSF Starting Grants FAQs](#) on the website for more information
- Question “rumours/myths” you hear from third parties
- If you have any questions, contact the SNSF at **stg@snf.ch**

Evaluation procedure and timeline

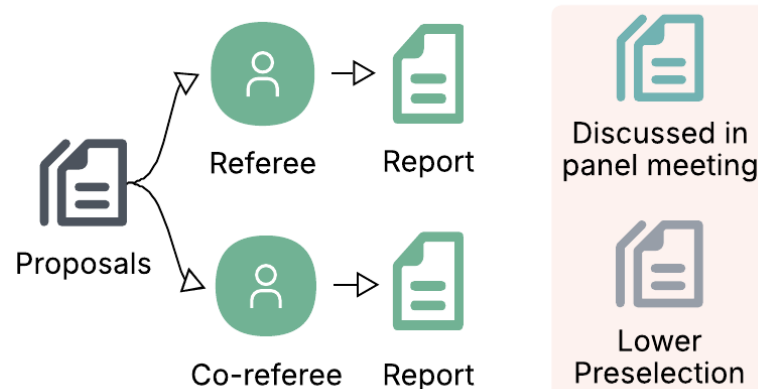
Evaluation process



Evaluation process: Phase I

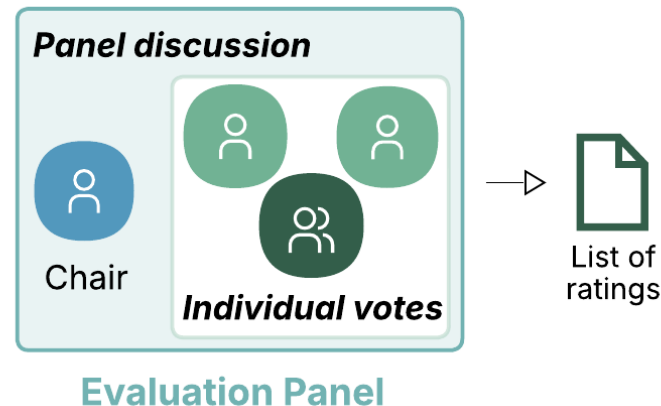
Before the evaluation meeting

Two panel members independently evaluate each application.
Applications with clear weaknesses are proposed for rejection without discussion.



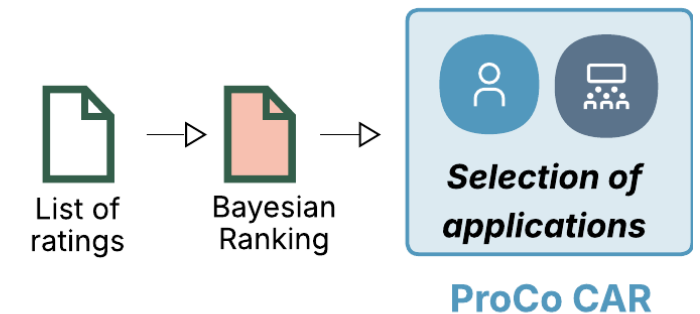
During the evaluation meeting

Referees present their individual evaluation.
Applications are discussed and rated individually by each panel member (except panel chair).



After the evaluation meeting

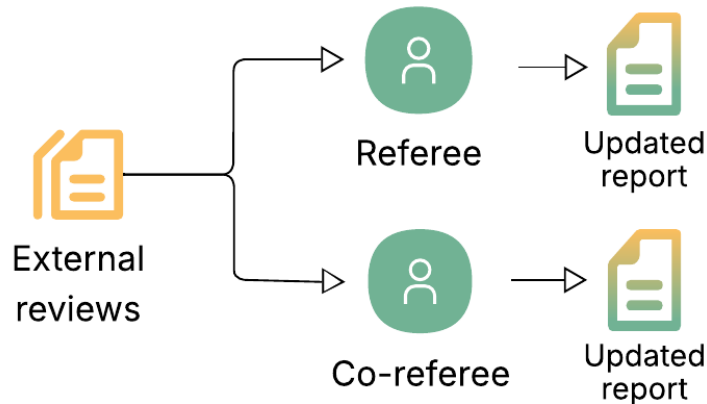
The ranking of applications is submitted to the ProCo CAR for the selections of applications for phase 2.



Evaluation process: Phase II

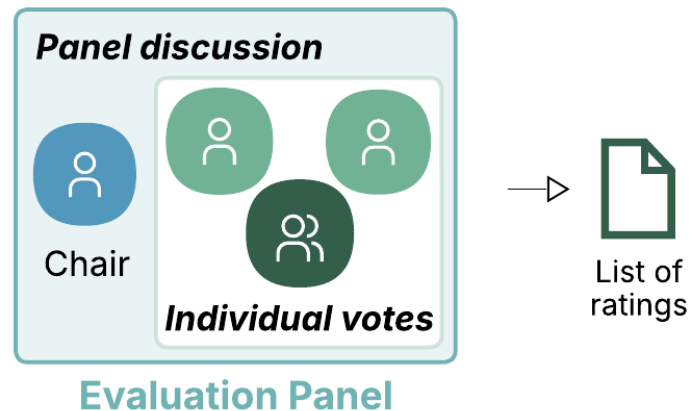
Before the evaluation meeting

Each application is evaluated by at least 2 external reviewers. Referees independently update their evaluation reports.



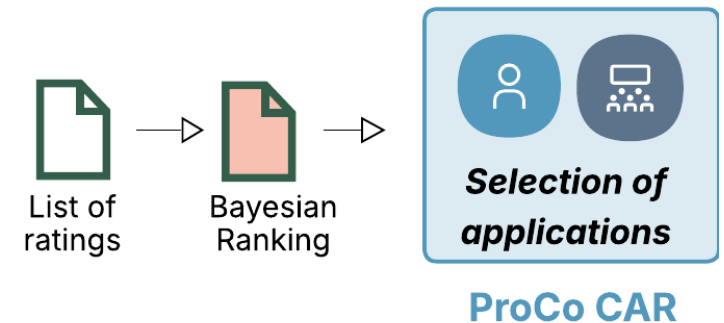
During the evaluation meeting

Applicants present their project followed by Q&A (interview). Applications are discussed and rated individually by each panel member (except panel chair).



After the evaluation meeting

The ranking of applications is submitted to the ProCo CAR for the funding decision



Evaluation panels

- Compositions of the evaluation panels are published on the SNSF Starting Grants website
- The composition of the evaluation panels will be updated before the scientific evaluation starts
- You will be informed which panel evaluates your application
- Your proposal will be allocated to a panel based on the information given under “Summary”
- In case of projects requiring “cross-panel” expertise:
 - Evaluators external to your panel may be assigned for your application
 - In case of interdisciplinary proposals, we may contact you after the submission deadline

Members of the evaluation bodies

The following lists contain the names of the members of evaluation panels. The evaluation bodies will be reorganised and adjusted after the submission of applications on the basis of the proposals submitted.

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - SSH-A](#)

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - SSH-B](#)

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - SSH-C](#)

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - MINT-A](#)

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - MINT-B](#)

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - MINT-C](#)

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - LS-A](#)

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - LS-B](#)

[Evaluation panel - Starting Grants - Call 2025 - LS-C](#)

For the SNSF, the interaction between applicants and members of evaluation panels regarding proposals is not compatible with academic best practice.

Evaluation criteria

Scientific quality of the research project

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project – to what extent:

- does the proposed research address important challenges?
- are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g., novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?

Scientific approach – to what extent:

- is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the groundbreaking nature and ambition of the research?
- are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
- are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate and properly justified?

Qualification of the applicant

Intellectual capacity and creativity – to what extent:

- has the applicant demonstrated the ability to conduct ground-breaking research?
- does the applicant provide evidence of creative and original thinking?
- does the applicant have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project

Section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 call document


SNSF Starting Grants 2026 timeline

- Call opening: 1 February 2026
- Call deadline: 5 May 2026 at 17:00:00 (Swiss local time / CET)

Evaluation Phase 1: May 2026 until October 2026

- Communication on the outcome of Phase 1: end of September 2026
- Dispatch of official decision letters for Phase 1: December 2026

Evaluation Phase 2: October 2026 until February 2027

- Interviews meeting dates (in person, in Bern): 
- Communication on the outcome of Phase 2: mid-March 2027
- Dispatch of decision letters Phase 2: early April 2027

StG 2026 Interview dates

- SSH: 28 & 29 January 2027
- MINT: 11 & 12 February 2027
- LS: 4 & 5 February 2027

- Earliest / latest starting date of grant: 1 May 2027 – 1 May 2028

Questions

Frequently Asked Questions I

Can I apply if I am an ERC or SNSF Starting Grants, Eccellenza, PRIMA or Practice-to-Science grantee?

No, you have already achieved the objective of the call.

Can I apply to SNSF project funding while the SNSF Starting Grant is under evaluation?

No. During the evaluation process, applicants may not have other SNSF grants under evaluation that overlap with the requested SNSF Starting Grant funding period with the exception of NRPs, NCCRs or other one-off funding calls.

Can I have an ERC-2026-StG under evaluation in parallel?

Yes, but if you are awarded an ERC StG for a similar project, you must decide between the offered funding and further evaluation of the SNSF StG application

Are exceptions possible regarding the minimum two-year Swiss link for SNSF Starting Grants?

No. The minimum two-year Swiss link must be fulfilled on 5 May 2026.

Frequently Asked Questions II

What is the difference between the *window of eligibility* and the *net academic age*?

- *The window of eligibility is the time elapsed between the PhD defense* and the call deadline.*
- *The net academic age is calculated in the CV and indicates how much time you have been able to spend doing research since your PhD defense*. (*or state examination)*

Can I submit a project without applying for a team/personnel?

No, because the aim of the SNSF Starting Grants is to carry out your research project and to lead a research team in Switzerland.

What happens if as a SNSF Starting Grantee I will get position as professor or group leader?

If it the position is in Switzerland, the project funds can continue to be used. If it is abroad, you can request to continue to use the project funds, but the maximal duration is 1 year (“[Money Follows Researcher](#)”). In both cases the remaining funds for your own salary must be refunded to the SNSF.

>> More FAQs on our website: [SNSF Starting Grants](#) <<

Any questions after the info event?

For up-to-date information see: www.snf.ch

For questions write to: stg@snf.ch



Facebook.com/snf.fns.snsf.ch



Linkedin.com/company/snsf



Youtube.com/SNSFinfo



Bluesky



Instagram.com/swissnationalsciencefoundation

