

15 September 2021 – pw, ws, lma

## Swiss Roadmap for Research Infrastructures 2023: scientific evaluation

### 1. Aim and scope

In view of the next ERI Dispatch 2025-2028, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) prepares the “Swiss Roadmap for Research Infrastructures 2023”. The roadmap is a planning instrument to coordinate newly planned research infrastructures (RIs) or major upgrades of existing RIs. The SERI has defined guidelines (in [French](#) and [German](#)) and the [submission procedure](#) (in English) to select RIs included in the roadmap. The first stage (Phase 1) is completed and the ETH Board and swissuniversities selected RI projects within their respective institutions that are coherent with their strategic and financial planning.

The scientific coordinators of the selected RI projects are eligible to submit full applications to the second (Phase 2) and third stages (Phase 3) of the selection procedure via [mySNF](#), the web platform of the SNSF for the submission of projects. In Phase 2, the SNSF performs the scientific evaluation of projects. In phase 3, the ETH Board and/or swissuniversities perform an in-depth evaluation of the projects rated of highest quality by the SNSF.

The present document describes the scientific evaluation and the documents required for Phases 2 and 3<sup>1</sup>. The information can also be found on the SERI [website](#) and in the documents listed above.

### 2. Legal framework

The SERI will mandate the SNSF to perform the scientific evaluation of the applications pre-selected in Phase 1. The mandate will be based on the Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA; SR 420.1), the corresponding ordinance (V-FIFG; SR 420.11), the SNSF-SERI service level agreement 2021-2024 (Item 5 in the annex: “Research Infrastructure”) as well as the following documents elaborated by the involved partners (SERI, SNSF, ETH Board and swissuniversities):

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the SNSF has not yet received the evaluation mandate from the SERI and the information is therefore still subject to change. If this document is updated, candidates from projects selected in Phase 1 will be notified.

- SBFI-Leitfaden „Schweizer Roadmap für Forschungsinfrastrukturen 2023 (im Hinblick auf die BFI-Planung 2021-2024): Zielsetzung, Prozess und Kriterien“ ([D/F](#)), 15.4.2021
- SBFI-Template „FORM FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS FOR SWISS RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES ROADMAP 2023“ ([E](#)), 15.05.2021.

### 3. Eligibility

Only research teams of applications pre-selected in the first stage (Phase 1) are eligible to apply. The responsible bodies (ETH Board and swissuniversities) informed the corresponding research teams.

### 4. Application documents and submission

One member of the leading research team is defined as the scientific coordinator of the RI project. In *mySNF*, the scientific coordinator corresponds to the responsible applicant. All other members of the leading research team can be entered as other applicants. The responsible applicant and the other applicants need individual *mySNF* user accounts. We recommend that the research team members create a *mySNF* account as early as possible.

The SNSF will receive a list of the projects selected in Phase 1 from the SERI and **the scientific coordinator listed will have access to the “Roadmap RI 2023” instrument on *mySNF* as of 1 November 2021**. The scientific coordinator can grant access to the other applicants by entering their details in the section “Manage authorisations”.

All application documents must be written in English with 11 pt font size and 14 pt line spacing. Please upload documents in PDF format (without write protection; maximum file size: 10 MB).

The application documents for Phases 2 and 3 need to be uploaded to *mySNF* between **1 November 2021** and **7 January 2022** (17:00 Swiss local time).

The following documents need to be submitted:

1. Letter of commitment from each participating institution (one single PDF with all letters)
2. 2-page CV and a 2-page short list of major scientific achievements of the leading research team, according to the [SNSF guidelines](#).
3. Research output list of the last five years of the leading research team, according to the [SNSF guidelines](#).
4. 1-page summary description of the new RI (in a single PDF with the following document “10-page description [...]”).
5. 10-page description of the research infrastructure with details on the following points: (1) quality of the infrastructure and research; (2) national and international scientific relevance

and future potential; (3) users and access; (4) scientific feasibility (see section 5.2 “Evaluation criteria” for the lead questions used in the scientific evaluation).

6. 5-page description on (1) the planning, (2) governance and management and (3) finances and stakeholder commitment (more information on each point can be found in the SERI [submission procedure](#), page 13).
7. 1-page description of finances (use table “Cost estimate & finance scheme”, which you can download [here](#)). More information can be found in the SERI [submission procedure](#), pages 14-15).

Please note that in Phase 2 all documents 1-7 are available to SNSF. Similarly, in Phase 3 all documents 1-7 are available to the responsible bodies.

## 5. Procedure and evaluation criteria

### 5.1 Procedure<sup>2</sup>

The SNSF establishes an expert Evaluation Panel and a Steering Committee, based on the scientific fields of the applications selected in Phase 1. The expert Evaluation Panel, approved by the Presiding Board of the National Research Council, is composed of international experts. The Steering Committee is composed of members of the National Research Council and other experts.

Two to four international experts will review each proposal on the basis of the submitted documents and suggest a rating according to the criteria listed in section 5.2. Independently from the scientific evaluation and without suggesting a rating, the external reviewers will comment on the plausibility of the investment, operating and other costs for the proposed project, on the basis of

- the 1-page description of finances (table “Cost estimate & financing scheme”)
- the 5-page description of the planning, governance and management, and finances and stakeholder commitment

Each application will then be assigned to two members of the Evaluation Panel who act as Referee and Co-Referee. The Referee and Co-Referee independently write a recommendation and propose a rating according to the criteria listed in section 5.2 and on the basis of

- the submitted documents
- two to four external reviews
- an overview of existing infrastructures in Switzerland

Independently from the scientific evaluation, the Referee and Co-Referee comment on the plausibility of the investment, operating and other costs for the proposed project, on the basis of

- the 1-page description of finances (table “Cost estimate & financing scheme”)
- the 5-page description of the planning, governance and management, and finances and stakeholder commitment

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- two to four external reviews

The Referee and Co-Referee present their recommendation during the Evaluation Panel meeting. The Steering Committee is also present to provide information on existing Swiss RIs and the SNSF evaluation standards (e.g. compliance with [DORA](#)), if necessary.

The Evaluation Panel then discuss and either accept or modify the recommendation during the meeting.

The Evaluation Panel submits its final recommendation on each proposal in a report to the Presiding Board of the National Research Council, which takes the final decision on all ratings. The SNSF sends the report to the SERI and the SERI communicates the results to swissuniversities and/or the ETH Board.

## **5.2 Evaluation criteria**

The lead questions for the scientific evaluation are as follows:

### **1. Quality of the infrastructure and research**

Lead questions for the scientific evaluation: Does the infrastructure correspond to the state of the art in research and development in terms of its conceptual, technical and logistical aspects? Are the research questions and approaches that can be addressed using the infrastructure scientifically significant and original? What would be the added-value compared to existing research possibilities? Would it increase scientific collaborations?

### **2. National and international scientific relevance and future potential**

Lead questions for the scientific evaluation: How does the proposed infrastructure fit into the existing national and international RI landscape? Does it contribute to the visibility of this research field in Switzerland? Will it raise the profile of the field nationally and/or internationally? Is there an immediate or potential need for the requested infrastructure, based on the addressed scientific questions and achievable projects?

### **3. Users and access**

Lead questions for the scientific evaluation: What is/will be the access policy concerning access costs, access priority and selection of users? Does/will the RI meet the national open access policy ([Swiss National Open Access Strategy](#))? What is/will be the policy regarding open data? How many potential users do you expect and what are their main sectors of activity? How did the research community participate in the development of the proposed RI?

### **4. Scientific feasibility**

Lead questions for the scientific evaluation: Does the management have the required leadership capabilities (scientific and managerial skills)? Are the deliverables and milestones plausible from a scientific perspective? Are the technical and logistical conditions in line with the proposed infrastructure?

## 6. Timeline

The following timeline is for information only and subject to change.

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>
September – October 2021	Steering Committee established
October – January 2021	Evaluation Panel established
1 November 2021 – 7 January 2022	mySNF open for applications
January – March 2022	External reviewing procedure
March – April 2022	Evaluation procedure
April or May 2022	Evaluation Panel meeting
July 2022	SNSF submits final report to SERI

## 7. Contact

Please use the following contact for all questions concerning the scientific evaluation performed by the SNSF.

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