

Call document for SNSF Starting Grants 2026

SNSF Starting Grants 2026 is the SNSF's highest level of career funding. The objective of the SNSF Starting Grants is to lead their project and a team of researchers in Switzerland. Upon completion of the grant, a successful applicant should be a research leader who can contribute substantially to their research field. This document describes the rules and procedures for compiling and submitting a proposal to the SNSF Starting Grants Call 2026. The scheme is open for all research disciplines and topics.

Key features of the SNSF Starting Grants Call 2026

- **Call deadline: 5 May 2026 at 17:00:00 CET** (cf. [section 5.4](#) for a detailed call timeline)
- Applicants must fulfil all three personal requirements: 1) Eligibility Window, 2) Career Stage, and 3) Swiss-link by the call deadline (cf. [section 1.2](#) for details and clarifications)
- Applicants may apply twice to the SNSF Starting Grants instrument regardless of the subject matter of the project and previous ranking
- Parallel submissions to other SNSF instruments with overlapping funding periods to the requested SNSF Starting Grant are not permitted. Exceptions are one-off calls such as National Research Programmes (NRPs) and National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs)
- Applicants may in parallel apply for other non-SNSF grants, in particular the ERC Starting Grant, with the same or a different project. However, simultaneous funding of similar projects is not permitted. If funding is offered for a similar project, applicants must decide whether to accept the funding offer or continue with the SNSF evaluation (cf. [section 1.3](#))
- For applicants who need to finance their own salary, the grant will cover the project funds (max. CHF 1 million) in addition to their salary. For applicants with guaranteed salaries, the grant will cover the project funds (max. CHF 1 million)

All proposals to the Call 2026 must be submitted via the SNSF Portal (portal.snf.ch)

- The proposal is submitted in one submission step (cf. [section 4](#)) including the mandatory confirmation letter of the higher education institution or research institution (cf. [section 1.5](#))
- Proposals are evaluated in two phases, as detailed in [section 5.1](#), according to the criteria defined in [section 5.2](#).
- Proposals will be funded in order of priority based on their rank and the available funding. An additional budget is earmarked to fund additional excellent female applicants.

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Preamble

Applications / proposals must be in line with the regulations outlined in this call document. In addition, and if no specific provision is formulated in the present call, the other regulations of the SNSF apply, in particular the Funding Regulations¹ and their General Implementation Regulations².

1 Applicant

1.1 Objective and targeted career level

The SNSF Starting Grants enable researchers to lead and manage their project and a team of researchers in Switzerland. Upon completion of the grant, a successful applicant should be a research leader who can contribute substantially to their research field.

Applicants have major achievements that are independent of their work as a doctoral student and the associated doctoral project. If applicants hold a medical degree, they have major achievements independent of their initial research work as a junior scientist. The applicant's major achievements will be assessed, taking into account the culture and norms of their disciplines. Applicants will normally have complemented their expertise with appropriate research collaborations, academic or extra-academic. The expected qualifications of the applicants are laid out in the evaluation criteria (cf. [section 5.2.2](#)).

For applicants submitting with a higher education institution that offers assistant professorships, at least such a position and title must be conferred for the duration of the grant. For applicants submitting with a research institution that does not offer assistant professor positions and titles, a position involving independent project and management responsibility (e.g., group leader) must be conferred for the duration of the grant.

The SNSF does not consider funding proposals that fail to meet the personal and formal requirements set out in the present call document and in the Funding Regulations (art. 10–22)³.

1.2 Personal requirements

Applicants have a PhD degree, or a medical degree, or a qualification that is equivalent to a PhD. In addition, they must fulfil three criteria: (1) Eligibility Window, (2) Career Stage, and (3) Swiss-link. For the SNSF Starting Grants Call 2026 all three criteria must be fulfilled on the following dates.

- The eligibility window is calculated up to 1 February 2026 (exception due to the postponement of the SNSF Starting Grants Call 2026)
- The Career Stage and Swiss-link are calculated up to 5 May 2026

To confirm that you fulfil all three personal requirements and that you are eligible to the call, you may contact the SNSF Administrative Office at stg@snf.ch.

¹ [Funding Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on research grants](#) (PDF)

² [SNSF General Implementation of the Funding Regulations](#) (PDF)

³ [Funding Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on research grants](#) (PDF)

1) Eligibility window:

After their PhD defence:

- They have at least 2 years of research experience with an average work-time percentage of at least 80% (0.8 full-time equivalent, FTE) in an academic or extra-academic environment.
- They submit their proposal no more than 8 years after the date of their PhD defence.

After their medical degree (state examination or equivalent):

- They have done at least 3 years of clinical work and have at least 2 years of research experience with an average work-time percentage of at least 80% (0.8 FTE) in an academic or extra-academic environment.
- They submit their proposal no more than 12 years after obtaining their medical degree.

After a qualification equivalent to a PhD, defined as 3 years of research activity with an average work-time percentage of at least 80% (0.8 FTE) after obtaining the higher education degree:

- They have at least 2 years of research experience with an average work-time percentage of at least 80% (0.8 FTE) in an academic or extra-academic environment.
- They submit their proposal no more than 8 years after obtaining a qualification equivalent to a PhD.

The relevant period to determine the fit within the window of eligibility is the time elapsed between the (oral) defence of the relevant degree and 1 February 2026 (exception due to the call postponement).

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 for the Funding Regulations⁴ apply. The reasons for extending the window of eligibility must be explained in the proposal.

2) Career stage:

Applicants are not eligible to apply if, at the time of application they have already achieved the objective of the SNSF Starting Grants (cf. [section 1.1](#)).⁵ Applicants who have already achieved the target career stage as well as applicants who fulfil both of the following criteria are therefore not eligible:

- a. they already hold a position that allows leading their research project and a team of researchers, e.g., group leader or university professor
- and**
- b. they have already received significant third-party funding for a research project, e.g., a SNSF project grant, or a Starting Grant, a Consolidator Grant, an Advanced Grant from the ERC or the SNSF, or funding from any other third-party source.

The conditions a) and b) are considered as benchmarks for evaluating the career stage of applicants. For current Ambizione grantees, the earliest possible submission date is specified in [section 1.3](#).

⁴ [SNSF General Implementation of the Funding Regulations](#) (PDF)

⁵ [Funding Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on research grants](#) (PDF), art. 4.

3) Swiss-link:

Applicants must have held a research position for the equivalent of at least two years with an average work-time percentage of at least 80% (0.8 FTE) at a Swiss research institution in the higher education sector in Switzerland, or have Swiss nationality, or hold a degree from a Swiss higher education institution (Master's, PhD, MD/FMH, or equivalent).

Note that the research position must be at a Swiss higher education or research institution in Switzerland. CERN, for example, is an international organisation and does not count as Swiss-link (if there is no additional affiliation to a Swiss higher education institution).

Examples and clarifications on how to calculate time-based criteria:

- Eligible: If an applicant has worked in research for four years at 40% (0.4 FTE), this would meet the requirement (totalling 1.6 FTE, which averages to 0.8 FTE over two years).
- Not Eligible: If an applicant has worked full-time (100%) for 1.8 years, they would not meet the requirement, as this doesn't meet the minimum two-year time requirement.

1.3 Multiple applications and duplicate funding

- Support for research projects already funded by the SNSF or third parties is excluded.
- Applicants must provide information on available and requested funding from the SNSF or any other third-party funding source (cf. [section 3.1](#)).
- 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.
- SNSF Starting Grant applicants may in parallel apply for other grants, in particular the ERC Starting Grant, with the same or a different project. However, simultaneous funding of identical or similar projects is not permitted (cf. art. 17 Funding Regulations⁶). 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.
- 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 Ambizione grant at the earliest.

⁶ [Funding Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on research grants](#) (PDF)

1.4 Repeated submissions

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. The applicants can submit a revised version of the same project or a new project.

- Each proposal is evaluated independently of any previous submission.
- Application procedures discontinued due to a violation of scientific integrity rules by the applicant are considered a rejection.

1.5 Employing host institution

The higher education institution or research institution must be established in Switzerland as legal entity (public or private) under Swiss law and sign the confirmation letter (template provided on the SNSF Portal and the SNSF Starting Grants website).

At the time of submitting the proposal, the applicant does not need to be employed by the higher education institution or research institution they have chosen as their host institution; however, the host institution must employ the applicant at least for the project's duration.

Higher education institutions that offer assistant professorships must award a position with at least this title for the duration of the grant. Research institutions that do not offer assistant professor positions and titles, must offer a position involving independent project and management responsibility ("group leader position") for the duration of the grant. For the applicant's own salary and project budget see [section 3](#).

The employing host institution guarantees to:

- integrate the grantee in the higher education institution or research institution and to provide working space for the research team;
- warrant access rights to infrastructures, equipment, and other services necessary for conducting the research project;
- ensure independence in leading the project and the team, in particular, the authority to publish as senior author and to invite as co-authors only those who have contributed substantially to the reported work.

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 (cf. [section 6.4](#)).

The present call is eligible for overhead contributions as defined in the relevant SNSF regulations.⁷

⁷ [Regulations on overhead contributions](#) (PDF)

1.6 Work-time percentage and time commitment

The expected work-time percentage and time commitment to the SNSF Starting Grant project is described here. The rules on when the salary of an applicant can or cannot be covered by the SNSF Starting Grant are described in detail in [section 3.2](#). Before applying, applicants are requested to discuss the conditions and procedure for conducting the project with their employing higher education institution or research institution which must provide a confirmation letter (template provided on the SNSF Portal and on the SNSF Starting Grants website).

If an applicant already has a guaranteed and paid position at a higher education institution or research institution in Switzerland for the entire duration of the proposed SNSF Starting Grant and therefore no salary is requested, they must be employed at least 0.5 FTE and spend at least 0.5 FTE on the project funded by this grant.

If the salary of the applicant is requested (either in full or for part of the project), the position may include some activities expected for the development of an academic career, such as teaching, in addition to the work directly related to the project funded by this grant. Specifically for the case where the salary of the applicant is requested:

- If the applicant is employed at a university of applied sciences or of teacher education, then the applicant must be employed at least 0.8 FTE and spend at least 70% of their working time on the project funded by this grant and the rest mainly on activities expected for the development of an academic career.
- If the applicant is a researcher who does clinical work, then the applicant must be employed at least 0.5 FTE as a researcher and spend at least 0.5 FTE on the project funded by this grant and the rest mainly on clinical work. The salary related to the clinical work is not covered by the SNSF Starting Grant.
- In all other cases, the applicant must be employed at least 0.8 FTE and spend at least 80% of their working time on the project funded by this grant and the rest mainly on activities expected for the development of an academic career.

If an applicant secures significant SNSF funding, such as project funding, or third-party funding, such as an ERC grant or similar, they may request a reduction of their time commitment to the project but respecting that the time spent on the SNSF grant is at least 0.5 FTE.

Note: Any work-time percentage reduction must be requested from the SNSF Administrative Offices and will be approved on a case-by-case basis (cf. [section 6.1](#)).

2 Formal requirements, ethical issues and research integrity

The SNSF may forward your application to your research institution, e.g. for declarations and confirmations. Not all research institutions make use of this option. The following overview shows all entities to whom the SNSF transmits data: [Overview: Data exchange with research institutions](#)

2.1 Legal basis

The general provisions of the SNSF (Funding Regulations⁸ and the General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations⁹) apply to the SNSF Starting Grants and the corresponding funding procedures. This call document is issued by the Academic Board of the Research Council.

2.2 User account

If applicants do not already have a SNSF Portal user account, they will need to open a new account: [Create an SNSF Portal user account](#). They should register their new account at least one month before the deadline. Their SNSF Portal account will remain in place for future submissions or the lifetime management of approved projects.

2.3 Ethics and Integrity

Research activities and methods that have ethical implications or may raise questions requiring sound ethical assessment must be declared on the SNSF Portal under “Declarations”. Hence, applicants should take note of the Swiss laws and ethical standards¹⁰. Furthermore, the rules of scientific integrity must be respected¹¹.

2.4 Open access and open research data

Under the SNSF Starting Grants, grantees must ensure open access to all peer-reviewed scientific publications of their results as set out in the SNSF Funding Regulations and the General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations.

For the SNSF Starting Grants, grantees must submit a data management plan (DMP) to ask for the release of funds for approved projects. Missing or inaccurate statements in the DMP need to be added/revised at the latest before the release of the payment of the second instalment.

The SNSF also expects that data generated or collected during the project are made publicly accessible in data repositories provided there are no legal, ethical, copyright or other issues, as set out in the SNSF Funding Regulations and the SNSF Open Research Data (ORD) Policy.¹² The repositories must comply with the FAIR data principles. Please note that costs for ORD must be considered at the time of submission of the application.

⁸ [Funding Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on research grants](#) (PDF)

⁹ [General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations](#) (PDF)

¹⁰ [Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation](#)

¹¹ [Regulations on scientific misconduct](#) (PDF)

¹² Further information: [Open Research Data](#)

3 Requested funding

For applicants who need to finance their own salary, the grant will cover the project funds (max. CHF 1 million) in addition to the applicants' own salaries. For applicants with guaranteed salaries, the grant will cover the project funds only (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 estimation should be as accurate as possible.

Applicants enter the requested funding using whole CHF integers in the SNSF Portal section "Budget". All costs must be indicated in annual allotments. For the list of eligible costs, see art. 2 of the General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations¹³.

The evaluation panels will assess the requested project funds, the amount of which may be reduced for ineligible, unjustified or disproportionate costs, see art. 2.2 of the General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations¹³.

3.1 Project funds

The maximal budget for project funds is CHF 1 million.

Project staff (cf. art. 7 General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations¹⁴ and annex 12¹⁵): applicants indicate the salaries (social security contributions included automatically) for applicant's research team (doctoral students, postdocs, other employees). When requesting positions, they should refer to the employing institution's salary rates and social contributions. Size, composition and role of the team members must be indicated.

Further costs must be classified in the correct expense category on the SNSF Portal¹⁶ (e.g., Travel, conferences and workshops; Equipment and material of enduring value; Cost for granting access to research data; Infrastructure use, data procurement, expandable items and other material costs, etc.). All available resources for the realization of the project must be declared.

For the costs for equipment, applicants include a short technical description together with a justification of its necessity. The costs for equipment may exceed the maximum of CHF 100'000 specified in art. 2.8 of the General Implementation Regulations for the Funding Regulations¹⁷, provided that the maximum budget of CHF 1 million for the project funds is not exceeded.

Note: Any funds received or requested from the SNSF, or other research funding institutions must be declared (refer to the SNSF Portal section "Relations").

¹³ [General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations](#) (PDF)

¹⁴ [General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations](#) (PDF)

¹⁵ [Annex 12: Salary ranges, guidelines for employees in SNSF-funded projects](#) (PDF)

¹⁶ Further information: [Guidelines "How do I enter the budget in the SNSF Portal?"](#)

¹⁷ Decision of the Presiding Board of the National Research Council July 5, 2023

3.2 The applicants' own salaries

If an applicant already holds a position for the duration of the grant that meets the SNSF Starting Grant requirements for conducting an independent project with management responsibilities (e.g. group leader or university professor; see also [section 1.5](#)), the applicant's salary *cannot* be covered by the grant.

An applicant's salary (either in full or for part of the project) *can* be covered by the grant in the following situations:

- An applicant holds a secured position that does not meet the SNSF Starting Grant requirements regarding independence, management responsibility and time commitment. This situation applies, for example, to positions with a strong focus on teaching (e.g. lecturers at universities of applied sciences).
- An applicant holds a position that does not cover the entire duration of the SNSF Starting Grant, e.g. a tenure-track position. In the case of a tenure-track position, they may apply for their own salary for the remaining duration after the end of the tenure-track position and receive this salary only if they do not receive tenure.

If the grantee obtains to a paid position, the remaining salary contribution must be returned to the SNSF and cannot be converted into project funds.

For higher education institutions that offer assistant professorships, the SNSF covers a salary at the level of a local assistant professor for the requested duration of the project. For research institutions that do not offer assistant professor positions and titles, the SNSF will pay a position involving independent project and management responsibility ("group leader position") for the requested duration of the grant.

Applicants indicate whether they request their salary (in full or for part of the project), including automatically included social security contributions of the employer. To determine the salary level, they contact the HR department of the higher education institution or research institution. If this information is not available on time, they may enter CHF 140'000.- per year (excluding social contributions). The exact salary must be confirmed by the employing host institution at the latest for approved grants.

4 Proposal and documents

All proposals must be submitted via the SNSF Portal. The following sections complement the additional information available on the SNSF Portal.

All documents and information must be submitted in English. For documents, the font must be Times New Roman, Arial or similar with a font size of at least 10, line spacing 1.5, and margins of 2 cm on all sides. Condensed fonts are not allowed. The documents must be submitted in PDF format.

4.1 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. **The page and character count in the SNSF Portal is binding. Proposals with research plans that are too extensive cannot be submitted.**

The research plan must be uploaded in its final form as a single file in PDF format (not write-protected), and it may not include attachments of any kind. **No modifications 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 (cf. Funding Regulations¹⁸, art. 22).

The research plan must be structured into the following sections:

Section a: State-of-the-art and objectives	Specify the project objectives in the context of the state-of-the-art in the research field and the state of the applicant’s own research. It should be clear how and why the proposed work is important for the field, and what impact it will have if successful, such as how it may open up new horizons or opportunities for science, technology or scholarship. Specify any particularly challenging or unconventional aspects of the project, including multi- or interdisciplinary aspects.
Section b: Methodology	Describe the proposed methodology in detail including any key intermediate goals. Explain and justify the methodology in relation to the state-of-the-art, and particularly novel or unconventional aspects. Highlight any intermediate stages where results may require adjustments to the project planning.
Bibliography	Provide references for all sources referred to in the research plan. Give the full reference, especially the title, source and full author list. Do not use “et al.” to shorten the author list. (Exception: The author list can be shortened if a publication involves large international consortia with over 50 authors. In this case, a link to the complete reference must be included). – The bibliography is uploaded separately and does not have a page/character limit. – The bibliography must not contain any additional information to the research plan.

Note that:

- The abstract is submitted separately via the SNSF Portal section “Summary” (cf. [section 4.2](#)).
- Section a) and b) are guidelines; the structuring of the research plan is the responsibility of the applicant.
- Your research plan should be legible also in printed form, so that tables, charts, or other important details do not need to be enlarged: If parts of the research plan are not clearly legible, they cannot be assessed.

¹⁸ [Funding Regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation on research grants](#) (PDF)

4.2 Summary, discipline 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 of the research” is made available to peer reviewers when they are approached for a peer review.

Summary of the research: The summary should summarise the main objectives and how these may exceed the state of the art. It should also contain a brief overview of the research approach, utilized methods and implementation of the research. Note: It is not recommended to use “buzz words” that are not a critical part of the project.

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, overarching categories: [Overview and further information on the classification of research disciplines](#). Note: It is not recommended to choose every discipline the research proposal might touch. Certain aspects might be better covered by keywords.

Keywords: The chosen keywords should be precise and meaningful to further specify the topic. They might also describe a certain method (e.g. “MRI”) or work subjects (e.g. “patients”). Note: It is not recommended to give generic or very broad keywords (e.g. “Immunology”).

4.3 CV / SNSF Portal profile

Applicants compile their CV on the SNSF Portal (cf. [Your curriculum vitae – all about the CV format](#)). At the time of submission, the information in the personal profile is assigned to the proposal and stored in their current state as a snapshot. For applicants, the complete profile including academic age and major achievements is stored as a CV.

The standardized CV is used to evaluate the general research qualification of the applicant, taking into account their research discipline and the net academic age of the applicants. The CV can be accessed by the referees and external peer-reviewers. The “Major achievements” serve as a general description of your most important scientific contributions to date. However, the “Major achievements” will also be used to assess the qualifications of the applicant (cf. [section 5.2.2](#)).

The SNSF has signed the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#). The scientific quality, value and impact of the major achievements identified in the CV are taken into consideration (including datasets, software, prototypes) in addition to research publications. In this context, the research content of an output is much more important than publication metrics or the name of the journal in which it was published.

4.4 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, choose the correct type of collaboration (e.g., exchanges on the project, publication, research infrastructures, exchange of personnel, industry/business collaboration etc). 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.

4.5 Submitting the proposal

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). Please make sure that you have entered all mandatory information and uploaded all necessary documents according to the requirements stated in this document or in the respective sections in the SNSF Portal by the submission deadline. Otherwise, your proposal may not be considered.

4.6 Receipt and verification at the SNSF

4.6.1 Administrative verification

The Administrative Offices of the SNSF check whether the submitted proposal meet the formal and personal requirements and whether you and the designated research institutions are eligible. Eligible proposals will be scientifically evaluated. Proposals may be considered not eligible even after the evaluation process has started.

The Administrative Offices of the SNSF may check whether the proposal respects scientific integrity rules (cf. ‘Regulations on scientific misconduct’¹⁹).

4.6.2 Contacts between applicants and the SNSF

Please address queries to the SNSF Administrative Offices by phone +41 (0)31 308 22 22 or by sending an email to stg@snf.ch. The Office may contact applicants to clarify issues related to the proposal. During and after the submission deadline, applicants are obliged to:

- provide any information requested by the SNSF,
- cooperate in clarifying issues.

The SNSF cannot give applicants any information on the evaluation of their proposals while the evaluation is in progress and until the decision is communicated in writing. **For the SNSF, the interaction between applicants and members of evaluation panels regarding proposals is not compatible with academic best practice.**

¹⁹ [Regulations on scientific misconduct](#) (PDF)

5 Evaluation and communication

The evaluation of the submitted proposals is based on the principle of competition. Thematic panels will evaluate the proposals in a two-phase procedure. The proposals are evaluated based on the submitted information and documents for phase 1 and additionally by external peer reviews and interviews for phase 2.

5.1 Evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure follows the principles that guide the SNSF's evaluation practices:

- Individual voting: Every panel member casts an independent rating.
- Clear separation between scientific evaluation and funding decision.
- Random selection: Funding decisions on proposals of similar scientific quality around the funding line may be reached by drawing lots²⁰.

Further information: [Evaluation procedure – this is how we select](#)

For the SNSF Starting Grants, the selection procedure comprises two phases:

5.1.1 Phase 1 evaluation procedure

The proposals are evaluated in thematic evaluation panels. The evaluation panels are published on the SNSF website after the submission deadline and applicants are informed in which evaluation panel their proposal will be evaluated.

The allocation of proposals to evaluation panels is based on the information provided in the “Summary” section (cf. [section 4.2](#)). Note that occasionally panel members from other evaluation panels may help to evaluate some proposals, e.g., for interdisciplinary proposals.

Before the evaluation phase 1 meeting, at least two panel members independently evaluate each proposal as referees and submit a structured recommendation. (cf. [section 5.2](#)). During the evaluation phase 1 meeting, the referees present to the panel the proposals assigned to them and justify their recommendations. Subsequently, the panel members discuss the proposal in terms of the identified strengths and weaknesses and based on the evaluation criteria. If your proposal clearly has many weaknesses, the evaluation panel may preselect it for rejection. In such cases the proposal is not discussed in detail (cf. Organisation regulations, art. 19.4).

Proposals not selected for phase 2 will be rejected by written ruling (cf. [section 5.3](#)).

5.1.2 Phase 2 evaluation procedure

Proposals selected for phase 2 are peer reviewed. External peer reviewers are researchers who do not participate in the panel meetings and who submit their structured reviews prior to the evaluation panel meeting phase 2. Applicants are entitled to submit a list with all the names and addresses of persons not to be asked for an external peer review in the SNSF Portal section “Exclusions”. The SNSF will abide

²⁰ [Organisational Regulations of the Research Council of the Swiss National Science Foundation](#) (PDF), art. 19, para. 6

by this list if applicants provide a valid reason for the requested exclusion and other experts are available.

The submitted peer reviews are checked by the SNSF Administrative Offices for formal conformity and by the referees from the evaluation panels for their usefulness for the proposal evaluation. The same referees then revise their evaluation recommendations from phase 1 on the basis of the peer reviews and submit an own updated recommendation.

The evaluation meeting phase 2 includes an interview with the applicants. During the interview, applicants present their research project and answer the questions from the evaluation panel members. After each interview, panel members discuss and rate the proposal. Based on the individual ratings of the panel members, a ranking list is compiled using Bayesian ranking and forwarded to the Programme Committee Careers, which will decide, within the limits of the available budget, on the proposals to be funded. A random selection may be applied if the ratings of the proposals at the threshold are not clearly distinguishable in the Bayesian ranking list. Proposals that are not funded will be rejected by written ruling (cf. [section 5.3](#)).

5.2 Evaluation criteria

The following criteria will be considered during the evaluation procedure. They will focus on the scientific quality of the research project and the qualification of the applicant. The same criteria will be applied during both evaluation phases:

5.2.1 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?
- To what extent 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 proposed research?
- To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
- To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and PI commitment adequate and properly justified?

5.2.2 Qualification of the applicant

Intellectual capacity and creativity:

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

5.3 Outcome and communication of decisions

After phase 1, all applicants will be informed about the outcome via email. Applicants not selected for phase 2 will receive a decision letter with the scientific reasons underlying the evaluation.

Applicants who advance to phase 2 will be informed about the date of the interview via email. Applicants rejected in phase 2 will receive a decision letter with the scientific reasons underlying the evaluation and the anonymized evaluation forms of the peer reviewers.

Proposals will be funded in order of priority based on their rank and the available funding.

The written ruling may be appealed against before the Federal Administrative Court²¹.

5.4 Timeline of the SNSF Starting Grants Call 2026

- Call opens: 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 January 2027
 - SSH Interviews: 28–29 January 2027
 - MINT Interviews: 11–12 February 2027
 - LS Interviews: 4–5 February 2027
- Communication on the outcome of Phase 2: mid-March 2027
- Dispatch of decision letters Phase 2: early April 2027
- Earliest possible starting date of grant: 1 May 2027
- Latest possible starting date of grant: 1 May 2028

The timeline is subject to change; please check the [SNSF Starting Grants website](#) for any updates.

²¹ [Appeals against SNSF funding decisions](#) (PDF)

6 Lifetime management

Lifetime management refers to the management and administration of funded projects from project start to project completion. Overview and further information: [Lifetime management of projects \(grants\)](#)

For clarifications and any requests concerning lifetime management, contact the SNSF Administrative Offices via stg@snf.ch.

6.1 Reduction in work-time percentage or time commitment

Any reduction in work-time percentage or time commitment must be requested and the SNSF decides based on the feasibility of the funded SNSF Starting Grant project. The SNSF must be informed as early as possible in order to decide on an amendment or the revocation of the grant.

The work-time percentage must comply with [section 1.6](#). A reduction of the time commitment to the SNSF Starting Grant project is only possible in the event of successful acquisition of additional significant SNSF or third-party funding. The minimum time commitment to the project must always be 0.5 FTE.

6.2 Obtaining a paid academic position during the grant

For SNSF Starting Grants covering the grantee's own salary:

Grantees who obtain a paid academic position that allows leading their research project and a team of researchers, must inform the SNSF.

- If grantees obtain a position in Switzerland (with an employment with a work-time percentage of at least 50%) (0.5 FTE)) the grant may be transferred to the new host institution, provided that the feasibility and success of the project are guaranteed. The project funds will continue to cover the SNSF Starting Grant project. The remaining amount of the grantee's salary must be reimbursed to the SNSF.
- If the grantees obtain a position abroad, "Money follows Researcher" applies. The "Money follows Researcher" (MfR) process is aimed at researchers who move abroad and would like current SNSF funding to continue. In principle, a continuation of the project is possible in any country. MfR is approved on a case-by-case basis on request of the grant recipient. The following MfR criteria always apply: [Money follows Researcher](#)

6.3 Transfer of the grant

A grant can be transferred to another Swiss higher education or research institution, provided that the feasibility and success of the project are guaranteed. Both host institutions must agree to the transfer.

6.4 Premature termination of the grant

Should SNSF Starting Grantees have to terminate their grant prematurely (e.g. obtaining a position on the extra-academic sector), they must inform the SNSF without delay. In such cases, the SNSF terminates the grant. The remaining budget of the grant must be refunded to the SNSF.