

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SNSF PROJECT FUNDING SCHEME

10 February 2026

Participants from the SNSF



Stuart Lane, Vice-president of the National Research Council and Member of the Academic Board



Pascal Fischer, Head of Section Projects, SNSF Office



Thomas Zimmermann, Head of Unit SSH, SNSF Office



Judith Neuenschwander
Scientific Collaborator, SNSF Office



Ngoc Dung Le
Scientific Collaborator, SNSF Office

Rationale behind changes
Regulation changes
Important details
Q&A

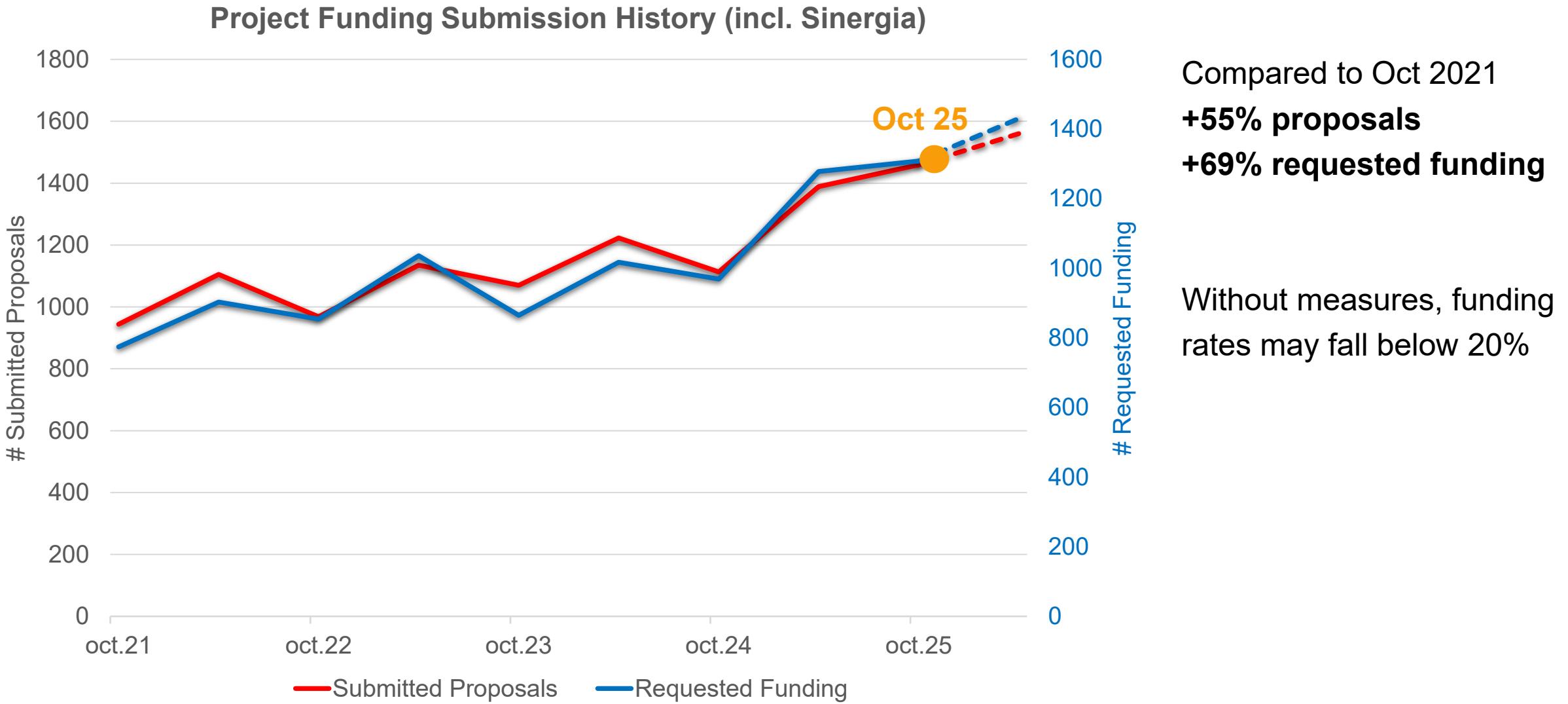


Context



- Very strong increase in demand since 2021 and especially in the last year
- Available funding has only moderately increased and cuts are expected in the future
- Success rates have decreased and are at a historically low point in project funding

Evolution of submitted proposals in project funding



Why are measures necessary?



- Very low success and funding rates force us to reject projects of exceptionally high quality in all domains.
- Very low success and funding rates lead to increasing randomness in the selection of funded projects due to ever smaller differences in quality.
- The large increase in the number of applications over the past years corresponds to trend seen internationally and not to a short-term reaction to the announced cost-saving measures.
- By limiting the number of grants and the funding per researcher, we avoid researchers investing time in strong proposals that cannot be supported and enable more outstanding researchers to obtain at least one grant.

Specific measures



- A researcher may only have a maximum of two simultaneous project funding grants. One of these must be a Lead Agency/Weave/ICIS project.
- Researchers may submit only one proposal for project funding within a 12-month period. Exceptions apply to proposals that were rejected in random selection or that were evaluated and proposed for funding by the SNSF within the framework of Lead Agency/Weave but were not approved by the partner organisation.
- Each applicant can still apply for an average maximum of 250,000 Swiss francs per year for the entire duration of the grant. What's new is that personnel costs may not exceed an average of 200,000 Swiss francs per applicant per year.
- The funding amount per project is limited to a maximum of 3 million Swiss francs.
- Applicants based abroad are only permitted in Lead Agency/Weave/ICIS projects. Cooperation with project partners abroad is still possible.

Potential impacts of measures



- Goal: strike a good balance between
 - providing substantial funding to the most successful researchers
 - enabling more outstanding researchers to obtain at least one grant
 - competition and diversity of funded research
- The SNSF is aware of potential impacts—especially on collaborative and early-career research—and will address them where possible while closely monitoring effects over the coming semesters.
- Please be aware: the negative impacts (restrictions on submitting applications) are immediately visible; the positive impacts (higher funding rate, all researchers have a fair chance, more diversity in funded research) will become apparent only later

Implementation of new regulations



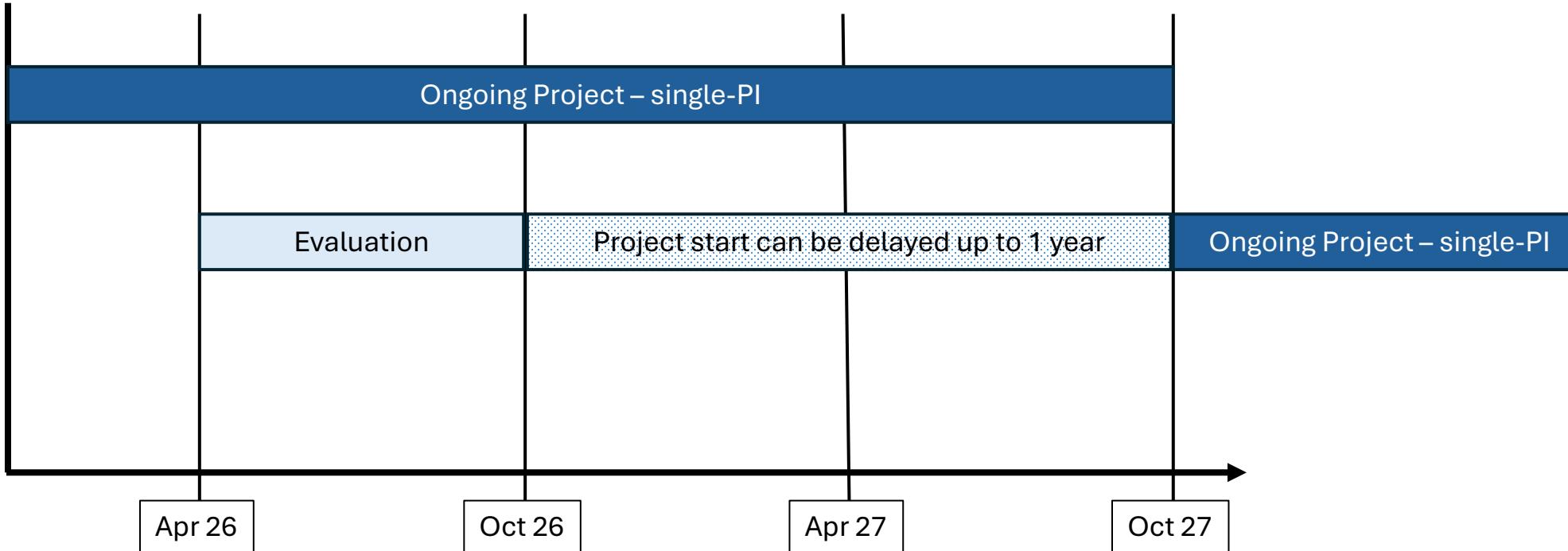
The new regulations come into force immediately

- They are valid for all proposals submitted to project funding on 1 April 2026
- They are also valid for all Lead Agency/Weave proposals submitted to partner agencies as of now
- Applicants with a proposal currently under evaluation in project funding are now excluded from submitting in April 2026 (apart from the exceptions listed in the amended regulations or proposal withdrawn)

Transition phase:

- Collaborative grants approved before 1 April 2026 will be treated the same as ongoing Lead Agency/Weave/ICIS grants. This allows grantees of a collaborative project to submit a second proposal even if their current grant is not a Lead Agency/Weave/ICIS grant.

Submission date vs project start



No overlaps between ongoing grants are possible, but submission of a new project is possible up to 18 months before end of ongoing project

What counts as an ongoing project?

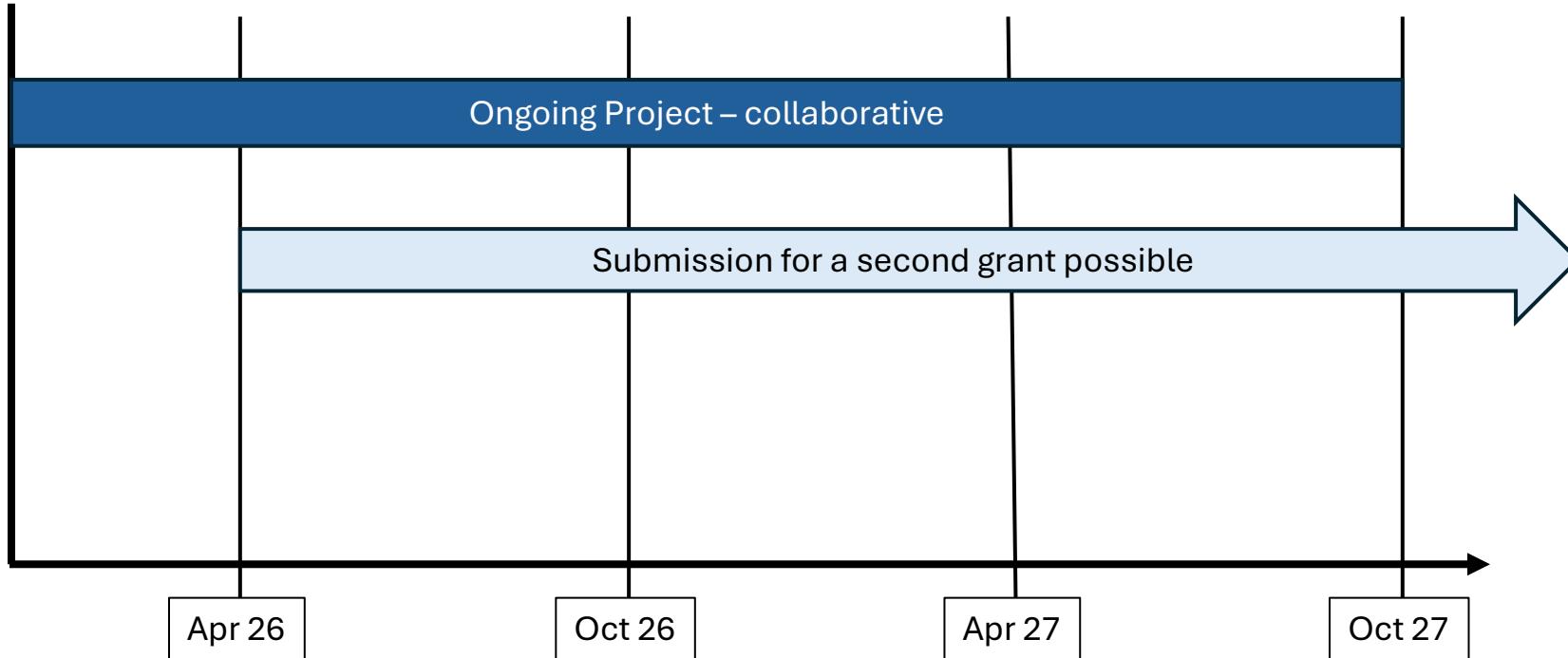
- Ambizione
- Eccellenza
- Practice to Science
- PRIMA
- Special calls ‘Projects on health and wellbeing’
- Project funding
- Sinergia
- SNSF Starting Grants (from call 2025 onwards)
- Weave / Lead Agency / International Co-Investigator Scheme

Transition measure for collaborative projects: valid for all above listed funding instruments with more than one grantee.

Transition measure for collaborative projects

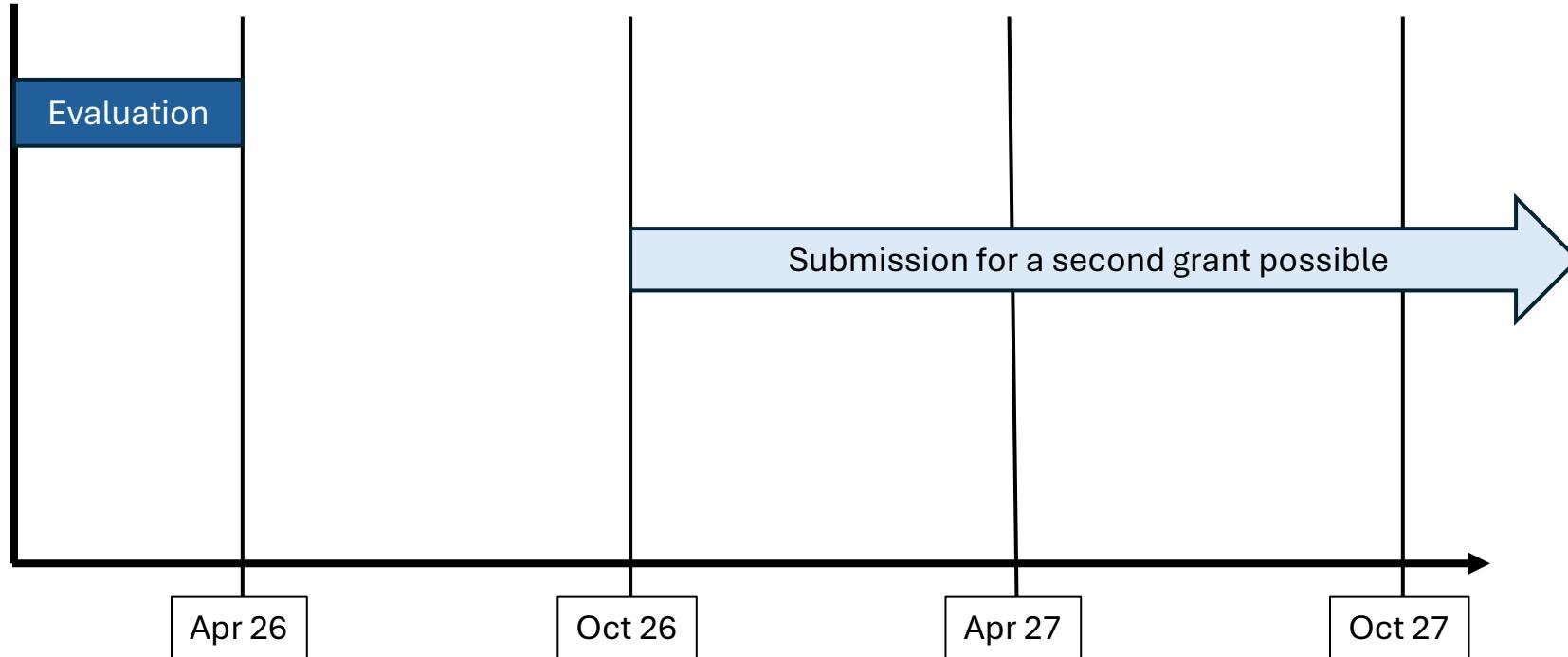
- Grantees of a collaborative project approved before April 2026 may submit a second proposal even if their current grant is not a Lead Agency/Weave/ICIS grant
- They may submit a single-PI, collaborative or a Weave/Lead Agency/ICIS project
- If they hold more than one ongoing grant, they cannot submit another grant with overlapping duration
- The restriction to allow one submission every 12 months still applies for these cases

Transition measure – ongoing collaborative grants



All applicants on an ongoing collaborative grant may submit as of April 2026 for a second grant.

Transition measure – collaborative grants in evaluation



All applicants of a collaborative grant currently in evaluation may submit again in October 2026 (unless withdrawn)

Withdrawal of projects currently in evaluation

Applications withdrawn before the end of February 2026 do not count as submissions

- Applies only to proposals submitted before 3rd of February 2026
- Withdrawal needs to be communicated to SNSF before the end of February 2026
- Applicants can then submit a proposal before the 12 months since the submission of the withdrawn proposal (i.e. April) if no other proposal in evaluation
- Collaborative proposals can only be withdrawn as a whole

Lead Agency / Weave proposals submitted to partner organisations

All measures are also valid for Lead Agency / Weave proposals submitted to partner organisations

- For agencies with a fixed submission deadline: the exact date is relevant
- For agencies with a rolling call (e.g., DFG); the submission date to SNSF is relevant

Regarding the restriction to allow only one submission every 12 months:

- small deviations (< 2 weeks) from the SNSF's project funding deadlines: exceptions from the 12 months may be allowed. Please verify with the SNSF Office before submitting!
- larger deviations (> 2 weeks) from the SNSF's project funding deadlines: if exceptions are decided upon, these will be communicated on our website.

What happens if the SNSF does not consider my proposal?

- **Formal** non-considerations (for instance if an applicant is not eligible) do not count as submissions
- **Substantive** (content-related) non-considerations (for instance if the research plan does not correspond to the minimal requirements) count as submissions

Q&A

- We are happy to answer your questions of general interest today
- If you have specific questions regarding your situation, please contact the office, preferably via e-mail:
 - Project funding SSH – e-mail: projects.ssh@snf.ch
 - Project funding MINT – e-mail: projects.mint@snf.ch
 - Project funding Life Sciences – e-mail: projects.ls@snf.ch
 - Project funding Interdisciplinary Research – e-mail: projects.id@snf.ch
- Please raise your hand to indicate that you would like to ask a question.