



NCCR 6TH CALL – WEBINAR

22 January 2024

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Content

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 - NCCR funding scheme
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NCCR funding scheme

- National networks on topics with strategic importance for Swiss research and long-term perspective
- Sustainable renewal and optimisation of research structures
- Implementation of coherent strategies for:
 - Collaborative and coherent research programme
 - The five structure-related areas: knowledge & technology transfer, education & training, equal opportunities, communication & outreach, open science
- High organisational and financial autonomy

Modifications for the 6th call

- Call thematically open (no strategic priority of the SERI as digitalisation for the 5th call)
- Size of the proposals:
 - More flexibility
 - Proactive communication that smaller and shorter NCCRs (minimum 8 years) are possible and welcome
 - Maximum duration remains unchanged at 12 years
- Conflicts of interest:
 - Expanded self-declaration requirements for international panelists and peer-reviewers
 - Focus on potential conflicts of interest within the team of directors
 - Clear rules for Research Council members involved in the evaluation procedure
- External peer-review:
 - More input by applicants: They can specify fields of research and disciplinary approaches necessary for the evaluation of the proposal

Modifications for the 6th call

- Transparency:
 - Information on submitted declarations of intent and full proposals to the responsible applicants and to all home institutions
- Panel composition:
 - Composition of outline and full proposal panels published 4 weeks prior the meetings
- Division of tasks between SNSF and SERI:
 - No meeting between the SNSF and the home institutions
 - Shortlist to SERI not ranked

Scope of the 6th call

- Presumably 6 to 9 new NCCRs
- Duration flexible between 8-12 years
- Budget between 8 to 20 Mio CHF for phase I
- Within this range, small – in terms of consortia size and/or budget – and short NCCRs are welcomed
- Same evaluation criteria for all NCCR proposals independent of their size:
 - Sustainable strengthening of Switzerland's position in proposed research fields
 - Renewal and optimisation of research structures in the fields

Diversity

The SNSF recognises that diversity can significantly enhance excellence in research

Gender diversity

- NCCRs are expected to establish an exemplary gender balance within the consortium (including the NCCR leadership)
- Home institutions are expected to support the NCCR applicants in their efforts to establish an exemplary gender balance within the consortium

Institutional diversity

- The SNSF encourages to include groups from different types of institutions that can make substantial contributions to the proposed topic

Requirements home institutions (HIs)

- The following institutions are eligible as HI:
 - The Federal Institutes of Technology and the research centres of the ETH domain
 - Universities, universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education and other institutions in the higher education sector that are accredited under the HEdA
 - Research facilities of national importance which receive funding from the Confederation
- HIs support NCCR proposals that are compatible with their long-term strategic planning
- Make adequate financial and structural contributions; the SNSF takes the different financial and structural situations of the HIs into account
- Commit to releasing the NCCR director of at least 30% FTE from other duties (e.g. teaching or admin tasks) and the co-director to an extent that is adapted to their organisational role in the NCCR

Self-funding by the home institutions (HIs)

- Resources specifically awarded to the NCCR by the management of the home institution (e.g. Rectorate, Presidency)
- Note: Resources provided by the participating research groups at project level, usually coming from the ordinary university budget of research groups, are not part of the Self-funding by the HI
- Self-funding can be cash or in-kind:
 - Cash: Financial resources at the free disposal of the NCCR management (parallel to the SNSF grant)
 - In-kind: Resources not at the NCCR's direct disposal (costs for assistant professorships, facilities etc.)

Examples for structural contributions

- Creating and extending research and service units, such as new research centres, national institutes, interfaculty structures, technical platforms or research networks
- Re-orienting existing or creating new (assistant) professorships within the NCCR's research domain
- Defining foci in education and research for the NCCR (e.g. course at undergraduate level or PhD programmes)
- Improving infrastructures, such as research infrastructures, databases, equipment, or work-space
- Creating and extending cooperations with leading national and international research institutions in the relevant domain

Stages in the application and evaluation process

- Declarations of intent (15 Feb 2024):
 - No documents required, no evaluation
 - Main purpose: adequate preparation of subsequent evaluation steps
 - Information on submitted declarations of intent to the responsible applicants and HI
- Outline proposal (15 April 2024):
 - HIs submit the signed form self-funding by the home institution
 - External peer review, at least three thematic panels
 - Outcome = classification of outline proposal; recommendation whether to submit a full proposal or not; no formal decision by SNSF
 - Only projects with continued support of the HI(s) can be submitted as full proposals

Stages in the application and evaluation process

- Full proposal (3 Feb 2025):
 - HIs submit the signed form self-funding by the home institution
 - External peer review, rebuttal (applicants can comment external reviews), interdisciplinary panels interviewing NCCR director(s)
 - SNSF submits unranked shortlist of recommended proposals to the SERI (State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation)
 - Information on submitted full proposals to the responsible applicants and HIs
- SERI (Sep 2025 – Jan 2026):
 - Evaluation of science policy aspects (incl. meetings with involved HIs)
 - Final decision by Federal Department EAER (Jan 2026)
- Start of new NCCRs (between March and May 2026)

Scientific evaluation – important elements

- Justification why an NCCR is needed for achieving the goals.
- The HI's support must be adequate to the goals of the proposal and to the NCCR funding scheme.
- NCCRs are more than just very big and long-lasting research projects. Ideally, they will define new research fields, establish novel collaborations, build up new and optimise existing structures, act as test beds for innovative approaches e.g. in equal opportunities or education.
- In collaboration with the HI(s), the NCCRs build institutional structures, research facilities and community building to ensure a long-term impact. Applicants should have a first vision about their potential legacy.

Questions?

- For additional and very specific questions contact nccr@snf.ch