

Horizon Europe Transitional Measures: Call document for SNSF Starting Grants 2022

Switzerland is currently considered a non-associated third country for participation in Horizon Europe and other related programmes. For monobeneficiary schemes such as most ERC grants, researchers at Swiss research institutions are not eligible to apply. To remedy this situation, the SNSF has been mandated by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) to offer an alternative, comparable call for proposals as part of its broader transitional measures in 2021-2022: the SNSF Starting Grant Call 2022. This is an integrative call, which, in addition to the transitional measure for the 2022 ERC Starting Grant, also covers the SNSF's 2022 Eccellenza funding scheme. Thus, conditions of employment of the SNSF Starting Grants are similar to those for researchers who intended to apply to Eccellenza. International and Swiss-based applicants who intended to apply for an ERC Starting Grant or an SNSF Eccellenza Professorial Fellowship to work in Switzerland are welcome to submit an SNSF Starting Grant proposal to the SNSF.

The aim is to maintain Switzerland's strong position as a centre of research excellence whilst offering an opportunity similar to Eccellenza for outstanding researchers to establish and to lead a research group within the Swiss research landscape. This document describes the rules and procedures for submitting a proposal to the transitional **SNSF Starting Grant Call 2022**. Key features of the funding scheme are summarised in **Box 1**.

Box 1. Key features of the SNSF Starting Grants Call 2022.

- The scheme is **open to all research disciplines and topics**.
- With an SNSF Starting Grant, grantees will lead an independent research project and direct a team of researchers in Switzerland. An SNSF Starting Grant comes after several years of research after the PhD or medical degree. **Applicants have achieved scientific independence** and contributed to impactful research in their field.
- Applicants are between 3 and 8 years after their PhD defence or equivalent or between 5 and 12 years after their medical degree.
- The applicant's Swiss higher education institution must ensure that applicants can direct the research and manage their funding.
- Applicants can request a budget of up to **CHF 1.8 million for a period of five years**.
- **Scientific excellence is the main criterion of evaluation**. The proposal is submitted in one application step. It must include the research plan, the CV and main scientific achievements, the research output, the requested budget and the higher education institution confirmation letter.
- **If grantees are not yet professor, they will become at least assistant professor without tenure-track**. To this end, their higher education institution must **confirm before the start of the SNSF Starting Grant** that they will receive the status and title of, at least, assistant professor. The salary will be covered by their SNSF Starting Grant.
- The **evaluation of the proposal by international panels will be conducted in two phases**. In a first phase, panel members will evaluate the submitted documents and rate applications on this basis. Top-rated applicants will be evaluated further in a second phase, which includes international peer review and interviews.

- The call opens on 1 December 2021 and **closes on 1 February 2022**.
- The outcome of the first phase will be communicated in July 2022.
- The outcome of the second phase will be communicated in November 2022.
- The projects can start, at the earliest, in January 2023.
- The funding of the projects is expressly subject to the financing decisions of the responsible federal bodies (Federal Council and Parliament).

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1. Eligibility Criteria

1.1 Applicant

1.1.1 Objective and track record

With an SNSF Starting Grant, grantees will lead an independent research project and direct a team of researchers in Switzerland. An SNSF Starting Grant comes after several years of research after the PhD, medical degree or qualification equivalent to a PhD during which grantees have already achieved scientific independence and contributed to impactful research in their field.

If applicants are not already professor, **they will become assistant professor without tenure track at least for the duration of the SNSF Starting Grant.** The applicant's higher education institution has to confirm before the start of the SNSF Starting Grant that the applicant will receive the status and title of, at least, assistant professor (see section 1.2).

The SNSF Starting Grant Call 2022 is open to researchers of any nationality who intend to conduct their research in Switzerland. Applicants have a PhD degree, a medical degree or a qualification that is equivalent to a PhD.

Applicants meet the personal requirements for this call if:

After their PhD defence:

- They have at least 3 years of research experience
- They submit their application 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
- They submit their application no more than 12 years after obtaining their medical degree.

After a qualification equivalent to a PhD, defined as 3 years of research activity after obtaining the higher education degree:

- They have at least 3 years of research experience
- They submit their application no more than 8 years after obtaining a qualification equivalent to a PhD.

The time periods are calculated based on the submission deadline. They may be extended if one or more of the reasons set out in Clause 1.11 of the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations¹ apply. The reasons for extending the time window must be explained in the application.

Applicants should have several major research outputs that are independent of their work as a PhD student and the associated PhD project. If applicants hold a medical degree, they should have

¹ <https://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/snsf-general-implementation-regulations-for-the-funding-regulations-e.pdf>

several major research outputs independent of their initial research work as a junior scientist. The applicant's research output will be assessed, taking into account the culture and norms of her/his discipline. Applicants will normally have complemented their expertise with appropriate collaborations.

Applicants will ask for the salaries of the employees in their team, including PhD students and postdocs. Applicants are expected to demonstrate significant experience in supporting or supervising less experienced researchers, including advanced-level master students.

1.1.2 Multiple applications and duplicate funding

- Applicants for an SNSF Starting Grant may apply for the call identifier ERC-2022-StG. However, they **cannot** participate as principal investigator in any ERC frontier project or SNSF Consolidator/Advanced Grant **and** an SNSF Starting Grant in parallel.
 - Support for research projects already funded by the SNSF or third parties is excluded.
 - Researchers who receive an SNSF Starting Grant must inform the SNSF about existing ERC Grants and parallel applications in ERC schemes.
 - Applicants will have to provide information on mySNF on available and requested funding for their research projects (for details, see section 3.1).
- A researcher participating as principal investigator in an ongoing ERC frontier research grant may not submit a proposal to the present SNSF Starting Grant Call 2022 unless the existing project ends before end of December 2022. An SNSF Starting Grant can only start once the previous ERC frontier research grant agreement has ended.

1.2 Higher education institution

The higher education institution has to sign the confirmation letter (template provided on mySNF):

If an applicant does not yet have a position as a professor ² at a higher education institution under Swiss law **for the duration of the SNSF Starting Grant:**

Her/his full salary (including social security contributions) at the level of a local assistant professor is covered by the SNSF Starting Grant. To this end, the higher education institution will have to confirm before the start of the SNSF Starting Grant that the grantee receives the status and title of, at least, assistant professor. The Swiss higher education institution must be an accredited institution under the HEdA³. Please refer to the list⁴ of universities, higher education institutions and universities of applied sciences accredited under the HEdA published by swissuniversities. The higher education institution has to confirm that the applicant will receive the status and title of, at least, an assistant professor.

If an applicant already has a position as professor at a higher education institution in Switzerland under Swiss law **for the duration of the SNSF Starting Grant:**

² Temporary or permanent member of teaching staff with independent position involving independent research and teaching duties/activities not bound by instructions, right to supervise doctoral theses.

³ Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (SR 414.20): <https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/20070429/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/studying/recognised-or-accredited-swiss-higher-education-institutions>

The higher education institution covers her/his salary, and the applicant asks only for funds for the research project. The higher education institution must be established in Switzerland as a legal entity (public or private) under Swiss law. The applicant does not need to be employed by the higher education institution when she/he submits the proposal; however, the higher education institution must employ the applicant at least for the project's duration. The working-time percentage at a higher education institution must be at least 50% (0.5 FTE). Should Switzerland obtain the status of an associated country and participate in Horizon Europe after the deadline of this call, this constraint would be changed to 50% of her/his total working-time in an EU Member State or associated country. Finally, the Swiss higher education institution must be the only participating legal entity. Well-justified exceptions to this rule may be considered.

1.3 Employment and time commitment

Before applying, applicants should discuss the conditions and procedure for conducting the project with the higher education institution. The latter must provide a confirmation letter (template provided on mySNF).

- If the SNSF pays the salary as an assistant professor during the SNSF Starting Grant period, then the applicant is employed at least 80% (0.8 FTE) and spends at least 80% of her/his working time on the project covered by this grant and the rest mainly on teaching.
- If the SNSF pays the salary as an assistant professor during the SNSF Starting Grant period and the applicant is a researcher who does clinical work, then the applicant is employed at least 50% (0.5 FTE) as an assistant professor. She/he spends at least this much time on the project covered by this grant and the rest mainly on clinical work.
- If the SNSF pays the salary as an assistant professor at a university of applied sciences or of teacher education during the SNSF Starting Grant period, then the applicant is employed at least 80% (0.8 FTE) and spends at least 70% of her/his working time on the project covered by this grant and the rest mainly on teaching.

A further work quota reduction may be approved on request in the event of the successful acquisition of significant third party funding.

- If an applicant already has a position as professor at a higher education institution in Switzerland during the SNSF Starting Grant period, then she/he is employed at least 50% (0.5 FTE) and spends at least this much time on the project covered by this grant.

2. Formal requirements, ethical issues and research integrity

2.1 Legal basis

The general provisions of the SNSF (Funding Regulations⁵ and the General implementation regulations for the Funding Regulations⁶) apply to the SNSF Starting Grant Call 2022 and the corresponding funding procedures. This call document is issued by the Presiding Board of the

⁵ https://media.snf.ch/UBa5QinDpnNjssV/snsf-funding_relations_2015_e.pdf

⁶ <https://media.snf.ch/u3qMhSLP21vefBd/snsf-general-implementation-regulations-for-the-funding-regulations-e.pdf>

National Research Council under a mandate from the SERI to set up a transitional measure for the ERC Starting Grant Call 2022 (ERC-2022-StG).

2.2 User account in mySNF

If applicants do not already have a mySNF user account, they will need to open a new account. **They should aim at registering their new user account no later than one month before the deadline.** Their mySNF 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 mySNF. Hence, applicants should take note of the Swiss laws and ethical standards⁷. Furthermore, the rules of scientific integrity must be respected⁸.

2.4 Open access

Under the SNSF Starting Grant Call 2022, 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.

2.5 Open research data

Under the SNSF Starting Grant Call 2022, applicants must include a data management plan (DMP) in their funding application. 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 ORD Policy⁹. The repositories should comply with the FAIR data principles.

3. Budget

SNSF Starting Grants are awarded up to a maximum of **CHF 1.8 million for a period of 5 years**. The maximum award is reduced *pro rata temporis* for projects of a shorter duration.

Applicants must use whole CHF integers only when indicating requested costs. All costs must be indicated in annual allotments.

3.1 Requested funding

Requested funding must be linked to the aims of the project for its entire duration. The estimation of project costs should be as accurate as possible. The evaluation panels assess the estimated costs carefully and are entitled to modify budgets.

⁷ <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2013/786/de>

⁸ https://www.snf.ch/media/en/TOYYqzR5b3FV4cqT/ueb_org_fehlverh_gesuchstellende_e.pdf

⁹ <https://www.snf.ch/en/dMILj9t4LNk8NwyR/topic/open-research-data>

Applicants enter the requested funding in the mySNF section "Requested funding":

1. **Salary of applicant:** applicants indicate whether they request their salary (including social security contributions). If they do not yet have a position as professor at a higher education institution during the SNSF Starting Grant period, the SNSF will pay their salary at the level of a local assistant professor.
2. **Requested positions:** applicants indicate the salaries (including social security contributions) for employees of their team (doctoral students, postdocs, other employees). When requesting positions, they should refer to the higher education institution's salary rates and social contributions¹⁰. The size and composition of the research team must be indicated, mentioning the key team members and their roles.
3. **Requested funding for the project:** costs have to be subdivided into equipment (including, if applicable, costs for installation/purchase of major equipment/access to infrastructure) and research funds (consumables, field expenses, travel costs, conference costs, other direct costs and any envisaged sub-contracting costs). For the list of eligible costs, see Annex, section 7.1. All available resources for the realization of the project and the required infrastructure and equipment have to be declared. Please include a short technical description of the equipment needed, together with a justification of its necessity.

Please note: Any funds received or requested from the SNSF or other funding institutions must be declared (refer to the mySNF section "Available or requested funds").

4. Creating the documents for upload

All documents must be in English. The font must be Times New Roman, Arial or similar with a size of at least 11, single line spacing and margins of 2 cm on the side and 1.5 cm at the bottom. Condensed fonts are not allowed. The documents must be submitted in PDF format.

The following sections complement the additional information available on mySNF.

4.1 Research Plan

Upload as a single file in the mySNF section "Research plan".

The research plan **must not exceed 15 (fifteen) pages (A4 paper size) and 60,000 characters (including spaces)**. This includes the cover/title page (and, if applicable, a table of contents), the summary, footnotes, illustrations, formulae, tables, *etc.*, but **not** the bibliography (**mandatory** list of sources/references at the end of the document). The research plan must be uploaded in its final form as a single file, and it may not include attachments of any kind. No modifications are allowed after submission.

The research plan must be structured into the following sections:

¹⁰ https://www.SNSF.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_doktorierende_e.pdf

<p>1 Current state of research in the field</p>	<p>Describe your project in the context of the current state of knowledge in your field. Make reference to the most important publications, particularly by other authors. Please describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - which previous insights provided the starting point and basis for the planned studies; - in which areas research is needed, and why; - which important, relevant research projects are currently underway in Switzerland and abroad.
<p>2 Current state of personal research</p>	<p>Present the research work you have already undertaken in the relevant field or related fields, describe the results obtained so far, as well as the relevance of these preliminary undertakings for your project.</p>
<p>3 Detailed research plan</p>	<p>Specify the approach you are taking and the concrete objectives you aim to achieve in the funding period. The following points should be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - describe the studies or experiments needed to reach the set goals. Assess the risks involved and propose alternatives if necessary. - characterize existing sources and datasets and describe the data collection strategy and possible alternative strategies. - describe the methods by which the research goals are to be reached, and discuss methods that first have to be developed. - explain the role and the planned work of each member involved in the project (incl. collaborations). In particular, you should describe in detail the projects of the PhD student(s) or postdoc(s) and explain why the projects' topics will be good themes for thesis/postdoc projects. The structure and organization of the project must be explained in relation to staff resources. - refer to the requested budget.
<p>4 Schedule and milestones</p>	<p>Compile a schedule that includes the most important milestones (e.g. table, Gantt chart, etc.). This plan should also indicate the main tasks for which the persons involved in the project are responsible.</p>
<p>5 Relevance and impact</p>	<p>Scientific relevance</p> <p>Describe the scientific relevance and expected impacts of your project for the discipline(s) and for science and scholarship as a whole (research and education/teaching).</p> <p>Broader impact</p> <p>If you have categorized your project as "use-inspired" research, indicate whether and to what extent the proposed project will have a broader impact and what this impact will be. The following points should be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - define the need for research from the perspective of practitioners/industry. Are there any knowledge gaps? What innovations and improvements are expected? - to what degree can the expected research results be put into practice? - in which fields outside science could the implementation of the research results lead to changes? What is the nature of these changes?

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 " <i>et al.</i> " 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 not included in the maximum number of pages (15) and characters (60,000).
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4.2 CV and major scientific achievements

Upload **both sections as a single file (max. 4 pages total)** in the mySNF section "CV/major scientific achievements". The structure of the **CV section (max. 3 pages)** must be as follows:

1. Personal information, including researcher ID (*e.g.* OrcID, ResearcherID, Google Scholar ID). The SNSF does not consider metrics (such as the H-index) in its career evaluations, and so these should not be mentioned.
2. Education:
 - a. For applicants with a PhD: **mention the date** of your PhD defence **and the name(s)** of the PhD supervisor(s).
 - b. For applicants with a medical degree: mention the date of your medical degree (Staatsexamen or equivalent) and the name(s) of the advisor(s).
 - c. For applicants without a PhD or a medical degree: mention the date of the PhD-equivalent degree, which corresponds to three years of research work since the higher education degree, and the name(s) of the supervisor(s).
 - d. Set out what stage you have reached with your habilitation, if applicable.
3. Employment history including current position(s) **with the name(s) of the supervisor/s**
4. Institutional responsibilities
5. Approved research projects as principal investigator (PI) or co-PI (please specify)
6. Supervision of junior researchers at the graduate and postgraduate level (summary information and the names of the junior researchers should be indicated)
7. Teaching activities (summary information)
8. Memberships in panels, boards, *etc.*, and individual scientific reviewing activities
9. Active memberships in scientific societies, fellowships in renowned academies
10. Organization of conferences
11. Prizes, awards, fellowships
12. Career breaks (provide justification)

All dates must at least include month and year. Additional points can be added if relevant.

In the section **Major scientific achievements (max. 1 page)**, emphasize your most important scientific and scholarly achievements. Describe for each achievement your specific contribution and the overall impact of the work.

4.3 Research output

Upload as a single file in the mySNF section "Research output".

- Give the full reference and **do not use "et al."** to shorten the list of authors, unless the research project was conducted as a large international collaboration with more than 50 authors.
- Authors must always be listed in the **same order as in the research output itself**, including for shared first authorships.
- Separate your research output resulting from your PhD/medical degree/PhD equivalent (or earlier) and from your time since.
- For all listed research outputs completed since, give a very short comment on your contribution.
- **Highlight the five most important research outputs** and explain your personal contribution to each of those where the output is multi-authored.
- Applicants in the humanities and social sciences who are doing a habilitation must indicate the status of their monograph: published or submitted (under the corresponding categories below: 2 for published or 11 for submitted). If still in preparation, only refer to it in your CV or career plan). Please specify when you expect to have it published and, if applicable, upload the corresponding agreement with the publisher in the container "Other annexes".

Structure the research output as follows and provide a direct link for each output whenever possible:

1. Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals
2. Peer-reviewed books/monographs
3. Peer-reviewed conference proceedings
4. Contributions to books
5. Patents and licenses
6. Oral contributions at conferences (talk or poster)
7. Outreach activities (science communication: *e.g.* public engagement in science, technology and knowledge transfer activities, art performances, *etc.*)
8. General contributions to science (*e.g.* spokesperson for experiments, leader of expeditions, founder of networks and training programmes, *etc.*)
9. Other artefacts with documented use (*e.g.* maps, methods, prototype demos, software, databases, design, contributions to big data collaborations, *etc.*)
10. Preprints (only if available on a preprint server, *e.g.* arXiv, bioRxiv, *etc.*)
11. Submitted but not yet accepted manuscripts: upload the proof of submission from the journal/publisher combined with the submitted manuscript under "Other annexes".

Your research output is evaluated in the context of your net academic age alongside your CV and major scientific achievements. **Do not cite journal-based metrics**, such as Journal Impact Factors. They are not regarded as appropriate surrogates to evaluate the quality of your research output (the SNSF is a signatory of DORA¹¹).

Your research output is evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Scientific quality
- Output at all career stages
- Productivity
- Scientific independence
- Impact in the field
- Expertise required for the submitted proposal

Your research output will be judged while taking into account the culture and norms of your discipline. Members of the evaluation panel and external peer reviewers may support their expert judgement of your productivity or your impact in the field with article counts or numbers of citations, respectively.

5. Uploading the application

Select the correct division and funding scheme (Programmes > Horizon Transitional Measures > SNSF Starting Grants). Before making any entries or uploading files, make sure to read carefully all information in this document and in the header of every data container. **The application must be submitted via mySNF no later than 17:00 CET (Swiss local time) on the submission date (Tuesday, 1 February 2022)**. You will receive a confirmation of your submission via email. Please make sure that you have entered and uploaded all necessary documents and information according to the requirements stated in this document by the submission deadline. **Otherwise, your application may not be considered.**

5.1 Receipt and verification at the SNSF

5.1.1 Verification of formal requirements and eligibility

The Administrative Offices of the SNSF check whether your submitted application meets the formal and personal requirements and whether you and your higher education institution are eligible. If your proposal is eligible, it will be forwarded to the corresponding evaluation panel. The proposal may also be not considered on formal grounds even after the evaluation process has started.

5.1.2 Scientific integrity

The Administrative Offices of the SNSF may check whether the application respects scientific integrity rules (see 'Regulations of the National Research Council on the treatment of scientific misconduct by applicants and grantees'¹²).

¹¹ <https://www.snf.ch/en/neSdcJ948w1y33Nj/topic/dora-declaration>

¹² http://www.SNSF.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/ueb_org_fehlverh_gesuchstellende_e.pdf

5.1.3 Contacts between applicants and the SNSF

Please address queries to the Administrative Offices of the SNSF by phone +41 (0)31 308 22 22 or email to stg@snf.ch. When checking submitted applications, the Office may contact applicants to clarify issues related to the application. Before, during and after the evaluation, the 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.

6. Evaluation and communication

A scientific Steering Committee, set up by the Presiding Board of the National Research Council, oversees the evaluation and funding activities related to the SNSF Starting Grants Call. It also ensures the application of SNSF's best practices and compliance regarding conflicts of interest. It is composed of the president of the National Research Council, independent external experts from each research domain (humanities and social sciences; biology and medicine; mathematics, natural and engineering sciences), and members of the Specialized Committee Careers. The evaluation of the submitted proposals is based on the principle of competition. Discipline-specific panels will evaluate the proposals in a two-phase procedure. The applications are assessed and rated based on the submitted documents for phase 1 and based on the additional external peer reviews and interviews for phase 2, and ranked comparatively to the other applications.

6.1 Evaluation panels and external peer reviewers

The SNSF Starting Grants Steering Committee will establish the panels based on the summaries, the disciplines and the keywords provided by the applicants. Applicants are entitled to submit a list with the names and addresses of persons not to be asked for an external peer review (exclusion list). The SNSF will abide by this list if the applicants provide a valid reason for the requested exclusion and other experts are available.

6.2 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 lots¹³.

The selection procedure comprises two phases.

¹³ https://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/por_org_rec_reglement_e.pdf (Article 23 para. 5)

6.2.1 Phase 1: outcome communicated in July 2022

In the first phase, at least two panel members acting as independent referees evaluate and rate the submitted application based on the scientific criteria (see section 6.3). All panel members then discuss the proposal. Following the discussion, every panel member submits a rating. A ranking list is compiled based on these individual ratings of panel members. Based on the panel's ranking list and the available budget, the Steering Committee determines the number of proposals that are selected for phase 2. The proposals that are not selected for phase 2 are rejected by written ruling.

6.2.2 Phase 2: outcome communicated in November 2022

The applications selected for phase 2 are peer reviewed by external peer reviewers. In addition, applicants are invited for an interview to present the research project and career plan and answer the questions from the panel members. The external peer reviewers are researchers who do not participate in the panel meetings and who deliver their structured assessments before the phase 2 panel meeting. Based on the written assessments of the external peer reviewers and panel members, the interviews with the applicant, and the discussions at the panel meeting, the evaluation panel generates a ranking list of the phase 2 proposals. The panel submits the final ranking of the phase 2 proposals to the scientific Steering Committee.

6.3 Evaluation criteria

The following criteria will be considered during the evaluation procedure. They will focus on the scientific excellence of the research project **and** the qualification of the applicant. The criteria will be applied during both evaluation phases based on the documents available (research plan, CV and main scientific achievements, research output):

6.3.1 Scientific quality of the research project

Groundbreaking nature and potential impact of the research project (scientific relevance, originality, topicality):

- The extent to which the proposed research addresses important unsolved scientific questions and technical challenges.
- The extent to which the objectives are ambitious, moving the field beyond the current state of the art (*e.g.* novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines).
- The extent to which the proposed research is high-risk/high-gain.

Scientific approach (approach and methodology of the research project as well as its feasibility):

- The extent to which the outlined scientific approach is feasible, taking into account the high-risk/high-gain nature of the project.
- The extent to which the proposed research methodology is appropriate to achieve the goals of the project.
- The extent to which the proposal involves the development of novel methodology.
- The extent to which the proposed timescales, resources and applicant's commitment are adequate and properly justified.

In the case of proposals for use-inspired basic research, the project's broader impact outside science is considered in the evaluation.

6.3.2 Qualification of the applicant

Intellectual capacity and creativity, career development and mobility of the applicant:

- the applicant's scientific achievements up to the point of submission:
 - scientific quality and independence of achievements to date and their impact in the research field;
 - achievements to date in relation to the net academic age;
 - ability, based on achievements to date, to carry out the project.
- the applicant's career development as well as retrospective and prospective mobility based on the submitted statement; in particular, the applicant's overall mobility by the end of the project is assessed in view of the goals of the scheme and the applicant's career goal.
- scientific independence of the applicant at the chosen research institution.
- suitability and added value of the research institution in supporting the research project scientifically and in ensuring and promoting the independence of the applicant, as well as facilitating her/his continual intellectual development and continuing higher education.

The first two preceding points notwithstanding, the following assessment criteria are applied to applications submitted at universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education:

- the applicant's scientific track record, particularly in terms of research and teaching experience as well as further discipline-specific achievements in use-inspired basic research;
- the applicant's mobility, with special consideration given to a change from a higher education institution to industry/business, or a change from a higher education institution to elementary schools or secondary level 2 schools.

6.4 Outcome and communication of decisions

After the first phase, all applicants will be informed about the outcome.

Applicants not selected for phase 2 will receive a ruling with the scientific reasons underlying the evaluation. Applicants who advance to phase 2 will be informed about the date of the interview. Applicants rejected in phase 2 will receive a ruling 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 funding of the projects is expressly subject to the financing decisions of the Parliament.

The ruling may be appealed against before the Federal Administrative Court.

7. Annex

7.1 Eligible and non-eligible costs

7.1.1 Direct eligible costs

These costs support the research, management, training and dissemination activities necessary for the realization of the project:

- **Personnel costs** cover the salary and social security contributions for the applicant and salaries and social security contributions for employees of the team (doctoral students, postdocs, other employees). For PhD students' salaries, please refer to the SNSF rates; for other collaborators, please refer to the salary rates of the research institution;
- **Material costs** that are directly related to the realization of the project, namely material of enduring value, expendable items, field expenses, travel costs or third-party charges; material;
- Costs for project-related **use of infrastructures** at institutions or laboratories;
- Costs for **sub-contracting**.

Indirect costs are not included in the proposal form. The SNSF pays the higher education institution an overhead of the total direct eligible costs.

7.1.2 Non eligible costs

These costs cannot be reimbursed through the grant, in particular:

- Costs related to return on capital
- Debt and debt service charges
- Provisions for possible future losses of debts
- Interest owed
- Doubtful debts
- Currency exchange losses
- Excessive or reckless expenditure
- Costs reimbursed under an EU grant
- Publication costs
- Deductible VAT

7.2 Summary of deadlines

Opening of the call	1 December 2021
Submission deadline	1 February 2022
Outcome phase 1	July 2022
Interviews	September 2022
Outcome of phase 2	November 2022
Earliest project start	1 January 2023