

Fondo Istituzionale per la Ricerca (FIR). Call 2024

Introduction

The FIR aims to support activities that enable the structuring and long-term development of research at USI, maintaining a proper balance between its components as well as the diversity of proponents, in line with USI's Strategic Planning and the related research budget. The fund specifically supports activities aimed at:

- Promoting innovative projects in scientific sectors strategic for USI's development.
- Organizing and developing research and doctoral training, including structured support for doctoral schools and international mobility of doctoral students.
- Acquiring new databases and strategic infrastructures relevant and widely used for scientific research conducted at USI.
- Co-funding programs supporting research that are structuring for USI, particularly research programs supported by Swissuniversities.
- Supporting researchers in preparing large-scale funding projects that require dedicated support, candidates for funding institutions.

Other research activities whose support is considered a priority for USI's development. Funding through the strategic fund is time-limited and targets projects whose realization cannot be reasonably assured with current resources or external funding. In this context, the FIR 2024 call focuses on:

- a) Supporting young researchers with doctorates to enable them to become scientifically independent.
- b) Supporting doctoral schools.
- c) Innovative and interdisciplinary projects with particular reference to sustainability.

The budget available for the three areas is approximately CHF 800.000.

Deadline for proposal submission: 31.05.2024.

Support to Young Researchers

Objectives

To support young researchers with doctorates in developing independent research and acquiring competitive funds.

Participants

Researchers who have obtained their doctorate at least two and no more than eight years ago and who do not yet hold a professorial position. Any extensions of these terms conform to FNS regulations ([link](#)).

Both internal and external researchers invited by USI faculty members to present a specific project can participate. Since the call is entirely funded by the USI Institutional Research Fund, USI-affiliated entities (IRB, IOR, IRSOL, FTL) cannot serve as the hosting institute.

Projects may include a period of mobility abroad.

Duration and funding

Up to CHF 120.000 for a duration of 24 months. Covered costs include:

- PI's salary (up to 50%).
- Research costs, support staff, and travel.

Additionally, up to CHF 20.000 additional for foreign mobility costs can be requested.

Position: Scientific collaborator or junior group leader, depending on qualifications.

Selection criteria

PI's track record

- Potential to achieve scientific independence.
- Quality of the project and potential contribution to PI's academic career.
- Consistency with USI's strategic research areas.
- Support from the hosting institute at USI (including affiliates) and possible co-funding.
- Planned mobility.

Required documents

- Application form
- CV (maximum two pages plus list of PI's publications)
- Research project (8 pages).
- Career and funding development plan.
- Letter of support from the hosting institute.
- Two reference letters.
- Detailed budget.

Evaluation procedure

- External assessment of the files (at least two).
- Report and co-report by members of the Research Commission.
- Proposal from the Research Commission.
- Decision of the Rectorate.

Support to Doctoral Schools

Objectives

To strengthen doctoral training, particularly with a range of courses and other activities to develop the skills of doctoral students.

Participants

USI institutes and faculties, possibly in cooperation with institutes from other universities.

Duration and Funding

Up to CHF 100.000 for 36 months. Fundable costs:

- Organization of doctoral courses: fees, travel and accommodation costs.
- Networking events for doctoral students: travel and accommodation costs.

Coordination costs must be borne by the institute managing the school. Participation of non-USI doctoral students is possible, but at their own expense. Since the call is entirely funded by the USI FIR, it is open exclusively to USI institutes, excluding affiliated entities.

Evaluation Criteria

- Scientific quality of the proposed program (scientific committee, speakers, etc.).
- Contribution to the creation of soft skills and cross-disciplinary competencies.
- Consistency with USI's strategic research areas.
- Number of doctoral students involved.
- Project's capacity to continue after the funding period.

Required Documents

- Application form.
- School project indicating educational objectives, planned activity program, number of participants (internal and external), and school management methods.
- Letter of support from the awarding faculties.
- Detailed budget.

Evaluation Procedure

- Report and co-report by members of the Research Commission.
- Proposal from the Research Commission.
- Decision of the Rectorate.

Innovative and interdisciplinary Research Projects

Objectives

In line with USI's strategic planning, to develop innovative and interdisciplinary research projects with a special focus on sustainability – broadly defined as research contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – to initiate new research lines that could receive external funding. The FIR contribution is intended as seed money to start these initiatives.

Participants

PIs and co-PIs who meet the criteria for submitting SNSF project funding. Since the call is entirely funded by the USI FIR, it is open exclusively to USI researchers, excluding affiliated entities.

Duration and Funding

Up to CHF 100.000 for 12 months. Fundable costs:

- Research personnel costs.
- Networking and workshop activities costs.

Substantial co-funding is required from the hosting institute/faculty from the corporate budget or third-party funds.

Evaluation Criteria

- Scientific quality of the proposed project.
- Competence of the PIs.
- Contribution to the development of sustainability research at USI.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Prospects for the sustainability of the research and for acquiring additional funds.

Required Documents

- Application form.
- CV and list of PI's publications (according to SNSF standards).
- Research project (8 pages).
- Detailed budget.

Evaluation Procedure

- External reviews.
- Report and co-report by members of the Research Commission.
- Proposal from the Research Commission.
- Decision of the Rectorate.