



2021
SNIS
Call for Projects

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Introduction

The terms ‘international studies’ and ‘pluri-disciplinary’ are essential for the SNIS. Here are their respective definitions:

SNIS understanding of international studies

The SNIS adopts an inclusive understanding of international studies. Therefore, research in international studies concerns issues that are pluri-disciplinary, relevant to the international agenda, and for which international cooperation is required to produce policy-relevant outputs. Investigated issues may combine political, economic, social, environmental, historical, legal, health, scientific, and development dimensions of complex societal questions.

SNIS definition of pluri-disciplinarity

Pluri-disciplinary research is concerned with the study of a research topic within one discipline, with support from other disciplines, bringing together multiple analytical dimensions.

The SNIS strongly encourages inter-, and trans-disciplinary research which go even further than pluri-disciplinary research.

SNIS definition of inter- and trans-disciplinarity

Inter- and trans-disciplinary research (IDR) is a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.

Scope of the Call

The Call offers project grants for pluri-disciplinary teams working on international studies (see above). The SNIS supports pluri-disciplinary projects in the social sciences and pluri-disciplinary projects that combine natural and social sciences. The SNIS does not support pluri-disciplinary projects that only consist of natural sciences. The SNIS does not fund individual grants, i.e., career grants.

Projects must run for two years, and funding can range from 100'000 to 300'000 Swiss francs.

There are two thematic branches of the Call:

- **The general Call**: in any area of International Studies as defined above;
- **Theme 2021** defined by the SNIS International Geneva Committee: *'Covid-19: What lessons for multilateralism? (particularly in view of climate change action).'*

There is no quota for the general Call or the annual theme, i.e., applicants have no statistical advantage when submitting to either branch.

Two-step procedure

The Call is a two-step procedure.

In the first round, research teams submit a pre-proposal that contains the description of the project as well as information on the submitting research team members. The SNIS Scientific Committee decides which applicants are invited to submit a full proposal. The success rate in the second round is approximately 40%. All participants in the first round can ask for a feedback for their applications.

In the second round, teams submit a full proposal. The SNIS Scientific Committee selects the winning projects and gives detailed feedback to those not retained.

IMPORTANT:

- The deadlines of the first and second round are final, i.e., information provided after the deadline will not be considered.
- Substantial changes of the project between the first and second round are prohibited.

Scientific Committee

The SNIS Scientific Committee is composed of nine specialists from different academic disciplines. Their biographies are available on the SNIS homepage. Currently, Prof. Christophe Muller is the president of the Scientific Committee.

All Committee members have experience in evaluating pluri-disciplinary projects. The SNIS Scientific Committee is independent in its decisions. The Scientific Committee welcomes submissions from all eligible institutions without institutional or geographical bias.

Criteria for selection

The SNIS differentiates between eligibility criteria that have to be met to allow for funding and evaluation criteria that are used to rank projects.

Eligibility criteria

The SNIS discerns formal and substantial eligibility criteria.

Substantial eligibility criteria

The two substantial eligibility criteria for the admission to the Call are:

- The project proposal meets the criterion of at least pluri-disciplinary research;
- The project proposal meets the criterion of international studies.

Criteria to qualify as international studies

Project proposals must demonstrate that the issue(s) investigated:

- Are pluri-disciplinary;
- Are relevant to the international agenda;
- Require international cooperation to produce policy-relevant outputs.

IMPORTANT : Projects in which there is only an international collaboration between researchers from different countries are not qualified as ‘international studies.’

Criteria to qualify as pluri-disciplinarity

Project proposals need to demonstrate that:

- The research question benefits from a pluri-disciplinary approach;
- The research design is genuinely pluri-disciplinary;
- The team is composed of experts from different academic backgrounds (it does not suffice that one person claims proficiency in many disciplines).

The SNIS Secretariat checks the substantial eligibility criteria and earmarks projects that might not fulfill the two eligibility criteria. The president of the SNIS Scientific Committee reviews all the earmarked projects and decides which proposals can enter the Call and which are rejected.

Formal eligibility criteria Formal eligibility criteria aim to guarantee the administrative solidity of SNIS funded projects and additionally ascertain that the projects contain co-funding.

The following formal eligibility criteria apply:

- A Swiss university or other Swiss institution of tertiary education or research acts as the hosting institution of the project. The list of qualifying institutions is available at <http://bit.ly/2dCPA7p>;
- The coordinator and co-coordinator submitting a project must both be faculty members (professor, assistant professor, post-doc, researcher) employed by a qualifying institution (see above);
- For the duration of the project, the coordinator needs to be employed by the hosting institution for work unrelated to the project with a contract of at least 40% full-time equivalent (FTE);
- Each project needs to have a co-coordinator;
- If the coordinator is a faculty member without a full-time contract at the hosting institution, the co-coordinator must be employed by the same hosting institution with a contract of at least a 40% FTE not related to the project;
- The coordinator of a project shall not be working on another on-going SNIS funded project at the time of submission. On-going means that the accounts of a project are not closed on the day of the first-round submission deadline;
- Co-funding (in-kind and monetary contributions combined) must amount to at least 25% of requested funds and shall not exceed 100% of requested funds.

The SNIS Secretariat checks formal eligibility criteria. Projects that fail to meet the formal eligibility criteria are notified shortly after the deadline of the pre-proposals and will not enter the Call.

Evaluation criteria

The following evaluation criteria apply:

Academic originality and rigor (50%)

- The adequacy of the literature review;
- The precise identification of a research gap;
- The originality and clarity of the research questions / hypotheses;
- The adequacy and completeness of the proposed research methods;
- The adequacy and quality of the team members;
- The adequacy between the research venture and the time & funding envelope available;
- The clarity of the research plan.

Collaboration (30%)

Inter-academic collaboration

- Involvement of different universities in Switzerland;
- Involvement of researchers from abroad;
- Involvement of Ph.D. students and post-docs;
- Involvement of local partners / researchers (for case / field studies).

Collaboration with IOs / NGOs

- Integration of the research topic with IOs' / NGOs' agendas;
- Collaboration with personnel from IOs / NGOs (where applicable);
- Quality and appropriateness of all other trans-academic partnerships (collaboration with non-academic partners such as private entities or any institutions that do not qualify as either IOs or NGOs).

Projected outputs & dissemination (20%)

- The ambition of the projected academic outputs;
- The post-project data-sharing strategy;
- The adequacy and depth of the projected dissemination / impact strategy;
- The projected reach of the dissemination efforts.

Roles in a project

The SNIS recognizes four roles in a project :

- Coordinator (SNIS funding can cover salary);
- Co-coordinator (SNIS funding can cover salary);
- Principal member (SNIS funding can cover salary);
- Associated member (SNIS funding can NOT cover salary).

Coordinator The coordinator manages the project, is the primary contact for the SNIS and is responsible for the successful conclusion of the project. There can only be one coordinator per project, and SNIS funds can only be used to compensate coordinators that do not have a full-time contract at their hosting institution.

Co-coordinator The co-coordinator serves as the primary contact for SNIS in case the coordinator is absent. There can only be one co-coordinator per project.

Principal member The principal members are the key research personnel. Principal members can come from the hosting or partner institutions and can be Ph.D. students, IO / NGO members or other researchers. The hosting university is responsible to conclude a contract either directly with their own researchers or with other principal members' institutions to ascertain / regulate the payments of salaries. Principal members cannot have a coordinating role in the project.

Associated members Associated members can have essential functions in the project, but they cannot receive compensations emanating from SNIS funds.

Salary provisions per roles

General provisions The salaries paid with SNIS funds should correspond to the scales published by the SNSF. If using the SNSF scales is not possible due to specific salary scales and rules of the employing institution, scales and rules of the employing institution can be used. In this case, the team has to provide a full explanation of reasons.

The SNIS reserves the right to trim compensations following good practice in the Swiss system of higher education and research.

The employment level of a researcher involved in a SNIS project should allow for an orderly focus on project work, i.e., avoid economic duress. In general, employment levels covered with SNIS funds of less than 50% are allowed only if other funding sources are used to raise the combined employment level dedicated to the project to at least 50% of a FTE post.

Specific provisions **Coordinator**

- If the coordinator has a full-time contract, SNIS funds cannot be used for the coordinator's salary;
- The project contribution of a coordinator (not compensated with SNIS funds) counts as 'in-kind' contribution to the project by the employing institution;
- If the coordinator is a faculty member without a full-time contract, SNIS will fund up to a 50% of a FTE position for the coordinator.

Co-coordinator

- The same rules as for the coordinator apply.

Principal members

- SNIS funds can be used to pay for their salary;
- The SNIS can cover up to a 50% FTE position in accordance to the employing institution. The SNIS reserves the right to trim compensations to be comparable with good practice in the Swiss system of higher education and research.

For Ph.D. students

- Ph.D. students can also be principal members;
- The salaries for Ph.D. students paid with SNIS funds should correspond to the scales of the SNSF. If using the SNSF scales is not possible due to specific salary scales and rules of the employing institution, scales and rules of the employing institution can be used. In this case, the team has to provide a full explanation of reasons;
- The scales for Ph.D. salaries are considered to be the remuneration for a 100% position of which a minimum of 60% should be dedicated to SNIS project-related work.

Two-round procedure 2021

Please note that all proposals must be submitted in English. Proposals that fail to meet this criterion will be automatically disqualified.

Pre-proposal content and deadline

To complete a pre-proposal, applicants need to fill in a form on the SNIS submission platform. The different form fields correspond to the eligibility and evaluation criteria cited above. Project coordinators must also provide a short biography (max. 500 characters), a list of relevant publications (maximum 10), and necessary administrative information.

Applicants also have to indicate ALL team members who will be involved in the project. All mentioned project members must have been personally contacted, and they must have given their consent for participating in the project.

The pre-proposal deadline is 21 January 2021. Results of the first round will be available at the end of March 2021.

Full proposal content and deadline

In the full proposal phase, applicants need to upload six individual pdf documents to the submission platform. Project coordinators have to provide the following documents:

- Summary;
- Research plan;
- Team member information;
- The appropriate dissemination strategy for the expected research results;
- Partnership information;
- Budget;
- Institutional letter for Post-docs: Only if the project coordinator is a faculty member without a full-time contract.

The criteria for the evaluation of the full proposals are the same as for the evaluation of the pre-proposals.

The Jury will also take into consideration if the project team has met their previous questions/critiques.

The full proposal deadline is 17 May 2021. Results will be available at the end of June 2021.

Use of SNIS funds

Travel expenses Travel expenses should be reasonable, with clear added value to the project and complying with the rules of the institution managing the SNIS funds.

Infrastructure and equipment The SNIS neither funds infrastructure nor equipment.

Publications The SNIS does not fund publication costs but strongly encourages open-access for articles emanating from SNIS projects. Project coordinators are encouraged to use their discretionary research fund (see below) to pay for open-access to their project-derived, peer-reviewed articles where necessary.

Administrative costs and discretionary research fund The SNIS does not fund any institutional overheads. However, project coordinators are entitled to allocate 3% of the granted sum to their discretionary research fund. The SNIS encourages project coordinators to use this fund to pay for open-access to their project-derived, peer-reviewed articles where necessary. Permitted uses of the the discretionary research fund are defined by the SNIS and coordinators must sign a document that they will observe the outlined rules of appropriate expenses .

All hosting institutions of selected projects will have to furnish support letters confirming that they will oversee the accounting of the allocated budget (without charging VAT or institutional overheads), and that they will control for the orderly use of the discretionary research funds.